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Session: “Towards “World Risk Society 2.0”

Racism and Nationalism in the age of fake news and post-truth: A media perspective on World Risk Society

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1. Structure of the presentation

A) The concept of risk society and its relevance for contemporary societies

B) Nationalism and Racism as risks

C) Nationalism and Racism in the media (the context of fake news and post- truth)

D) The importance of civil society

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A) The concept of risk society and its relevance for contemporary societies

- The concept introduced by U. Beck (1992) demonstrated how the modern societies (industrial or post-industrial) find it difficult to regulate and respond to challenges stemming from their development and modernization. (i.e. ecologic crisis)

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A) The concept of risk society and its relevance for contemporary societies

- An overview of the major challenges that modern societies face at the national and the international level (i.e. ecologic crisis, health risks, security risks, mixed migration flows, effects of globalization...) indicates that the concept is still very pertinent specifically when it comes to the difficulty to regulate or rather have a coordinated response to those challenges, either in the national or international level.

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B) Nationalism and racism as risks

- In the context of the Cold War, nationalism correlated with the process of decolonization
- In the post- Cold War era, there has been a proliferation of ethnic conflicts and a form of nationalism centered around ethnic identity and the change of borders
- For many scholars, this dynamic comeback of both nationalism as well as racism express frequently a reaction to the perceived threats of globalization, neoliberalism and free-market capitalism.



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B) Nationalism and racism as risks

- In the context of the EU and in the recent past, there are many examples of both nationalist and racist rhetorics in the context of elections, referendums and also during the rise of mixed migration flows in Europe.
- An important differentiation with previous periods is the growing appeal and impact of such approaches (media and political discourse)
- Apart from the disenchantment with globalization, it can be explained as a side-effect of the different nature of the (digitalized) public sphere in our information societies

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C) Nationalism and Racism in the media (the context of fake news and post- truth)

- In present time, the public is much more frequently exposed to fake news (in the form of disinformation) particularly in the social media and many other sources (i.e. blogs).
- The corrosive effect of fake news can be also detected in the discussion around post-truth, a context in which emotions and beliefs, rather than facts, are more important to determine truth.
- It is certain that nationalist, racist and populist discourses have made abundant use of such elements.

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C) Nationalism and Racism in the media (the context of fake news and post- truth)

- However, nationalism and racism are always a major concern even in the traditional media. Very often, vulnerable groups (i.e.minorities, refugees, migrants) are either:

Underrepresented: invisible, irrelevant, victimized, trivialized

Or

Misrepresented: stereotyped, demonized, scapegoated and whitewashed/ tokenized

(J. Skyler)

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C) Nationalism and Racism in the media (the context of fake news and post- truth)

- The confluence of nationalism and racism with fake news and post truth is creating a very destabilizing framework.
- In that respect, both of them could be described as constant risks that seem very difficult to confront.

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C) Nationalism and Racism in the media (the context of fake news and post- truth)

- Ways to neutralize the disorienting effects of nationalism and racism in digital and traditional media
- Quality journalism (respect of ethics and reference to the guiding principles for reporting)
- Synergies between traditional media and citizens (citizen journalism, crowdsourcing)
- Regulation of social media platforms (detection and removal of accounts that incite to racial violence and promote hate speech)

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D) The importance of civil society

- According to Beck and Levy (2013) cosmopolitan civil society is a reconfiguration of nationhood in a world risk society with the following elements:

- 1) human rights imperative
- 2) world market imperative
- 3) migration as the prism of Otherhood
- 4) global generations and civil society movements
- 5) local interpenetrations of world religions

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D) The importance of civil society

- The fundamental challenge for cosmopolitan civil society is to create the conditions for a realism that reconcile one's own interests with the legitimate interests of others and thus foster a shared perception of future (Beck, Levy, 2013)
- Instead of regulation and coercion, a cosmopolitan approach puts emphasis on coordination and mutual recognition.