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WESTERN APPROACHES OF PRODUCING OF SOCIAL ADVERTISEMENT (COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN SOCIAL ADVERTISEMENTS)

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ABSTRACT

Social advertisement is the prosocial project of the past century having its roots from the Northern America. For years social advertisement had been passing through gradual changes. Despite of the fact that forms and means of expression, qualitative data were changing, its prosocial assignment and “noble” mission considering taking care over society, touching of social problems, trying to develop definite ways and recommendations to overcome challenges still remained unchangeable. Within the social advertisement a problem is accumulated with its whole vividness. As a rule, it reflects alternative prospects and suggests possible ways of overcoming of such challenges. Accordingly, using of the social advertisement, being an instrument of prosocial activism, to receive a better social landscape is a finely approbated method. Western experience of the social advertisement is a conductor of the long-termed history, particularly in case of USA where efficient steps in this direction are constantly made since the period of the Second World War. In the present work we applied a comparative approach which enabled us to compare European and American trends of producing of social advertisements and to see definite similarities and different, on the first hand, on the continental level, and on another hand, by using the Georgian practice. The civilized world constantly makes an effort of resolving of social problems and their considering for the best interests of the society. Among multiple means, the stated aim serves to the periodic screening of the social advertisement; thus, a role of the traditional media, and contemporary digital platforms in this direction is priceless. A target of the present work, from the viewpoint of American and European peculiarities of producing of the social advertisement, is to distinguish key trends. As for the tasks, we made some steps to reach the aim, - reviewed the practice of producing of American and European Social advertisements, distinguished key similarities and differences, and finally, compared them.

KEYWORDS

Social Advertisement, USA, Europe, Advertising Council, Theory of Modelling, Theory of AIDA

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Introduction.

For years advertisement has been changing in different directions, - starting with attractive slogans and ending with cultic logos. Since the time of appearing of the first social advertisement in America, other countries of the world had followed it step-by-step.

The whole arsenal of social problems in the contemporary world still remains to be a serious challenge. Adjacent results of the process of globalization in this part are vivid, it is the main reason if why social problems often go beyond the local scopes and transform into the global challenge.

Definite expectations, surely, existed around the issue which gave us a possibility to formulate estimated results of the research. We fully share the opinion that the hypothesis represented by us may not comply with real results of the research; however, it will become a basis for revealing of the essential news.

We formulated the **research hypothesis** as follows:

H₁ – rich experience exists in America in the field of producing of the social advertisement, which is the birthplace of development of this direction. As for the European social advertisement, definitely, it repeats American approaches. Generally, American and European social advertisements suffer from lack of efficiency of forms and means of audiovisual expression and contains rational tones.

Methods and Methodology.

Researching of the social advertisement, in the local and global context, is a rather actual issue. The topic will not lose its actuality unless social problems and challenges existing in the society are eradicated. In this direction, scientific experience is too poor. Accordingly, this research will be a kind of focal resources for the individuals interested in this issue, it will rise new or long time ago forgotten discussions in the field of mass communication in relation to key prosocial instruments, such as social advertisement.

This work, majorly, required using of methods of the qualitative research as, in frames of the research, we have studied content-related aspects of the European and American social advertisement. Proceeding from this, the following methods of the qualitative research are relevant: comparativistic analysis and content-analysis.

A method of comparativistic, or, in other words, comparative analysis is the best mean for making a parallel between two or more objects, revealing of general similarities and differences. Using of the stated method in the present work is not occasional as we compare European and American approaches of producing of the social advertisement.

What are the advantages of the method of comparativistic analysis:

- Informing choice: comparative analysis provides the decision makers with information on different objects and then it is easy to make a correct choice among multiple options:
- Identification of trends and templates: it identifies general achievements, and distinguishes similarities and differences;
- Resolving of problems easily: comparative analysis supports resolving of complicated problems easily by their systematic unbundling on manageable components;
- Transparency: by comparing with multiple options, the method supports transparency in the decision-making process that enables interested bodies to acknowledge a base of the choice (What is Comparative Analysis?, 2023).

Qualitative research of the content analysis is one of the popular methods. It is often applied by media researchers, as it provides possibilities to study the content, to analyze its composition and to observe its architectonics. By means of the content analysis we will be able to analyze and to monitor the data. Using of the stated method in this work is absolutely logical and important that is conditioned by several factors: in frames of the research, we, naturally, had accumulated and conducted content-analysis of the European and American social advertisements, reviewed the content, architectonics, forms and means of expressions and others (Toradze & Maisashvili, 2019).

In the process of using of content-analysis in the research, one should necessarily take into consideration the components, underlaying this method:

- Systematicity – the whole process is conducted systematically; beginning with the process of selecting and ended with submitting of results;
- Objectivity – the researcher is released from subjective views and while assessing carries definite media contents through the objective prism maximally;
- Measurability – results are digitalized and based (QADRI, 2022).

Submitted methods of the qualitative research focally assisted us in understanding of the content-related aspects of the topic thoroughly and following development of the research. Moreover, on the continental level it showed general similarities and differences and a link with the practice of producing of social advertisement in Georgia.

Theoretic Frame.

AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model was implemented for the first time in the end of the 19th century, in 1898, by the American pioneer in advertisements and sales, Elias St. Elmo Lewis. Lewis had

developed the model, as a frame for the purpose of attracting and involving of viewers into the process. To say it briefly, it considers how to rise interest among consumers regarding our product. In case of the social advertisement, it is clear what may be the product: creation of the social benefit at the expense of making of definite steps.

Theory considers the following stages:

- Attention: attracting of the auditory attention by an attractive content, visual form and titles;
- Interest: after attracting of attention, talking on advantages is necessary to rise an interest;
- Desire: appearing of a desire is the next stage, here it is possible to appeal emotions and to illustrate how can it resolve problems and improve a quality of life;
- Action: here, an essential significance is assigned to calling for the action to provide reaching of the aims by the social advertisement and to avoid its leaving beyond the screen (AIDA Model, n.d.).

AIDA model is broadly used in the commercial advertisement, as well as in the social version.

Personages, special heroes often are created in the social advertisement to provide making of definite decisions by them. This way, there is a big chance of repeating of seen actions by the viewer and implementing in his reality.

For more clearness, - the USA's "Ad Council" has created multiple personages who appeal on definite social problems and try to increase a degree of knowledge/ awareness regarding such problem in the society and to suggest ways of its resolving. For instance, the American "Ad Council" created a personage on ecological problems – Crying Indian. A theory of modelling is also applied in the social advertisement aimed at preventing of the forest fires, as here we meet a specially created hero / personage – Smokey Bear. Similar method, it seems, efficiently work in the USA, as, based on the statistics of "AD Council", it turns to be that the social video clips created by the Council have a rather high indicator of efficiency reflected in the part of localization and liquidation of the problem.

Author of the theory of modelling is the American psychologist, Albert Bandura. In 1960s his work underlined the significance of studying by observation, imitation and modelling in formation of behavior. Bandura's theoretic concept underscores the method of studying by individuals not only by a sole experience, but by observing other people as has an important effect on people's behavior.

According to the theory of modelling, the process consists of several stages:

- Attention – a specially created model/ personage should attract attention of the targeted auditory;
- Absorbing – means memorizing of the seen behavior by individuals, absorbing deeply in their consciousness;
- Reproduction – a viewer tries to implement the displayed behavior in the real life, and for this he develops relevant skills;
- Motivation – observer is motivated in implementing of the seen behavior in the practice, and, to turn it into the rule of life (Modelling Theory).

Discussion and Results.

The first essential difference between European and American social advertisements is revealed on the terminological level, mainly in the USA social advertisement is known as the public services advertisements (PSA), which serves to the same aim, as the social advertisement.

American and European advertisement, from the cultural and esthetic viewpoints, differ from each other significantly, they have different approaches, trends, content and originality.

Scientists interested in this issue compare American and European versions of advertisements and share interesting trends (European Advertising vs. American Advertising, 2020).

European advertisements are characterized with a particular bravery, and the American ones are relatively classical. Among significant differences a priori we should mention tones, which, paint opposite image in the USA and Europe, mainly: European advertising, majorly applies an expressive narration, often uses "emotional extortion", American one is well-formed, rational, and, we can say, rigid.

As we are aware, the USA, mostly, is focused on selling of the products, in Europe, majorly, attention is paid on the emotions caused by packaging and advertising.

European advertising is characterized with expressionism, as for the American one it is purposeful, right-lined and violent. The stated is confirmed by the social advertisement devoted to the rule of using of the belt issued by the American Department of Transport. The social clip, actually, is created with cold consciousness and is aimed at informing of the society about legal offences. Cadres of law enforcement

authorities and their representatives are often repeated in it. Music is neutral. Slogan is normative and is as follows: **“If you do not make a belt, you will receive a fine receipt”**. Imperative tone and power of law is felt in the advertisement, and there is a lack of emotional narratives and sub-texts (Click it or Ticket - 2004 Commercial, 2020).

Similar advertisement was issued in Europe, mainly in Norway. We can say that here an absolutely opposite approach was represented. Cadres have artistic value, and idea is creative. In the social video clip, we see a vehicle hitting the tree. Exterior is replaced by the interior and in the cadre, we see three passengers being unconscious in the vehicle. Using the montaging technics, it looks like their souls are leaving their bodies. Only one passenger, who had made the belt, survived – his soul returned into his body. From the first glance, the whole working process is shown behind an easy social advertisement. Slogan of the advertisement is artistic as well: **“Heaven can wait”** (Heaven Can Wait, 2006)

Despite of the fact that in American and European social advertisements one and the same idea is implemented, approaches are very different: majority of European social advertisements, as we had seen, apply artistic and emotional methods, that, probably, has a focal impact on the targeted auditory. As for the American social advertising, we have obtained a clearly informative and legal narrative which communicates with society on the language of law.

In American advertising, a message, mostly, is transferred in the textual form, and in the European advertising authors transfer the idea laconically. Here, more attention is paid on the visual side.

Under the research carried by the Morgan State University, American companies spend more funds on advertising in comparison with the European enterprises. This is how we can explain a success of American corporations on the European markets, as their advertising companies are more attractive and massive.

Another niche being different in American and European advertising is that Americans openly express their love to their birthplace that is often expressed in active using of the USA’s flag in advertising clips (Why Advertising in Europe is Different From Advertising in The US, 2020).

Trivial opinion that the world is becoming smaller, as if it was transformed into the “global village” as Macleuni suggested, however, when we deal with advertising, a principle of foreverness of the world is revived. In the contemporary world, and even in terms of globalization, all states have their own characteristic niche, but population is diversified. It is impossible to comply one strategy with the targeted auditory of several states. Accordingly, any advertising clip should be underlaid with a qualitative analysis of the socius to reveal peculiarities. The following steps should be based solely on this fundamental pre-research.

As a result of revealing of key diversities of American and European approaches of producing of advertisements, we can say that Georgian advertisements, including the social ones, share European findings much more as more significance is assigned to the visual and emotional sides of the ad.

As we gain from history of the social advertising, in this direction initial steps were made in the Northern America, when a social poster was published to protect the Niagara Waterfall. Accordingly, American experience of producing of social ads is relatively richer and has a broad history.

The “Ad Council” (Ad Council - Our History, n.d.) is especially noteworthy, as it has been producing social campaigns since the period of the Second World War, since the year of 1942. It has issued multiple well-known social ads, majority of which is actually involved in stimulation of prosocial activism till now.

Savings Bond (1942-1980) – a social ad, which was especially popular in the periods of the Second World War and Cold War. It was pleading Americans for buying of war obligations;

Security of War Information (1942-1945) – social ad pleaded the American society for secure communication in the period of the Second World War to prevent leaking of significant information;

Wildfire Prevention – Smokey Bear (1944 – till now) – this social ad which is focused on preventing of forest fires keeps its actuality till now. It encourages members of the society to take care over the forest and to avoid actions causing fire. Specially for this social clip a personage *Smokey Bear* was created, he says the following phrase: “Remember! Only you can avoid a forest fire!” The social campaign had reached significant results, mainly in 2000 area of the territories lost as a result of forest fire had been decreased from 22 mln ha – to 8.4 mln. Ha.

American Red Cross (1945-1996) – in frames of the social campaign, the Ad Council managed to mobilize blood donors for the Red Cross. The stated prosocial activism in this direction was playing a key role during fifty years;

Polio (1958-1961) – social ad was focused on activization of vaccination against poliomyelitis. As a result of this campaign, 80% of the USA’s population was immunized and the state eradicated the stated viral disease.

Crying Indian – Keep America Beautiful (1971-1983) – it was the social campaign directed against the ecological problems, mainly pollution. We can say that it was a cultic ad where a role of the “Crying Indian” was played by the actor Iron Eyes Cody. It played a significant role in the process of resolving of problems, - in 1983 indicator of pollution was decreased by 88%;

Peace Corps (1961-1991) – in the program of recruiting of the Peace Corps, thousands of volunteers were involved in and by the year of 1991 their number reached 30%, supported by the Ad Council;

United Negro College Fund (1972-till now) – this campaign, with its slogan, has mobilized more than two billion dollars which were spent on the aid designated for colored people. As a result of it, more than 400000 students were enabled to graduate the college.

McGruff – Take a bite out of crime (1979-till now) – the stated social campaign is actively used recently and is aimed at preventing of different serious crimes;

Drunk Driving Prevention (1983- till now) – The Ad Council and American Department of Transport has still publishing social ads against driving of a vehicle in a drunken state. It has several slogans: 1. Drinking & Driving Can Kill a Friendship; 2. Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk. 3. Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving.

Vince and Larry, Crash Test Dummies (1985-till now) - the social campaign regarding use of the safety belt has been going on since 1985 – till now. It is remarkable that the campaign-related character of social clips has brought a serious result, practically using of the belt was increased from 14% - to 79%, that, in its turn, saved life to about 85 000 people.

AIDS Prevention – Help stop AIDS. Use a condom (1988-1990) – the stated campaign of the Ad Council delivered information about AIDS. Merely, in frames of this campaign the word “condom” was sounded for the first time, where the advertising slogan actively called for its use: “Help stop AIDs. Use the condom”.

Family violence (1994 – till now) – public services advertisement (PSA) pleads members of society for taking an active part in the campaign preventing violence. It is noteworthy, that on the first year upon issuing of the social ad more than 34 000 calls were produced on the hotline.

I am an American (2001 – till now) – the social campaign was launched upon the terroristic act committed on the 11th of September, 2001. Representatives of different nationalities participate in the social ad, they make an accent on diversity of the USA, they stand in front of the camera and say: “I am an American”.

Adoption from Foster Care (2004-till now) – the social campaign which is actively going on in recently refers to adopting of children form foster care. The main purpose is to bring children up in family terms. Slogan of the social ad is as follows: “Being a proper parent does not require being proper at all”. In frames of the campaign, social website (AdoptUSKids.org) was created with more than 14 families registered on it.

Autism Awareness (2006-till now) – the public service ad was targeted at rising of awareness towards the people having an autism specter. In frames of the campaign, a special web-site (autismspeaks.org) was created with uploaded information on autism to provide its timely identification. Ads recorded in frames of the social campaigns had obtained multiple awards in different time.

Love Has No Labels (2015-till now) – a social campaign obtaining the Emmy Award, which is targeted at supporting of inclusion. It makes an accent on diversity according to the race, gender, age, sexual orientation and opportunities. The ad, as it was mentioned won the award in the nomination of the best campaign on the Emmy Awards in 2016;

Seize the Awkward (2018- till now) – social campaign openly discusses mental problems among young people. In 2020 the campaign had been broadened much more to settle the problems of mental health which became acute in the period of pandemics;

COVID-19 Response (period of pandemics) – upon spreading of the pandemics, the Ad Council, in close cooperation with the White House, Diseases Control and Prevention Center, US Department of Health and Human Resources and large-scaled media channels, created social ads carrying a campaign-like character. It was targeted at warning of the American society, - to preserve a distance, to carry face masks, to stay at home that would decrease spreading of the virus.

COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative (period of pandemics) – on the 25th of February, 2021, the Ad Council and COVID Collaborative launched an activity promoting the anti-COVID-19 vaccination to eradicate the virus by this mean. It was one of the largest social campaigns which has united many social figures. Similar practice of using of authorized people had not been frequent before. In frames of the campaign, American ex-presidents Barak Obama, George Bush, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, with former first ladies Michelle Obama, Lora Bush, Hillary Clinton and Rosaline Carter appeared in advertising clips; on top of all the Patriarch of Rome Francisco, together with six cardinals and archbishops, compared the COVID-19 preventing vaccination with “the act of love”.

The American Ad Council has been actively producing social campaigns in different directions till now. Social ads are represented in the multimedia format on the specially created web-sites: printed, audio and audiovisual formats. The Ad Council makes a main accent on the following topics: society, education, environment, health and security.

Conclusions.

Content-analysis of American and European approaches of social ads in the beginning, followed with the comparativistic approach significantly dismissed the hypothesis delivered by us. Under the estimated result of the research, European and American approaches of producing of social advertisement were similar; moreover, we have stated that as opposed to the American social advertising, the European one shows more dramaturgy, use more metamorphic approaches and emotional “extortion” when in America rational methods are in surplus. On top of all, we meet direct appeals in American social advertising, in the form of slogans.

From the viewpoint of producing of social advertisements, the American experience, in comparison with the European, counts much more years. As a result of showing of diversity of American and European approaches in producing of advertisements, we can say that the American advertisement is linear, direct and business-related; as for the European one, it is relatively metaphoric, indirect, rich with the sub-texts and artistic values. The American approach considers creating of personages as well. The main hero is created to resolve definite social problems, he provides the society with special messages which are significant and noteworthy.

What one can say based on the comparative analysis conducted between the Western and Georgian approaches? – In the Georgian social advertising both methods are almost equally applied. Unless the Georgian social advertising assigns a priority to graphic technics, it shared the European approach more actively: strong emotional background, artistic technics, impressive slogans.

In parallel with technological development, similar complex approach was relatively simplified. Recently, majority (but not all) means of graphic expression are in surplus. Accordingly, social ads became more business-related and carrying informational values that approximates us to the American attitude; however, for us European methods still remain to be well-known and approbated.

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