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**International Journal of Cross-Cultural
Studies and Environmental Communication**

Gender, Media, Politics

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GENDER, MEDIA, POLITICS. INTRODUCTION

Daniela Roventă-Frumușani¹

The digital revolution (M. Castells 1996; U. Beck 2000; S. Proulx 2014) and the « genderquake » (E. Macé, 2015 ; Froidevaux-Metterie, 2015) are the major paradigmatic changes marking the third millenium. The building of the digital identity as continuous self-production with its corollary- “the expressivist turn” (“le tournant expressiviste”) demands a new gendered discourse analysis from the double perspective of the disseminated or commented content, as well as of the nature of expression (the *what* and the *how*).It becomes essential to scrutinize how women (leaders or simple citizens) are positioning themselves, are using the new democratic participatory social media and contribute to the social change.

Recent Romanian and global studies (GMMP, 2015;2020 ; Coulomb-Gully 2010, Roventă-Frumușani et al 2017, Roventa-Frumusani 2020, Ross & Padovani 2017, Ross 2020 etc.), suggest a gender imbalance in media organizations, in content, as well as in journalism practices. In order to answer these questions we discuss some national results of the last Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP 2020) launched in 1995 and representing the longest longitudinal study on women and media at the global level . According to the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project Report for Romania, the gender gap between male and female news reporters is narrowing in many major news topics (politics and government) and a slight improvement concerning the presence of women as subjects of news appears too. Women represent roughly one-third of the subjects of news: 32 percent in print; 19 percent in radio news and 40 percent in TV news. Men are still portrayed in news as the main actors of public life: 76 percent of subjects in news concerning politics are men, while only 24 percent are

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Specialist in semiotics, gender studies and discourse analysis, she authored five books,edited and co-edited ten, and published over 100 studies and articles in the above mentioned fields, in Quaderni, Communication, ESSACHESS, Réseaux, Degrés, Kodikas-Code, Poetics, Revue Roumaine de sciences sociales, Canadian Journal for Communication. She is member of the ISA-RC14 board ,since 2010, of the SFSIC (French Society of the Information and Communication Sciences), and of the scientific committees of Recherches féministes, Communication, Essachess, Styles of Communication, The International Journal of Cross-Cultural Studies and Environmental Communication.

She worked in 12 media and gender project teams (director and member of the project team), organized 30 summer schools, international conferences on gender, discourse, media, and evaluated over 80 projects within AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie).

women. Subjects such as politics and economy are still regarded as men's concerns in traditional media, as well as on Internet, where women and men are even more unequally represented as news subjects (Roventă-Frumușani 2018).

Sensitive to racist and sexist dimensions, discourse analysis has only recently addressed the gendered character of political speeches and ethos, as discursive devices contributing to perpetuate the exclusion of women from power and visibility in the public space .”Going beyond the framework of the analysis of political discourse in the strict sense, the media discourse and the representation of women politicians has given rise to many work, both on the part of political scientists and communication specialists” (Coulomb Gully 2010:.177).

Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) divided political communication in Western countries into three distinct historical phases, starting with the post-World War II which has been called the ‘golden age of the parties’; the second phase, starting in the 1960s, was the ‘era of television’. The third, more generally termed the digital era, characterized by an intense personalization, privatization and populism is now followed (since 2010) by the era of social media (in the opinion of most researchers)

In this ‘new new’ media era the triad *women - politics – social media* research shows how the initial development of social media intended for private even intimate use (boyd and Ellison 2007) moved to civic participation including women in this evolution (Coralie Le Caroff 2015). We aim to contribute to this field of research by proposing, in this issue, to address the following questions: what is the specific use made of social media by women political leaders in their daily political action and during electoral campaigns and how are classic and new media talking with and about women? *In fine* we reassert that gender thinking fundamentally renews theories and issues, making visible and thinkable spaces hitherto unexplored.

The development of Women Studies and Gender Studies and the consideration of intersectionality have brought to light issues that shed new light on the political space. Integrating gender into thinking - into all thinking - opens up perspectives for analysis that had hitherto been unthinkable, like this space called a “blind spot that does not reflect the rearview mirror” (de Lauretis, 2007, p. 20))

Since gender has become one of the first languages of politics (Achin and Bargel 2013 Coulomb-Gully 2016,) the authors of the paper “Romanian women politicians, Gender Identity,

(Im)politeness. Facebook electoral campaigns” Daniela Roventă-Frumușani and Alexandra Irimescu propose to emphasize the manner in which Romanian women politicians act and interact strategically on Facebook at the intersection of “identity strategies and strategic uses of technologies”(Mabi & Théviot 2014:15). Following Web 2.0.’s infrastructure with its emphasis on interaction and expression, on democratic dialogue and opinion sharing, (Cardon, 2010), the authors emphasize the « presentation of self » in Goffman’s theatrical way and nowadays *networked self* (Papacharissi, 2011) engaging new forms of visibility and discursivity . But the sequences (replies) of this new dialogue (or rather polylogue) do not always follow the rules of public discourse (civility, non-threatening face acts, solidarity etc.- cf. Jan Rowe, 2015) and the gender dimension introduces a lot of unexpected nuances which will be described and classified.

The research signed by Valentina Marinescu, Ines Razec, Anda Rodideal „GMMP.Women and News in Romania.Twitter Analysis” , conducted on social media platforms, with a particular emphasis on Twitter, reveals a different reality that perceives women based on stereotypes, and reduces their activity as reporters and news anchors to a limited amount of subjects that are considered as suitable for them only based on their gender, and with little to no consideration for their intellectual or professional capacities. This reality is the direct consequence of successive decades portraying women as inferior to men, which progressively lead to the internalization of such behaviours even by the new generations, through the propagation of gender stereotypes by the media.

The paper “GMMP ROMANIA 2015-2020. An Analysis of Radio Newscasts” authored by Ramona Marinache and Theodor Dumitrache is focused primarily on the representations of women in the newscasts of Romanian radios on the global monitoring day-29 September 2020. Based on a qualitative reading of GMMP data gathered in 2015 and 2020, the article presents a brief insight on the way the representation of women in radio newscasts from Romania has changed in the past 5 years. To this insight is add the comparison of different historical, social and economic contexts in which the two monitoring took place and the way these contexts might have influenced the social realities presented in radio newscasts.

In “Gender Identity and Gender Roles Portrayals in TV Ads” Maya Hajj Hassan offers a complete literature review of the last four decades that have witnessed a multitude of studies on gender-role portrayals in advertising on television . According to marketers and advertisers, gender is a principal variation indicator in developing marketing strategies and defining target

groups. The empirical research emphasized that social gender roles are exceedingly stereotypical in television. Nevertheless, it is still not obvious how a country's culture reproduces gender identities or shapes gender roles in TV ads across time and different places as well as it is not clear how both gender identities and roles are being influenced as a result of their representations in TV ads. Therefore, the aim of the study in hand was to observe how the elements of TV ads have deployed gender social image in the one hand and had their impact on reproducing gender identity and gender social roles, mainly for women on the other and, also, to examine the socio-cultural motives that have led to bringing forward the image of women as a commodified object. It is worth noting, in this regard, that research on gender role portrayals in different European and Asian countries has led to the consent that gender roles are greatly stereotypical in television advertisements.

The research concludes that a global pattern of gender stereotyping is still at work in TV advertising, which in itself influences gender-role and identity stereotypes in the Lebanese society, further perpetuating gender roles and gender inequality.

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ROMANIAN WOMEN POLITICIANS, GENDER IDENTITY, (IM)POLITENESS. FACEBOOK ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

Daniela Roventă-Frumușani¹, Alexandra Irimescu²

Abstract: *In this study, we attempted to explore gender aspects of face work between the reversal of stigma and the maintenance of the gender role which in our view remains still relatively understudied within the broader domain of (im)politeness research. We focused specifically on the intersection of gender, social media use and (im)politeness using the social network site Facebook in the context of the 2016 Parliamentary Election campaign in Romania. If women politicians need to reposition themselves in relation to their gender identity in order to gain recognition in politics, we were interested to reveal some new strategies of visibility and legitimation of Romanian candidates. We question the political ethos as the image of the speaker that results from the continuation of the unveiling of personal traits of character, corporality, verbal declarations, etc. on the cross roads of socio-discursive imaginary of the audience, populated by beliefs, collective representations, and of course gender stereotypes. The data presented in this article, were collected using a content analysis of communication focusing on the inextricable links between Facebook posts and its comments in the construction of the feminine political ethos. Addressing the issue of impoliteness and interaction in Facebook electoral campaigns, we search the markers of impoliteness and aggressiveness in Facebook comments.*

Keywords: *impoliteness; electoral campaigning; gender ‘expressivist’ turn; interactional meaning; relational pragmatics.*

1. Introduction

The digital revolution and the « genderquake » are the major paradigmatic changes marking the third millennium. The building of the digital identity as continuous self-production with its corollary, *the expressivist turn* (Allard and Vandenberghe, 2003), demand an in-depth gender analysis from the double perspective of the production and interpretation of the political image.

A recent publication *A Crisis of civility? political discourse and its content* (Boatright & al., 2019) argues that all democracies face potential threats institutionalized through the use of media and technology; to avoid intolerance and division new practices of civil discourse

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must become a constant feature of modern democratic life. The authors are distinguishing two concepts of civility (S. Laden 2019): civility as politeness and civility as responsiveness. Civility as politeness means not insulting those with whom we do not agree and respecting a set of manners in speech and behavior; the second concept takes civility to be a form of engagement in a shared political activity characterized by an openness and the disposition to cooperate called responsiveness. The first view is common to empirical sciences (social psychology, linguistics) whereas the second one is more common in political philosophy and theory. We try to bridge the functioning of democracy (political science) with (im)politeness (language sciences). Moreover, the field of democracy research grounded in political science and analysis of political language addresses significant issues such as debate and controversies in the public space (off line and online), the exponential growth of political participation in social media (Bischof and Ilie 2018).

Web 2.0. with its emphasis on interaction and expression creates favorable conditions for democratic dialogue and opinion sharing, while the “presentation of self” in Goffman’s theatrical way engages new forms of visibility and a” relational pragmatics” (Locher 20015, Locher et al 2015, Sifianou 2016 and 2018, Culpeper 2019 etc.). But the sequences (replies) of this new dialogue (or rather *polylogue*) do not always follow the rules of public discourse (civility, non-threatening face acts, solidarity etc.). That is why after a focus on politeness phenomena (Brown & Levinson 1978, 1987- the first wave of politeness approaches), we witness nowadays new practices in social media interaction, opening multiple functionalities of impoliteness (rudeness, aggression, conflict, incivility - Culpeper 1996, Culpeper 2005, Papacharissi 2004, Jamieson et al 2017).

As the study of the gender dimension has been under-researched in political behavior and campaigning (Segaard Signe Bock 2015, Papacharissi 2004, Bousfield 2008, Enli 2017, etc.), we decided to analyze the intersection of gender, social media use and (im)politeness strategies in Facebook electoral campaigning.

Addressing the issue of impoliteness and interaction in Facebook electoral campaigns, we made use of the theories of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987, Culpeper 2005,2011, 2016, Hutchby 2008) interdisciplinary grounded by the socio-cultural *Gender Studies* approach (Karen Ross, 2020 Diane Bystrom, 2020, Jean-Claude Soulages 2016 etc.), socio-political analysis (Papacharissi 2004, Rowe 2015, Seely 2018, Sinkeviciute 2017 etc.) and rhetoric-pragmatic approach (Ilie 2001, 2004 and 2018, Harris, 2001, Mills 2004, 2009, Ionescu-Ruxandoiu 2012).

If until now researchers have focused on the elites (politicians, journalists, pundits), we consider that the exploring of citizens' reactions and interactions on SNS is a significant task (under researched until now).

In this study, we intended to explore gender aspects of online political participation, which in our view remain still relatively understudied in post-communist societies. We focused specifically on the *expressive forms of participation* using the social network site Facebook in the context of the 2016 Parliamentary Election campaign in Romania.

The main *research questions* following Nancy Fraser's (2011) quest for women's legitimacy have been: i). To what extent do the post-communist context and social media shape women politicians' status, role and networked self; ii). How does the audience talk to and talk about women candidates; iii) How does the audience (Facebook followers) consolidate, attack, reward the image and rhetoric of women politicians on Facebook? What categories of insults are used in the process of conflict, tension increase?

This research paper is divided into three main parts. The first section looks at the recent developments in (im)politeness research, gender study and the election campaigns' use of social media, the second deals more specifically with the candidates' profiles and interactions with voters in a quantitative perspective, and the third one addresses future research avenues of the gender/electoral campaign/social media triad as well as some conclusive remarks.

2. Survey of Studies on (im)politeness, gender and social media political discourse practices

2.1. Impoliteness

The root of (im)politeness research is firmly grounded in the field of pragmatics, strongly related to the concepts of identity, face and interaction. The first wave of politeness research, inspired by Grice (1975), Lakoff (1973) is represented by classics such as Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983). The second wave of politeness research (Culpeper 2011b, Haugh and Culpeper 2018) is represented by "discursive approaches", such as in Eelen (2001), Mills (2003) and Watts (2003), which highlighted some of the limitations of the first wave approaches to politeness. A key assumption underpinning the second wave approaches is that politeness does not have one single meaning and is a site of 'discursive struggle'. Culpeper argues that the counter-critique of second wave approaches appears to have motivated a general shift in the field towards a middle ground between classic and discursive approaches to politeness (Locher and Bousfield 2008; Locher 2012, 2015; Kadar and Haugh 2013). This

third wave of approaches is mainly focused on particular configurations of pragmatic forms, functions and contexts, giving rise to *interactional meanings* and to the *integrative pragmatics*.

It is worth noting that the separation between incivility and impoliteness is not often made in the literature (Papacharissi, 2004, Rowe 2015); incivility and impoliteness are somewhat muddy constructs with unclear boundaries, they often merge into each other and are defined in various ways in the literature (Herbst, 2010; Jamieson, 2000 apud Seely 2017, Theocharis & al.2020 etc.). Numerous content analyses of impolite posts and comments in social media are stressing the *continuous nature of the politeness-impoliteness phenomenon*. Since the categories established by the main analysts are comparable if not similar, we adopt the most frequent categorization of impoliteness (Culpeper 2011).

2.2. Web 2.0, hyper connected society and political campaigns

While the body of research on impoliteness has been steadily growing (Culpeper, 1996, 2008, 2011; Bousfield, 2008; Bousfield and Locher, 2008; Culpeper et al., 2003; Culpeper et al.2019, Mills, 2009; Terkourafi, 2016), scholars are only beginning to give attention to impoliteness in computer-mediated communication (CMC) (e.g. Herring 2000, Herring 2019 Bou-Franch, Patricia & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich , Pilar , 2019). That is why we have chosen to articulate the triad *women-(im)politeness- social media*.

Language and social media are concerned with identity construction, negotiation and management. Thus, a significant number of studies focuses on media practices that aim to construct who we are and how we relate to others (Locher, Bolander ,and Höhn 2015; Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2014; Ilie 2010, 2018 b). Previous research in discourse analysis sees identity practices as essentially discursive and relational, as socially constructed. Identities emerge in interaction with others, and are constantly changing, so it becomes crucial to scrutinize interactions and how individuals engage in processes of negotiation, identification and disidentification with others (Roventă- Frumușani & Irimescu 2018).

Impolite and aggressive behavior of mostly anonymous users appears to be an important feature of online comments. It is also argued that the strength of those face threats may be boosted by the fact that they are uttered in front of large audiences.

Since the beginning of Web 2.0, it has been observed that ‘confrontation, misinformation, and insult [...] characterize many public forums on the Internet’ (Katz, 1997: 190) generating a ‘toxic disinhibition’ (Suler, 2004: 321), characterized by rude and harsh language.

2.3. The *expressivist turn* and the feminine identity on Facebook

The *expressivist turn* (Allard and Vandenberghe, 2003), made visible by the technological advance becomes one of the sources of the *modern self* (Taylor, 1989) supposed to increase the capacity of individuals to build themselves autonomously.

Researchers have tried to see if the *expressivist turn* took place also in the case of the gender (Allard, 2008; Bourdeloie, 2013; Irimescu, 2017) through the new *technologies of gender* (de Lauretis, [1984] 2007) such as blogs and social networks. While some researchers are suspicious regarding this hypothesis, many of them are looking for empirical evidence and theoretical arguments in favor of a *gender expressivism* (Bourdeloie, 2013), especially in the case of blogs (Antunovic and Hardin, 2013).

Nowadays, in political campaigns Facebook becomes the new stage of enunciation, a new scene of *self-presentation* (Goffman, 1959) which leads us to the questioning of the construction of the feminine *ethos* in politics (Charaudeau 2005, Maingueneau 2014). Patrick Charaudeau (2005) defined the *political ethos* as the image of the speaker that results from the continuation of the unveiling of personal traits of character, corporality, verbal declarations, etc. to encounter the socio-discursive imaginary of the audience, populated by beliefs, collective representations, and stereotypes.

3. The Romanian Women Politicians. Context, strategies and interactions

3.1. The Romanian political and parliamentary context

After the anti-communist revolution in 1989, Romania becomes a semi-presidential republic whose electoral system requires some clarifications. Before the parliamentary elections in 2016, Romania renounced to the uninominal voting system (valid for the last two elections, from 2008 and 2012) to move to a system of proportional representation on the lists. In the case of the current electoral system, the citizens vote the parties and not the individual candidates, as has been the case before.

The most favorable voting system for women is the one on the lists, but in order to improve the women's representation in the Romanian parties, and in politics in general, it is mandatory to gain the good will of the Romanian political parties to restrict the gender gap. In other words, it is not enough for the parliamentary parties to have many women on the lists, but these women should be on the eligible positions to become real candidates for the Parliament. Otherwise, the political representation of women remains only symbolic or a mere

slogan used in the electoral campaigns.

According to the data provided by the *Coalition for Gender Equality*, more than 170 women, including 27% for the Chamber of Deputies and 29% for the Senate, have been on the lists of candidates nominated by the parties, but many of these women were in non-eligible positions, while others (fewer) have held the top positions. After the 2016 elections in the Romanian Parliament there were 89 women, representing approximately 19% of all parliamentarians. It is the best representation of women in the post-communist period that is reflected in the composition of the current Parliament, as well as in the composition of the government.

3.2. Corpus and methodology

In designing our research, we used two distinct yet complementary data sets: the messages posted on the public FB pages of prominent liberal political women engaged in the parliamentary election campaign and the reactions and interactions of their followers (at the most popular posts).

The data for the content analysis were collected from the official pages of the candidates in the last week before the elections (1-5 December 2016). The selection of the National Liberal Party was motivated by the inclusion in a more comprehensive project aiming the analysis/comparison of the traditional/mainstream parties' (Social-Democrat Party, National Liberal Party) campaigning strategies (verbal as well as visual). This analysis represents a section of the project.

We recorded in an excel database all the posts published by these top three women politicians of the parliamentary parties during the last week of the parliamentary campaign (December,5-11, 2016 in Romania). In the first step of the analysis, we emphasized the most commented posts as well as the themes which attracted these comments; in a second step we identified and described the structure and meaning of impolite interactions. The comments analyzed only include the 'first-order' comments, i.e., the initial comments to the original posts and not the replies to those comments.

3.3.Papacharissi's incivility model and impoliteness markers

Summing up the numerous debates around (im)politeness, incivility, rudeness, aggression etc., we should emphasize that no consensus has been reached between these concepts, neither on the measures of incivility. According to Papacharissi, incivility means disrespect of the collective traditions of democracy and is defined as 'a set of behaviors that

threaten democracy, deny people, their personal freedoms, and stereotype social groups' (Papacharissi, 2004: 267).

A three-item index was developed (Papacharissi, 2004) to determine whether or not online comments violate standards of democratic discourse, put otherwise if a comment (1) verbalized a threat to democracy (e.g. proposed to overthrow a democratic government by force), (2) assigned stereotypes (e.g. associate person with a group using labels) or (3) threatened other individuals' rights (e.g. personal freedom and freedom of speech).

A second index was developed in order to identify impoliteness. A comment was considered impolite if it (1) contained name-calling, (2) cast aspersions, (3) accused others of lying, (4) used hyperbole, (5) used pejoratives for speech, (6) signaled non-cooperation and/or (7) sarcasm. An 8th, catch-all category of 'other' was also used (e.g. comments written in capital letters, or partly in capitals, to symbolize shouting).

Zizi Papacharissi's model will be used in the quantitative analysis of Facebook comments, complemented by a qualitative analysis of types and subtypes of impoliteness.

In the inductive perspective of a bottom-up analysis, based on a lot of empirical data, Culpeper (2015) offers a comprehensive taxonomy of negative politeness with a particular emphasis on insults, considered by far the most frequent impolite formulae. Insults are categorized in 1. Personalized negative vocatives: *loser/liar* etc.; 2. Personalized negative assertions: [you] [are] [so/such a] *thick/stupid/bitch*; 3. Personalized negative references— [your] [stinking/little] [*mouth/act/arse/body/corpse/hands/guts/trap/breath/etc.*]; 4. Personalized third-person negative references (in the hearing of the target) - [*the*] [*daft*] [*bimbo*].

A version of politeness as social practice places particular emphasis on the interactive context, and most recent work on politeness and power involves a version of context which applies at a number of different levels of analysis, including the type of speech event, the immediate physical context, the topic being discussed, social and cultural expectations of the participants, **gender, age**, education, status and power differences, distance and affect between interactants, personal histories, and so on. Mills (2004:197) and Harris (2007:126) suggest that the notion of *communities of practice* is a particularly useful one, especially when defining a culture or a society; however, in the actual 'connective era' of social media the role and influence of communities (and influencers) is crucial. That is why we have chosen to analyze the public's reactions on Facebook in a specific context—the electoral campaign.

3.4. Romanian liberal women candidates

The first candidate is **Alina Gorghiu** (age 36), lawyer and member of the PNL since 2002, spokesperson during the presidential electoral campaign (2014), president of the PNL from December 2014 to December 2016. She resigned after the Parliamentary election due to the poor results of the party and today she is a member of the Senate. The second candidate is **Raluca Turcan** (age 40), economist and vice-president of the party; she has been a member of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies since 2004 and she has served as interim president after Alina Gorghiu's resignation. The third candidate is **Cristina Pocora** (age 37), who initially worked as a parliamentary advisor and Secretary of State at the Ministry for Relations with the Parliament. After that, in 2007 she was a candidate for the PNL Congress and was elected to the Central Political Office, afterwards she became a member of the Chamber of Deputies from 2008 to 2016 when she lost the elections. Furthermore, she has participated, without success, in the local campaign for mayor of Bucharest (third district).

Name	Party	Like	Followers
<i>Gabriela Firea</i>	<i>PSD</i>	<i>479 579</i>	<i>470 934</i>
<i>Gorghiu Alina-Stafania</i>	<i>PNL</i>	<i>121 734</i>	<i>119 265</i>
<i>Clotilde Armand</i>	<i>USB</i>	<i>93 797</i>	<i>93 482</i>
<i>Turcan Raluca</i>	<i>PNL</i>	<i>74 109</i>	<i>73 376</i>
<i>Plumb Rovana</i>	<i>PSD</i>	<i>27 574</i>	<i>27 159</i>
<i>Vasilescu Lia-Olguta</i>	<i>PSD</i>	<i>12 837</i>	<i>12 837</i>
<i>Pocora Cristina-Ancuta</i>	<i>PNL</i>	<i>9 785</i>	<i>9 581</i>
<i>Nicoleta-Cătălina Bozianu</i>	<i>PMP</i>	<i>5 260</i>	<i>5 223</i>
<i>Gratiela Gavrilescu</i>	<i>ALDE</i>	<i>3 630</i>	<i>3 564</i>
<i>Dan Carmen Daniela</i>	<i>PSD</i>	<i>3 422</i>	<i>3 422</i>
<i>Presada Florina</i>	<i>USR</i>	<i>1 250</i>	<i>1 347</i>

Table 1 : Data found on their public pages on 27 January 2017

In our research, the website *Facebrands.ro* was an important tool used to reveal the popularity of the women candidates on Facebook. The women we analysed were in top 10 women politicians in Romanians' perception. On top of the list is the mayor of Bucharest, Gabriela Firea, followed by Alina Gorghiu, meanwhile Turcan ranks 4th and Pocora ranks 7th in the top of popularity on Facebook.

3.5. Results and discussion

Description and quantitative content analysis of posts and comments. Alina Gorghiu's posts and comments.

With the explosion of Internet (im)politeness is no more a marginal activity but a permanent interaction creating alliances or disaffiliating people, especially in a polarized setting (controversies, electoral campaigning). Our standard definition of the most frequent impolite formula- the insult- is following Goffman (1967), Papacharissi (2004) and Mateo/Yus 2013 an offensive utterance the speaker uses for an open offense to the addressee. Insults often overlap with other categories such as taboo words, expletives, swearing (Culpeper 2011). In our corpus insults serve to assert *socio-political identity* through political antagonistic structures (in the leaders' posts) and to assert *personal identity* to the same leaders (as a results of the comments).

Antagonism finds the most obvious expression in insults and taboo language; antagonism is present at an ideological level (see infra the permanent opposition PNL vs. PSD), but also at a personal one (frequent attacks on people's appearance, intelligence, skills, maturity).

Date	Post	Comments
5.12.2016	Leon Dănăila's photo - <i>How not to love him?</i> ³	761
5.12.2016	PSD attacks	302
6.12.2016	Self-promotion Example: <i>We have a full day today. We start at 11.00 live, interview with DC News (...) that you can watch on my web page Don't miss the debate at GDS (Group for Social Dialogue,)and the tonight show on BITV channel</i> ⁴	339
7.12.2016	new attacks on PSD and injunction to vote Example: <i>Do you still have doubts that PSD is the same petrified party?</i> ⁵ , Choose #Romaniaforwards ⁶	327
8.12.2016	injunction to vote hashtag#PNL	736
9.12.2016	injunction to vote	738
9.12.2016	labeling (PSD) bad people govern the country	216
11.12.2016	Example: <i>thanks to people for having voted and hope for the future with Dacian Ciolos</i>	634

³ Original: *Cum sa nu iti fie drag ?!*

⁴ Original: *Astăzi avem o zi plină, începem la 11.00 cu live pe pagina mea într-un interviu din redacția DC News (...) Nu ratați dezbateră de la GDS și emisiunea de diseară de la BI*

⁵ Original: *Mai aveți vreun dubiu că PSD este același partid încremenit?!*

⁶ Original: *Alege #RomâniaÎnainte*

Table 2: Alina Gorghiu's popular posts

Our paper focuses on self-presentation strategies of the three women candidates, as presented online, and on the reaction of the audience; the analysis follows Culpeper's distinction between *bald on record impoliteness* (in specific circumstances where the face is irrelevant), *positive impoliteness* (i.name calling; ii. snub the other; iii. use inappropriate identity markers), *negative impoliteness* (belittle the other; explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect personalize I and you) and *sarcasm and mock politeness* (Culpeper 1996, 356-358).

During the electoral campaign, Alina.Gorghiu has had the greatest number of posts and comments as well. The *total number of posts* was 44 and the *total number of comments* 6166 with the average of 6 posts per day and 880 comments per day. Out of the total number of posts, we selected the posts with more than 200 comments (8) and established the top 5 subjects: i) insulting messages addressed to the enemy-PSD (Social Democrat Party and its leader); ii) portrait of Leon Dănilă (the famous surgeon, recently coopted by the National Liberal Party); iii) self-promotion messages (TV interviews, television broadcasts of A. Gorghiu); iv) promoting PNL and its leaders (video with prime minister Dacian Cioloș 'locomotive of the party'); v) thanks addressed to the voters.

As a preliminary conclusion we should mention: the *personalization of politics* (parties are in the background, main actors in front of the stage) and the *negative impoliteness* – political attacks (total 845). We remark the aggressive negative campaign against the main counter candidate in the race - the Social Democrat Party (PSD) and its main leaders accused of corruption, poor governing, incompetence (posts during all the campaign, marking the beginning as well as the end of it).

Even when the strategy tries to become positive (the presence of a famous surgeon recently coopted in the PNL in order to transfer his capital of legitimacy and sympathy to Alina Gorghiu (the famous doctor accompanies her in all the crowd baths), the numerous comments are negative highlighting the "mise en scène", the failure of the intended transfer of credibility of the expert (the famous, mature surgeon) to the woman politician (twice less credible: woman and young).

Raluca Turcan. Posts and comments

With a total number of 34 posts and 525 comments during the last week of the one-month campaign, Raluca Turcan arrives at the average number of 5 posts per day and 75

comments per day.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Comments</i>
5.12.2016	PSD attacks The candidate's assumption: the dirty Campaign of the PSD aims to discourage participation in the vote: <i>I saw the campaign of misinformation and attacks on a person to the candidates of the National Liberal Party, launched by PSD and broadcasted on all radio/TV/media channels.</i> ⁷	47
7.12.2016	injunction to vote – PNL: <i>Only by casting your vote, you can orientate/put Romania on the right track. Having a serious and responsible president, Klaus Iohannis. Having a professional and good-natured premier, Dacian Ciolos. Having a Parliament capable to make laws in the public interest.</i> ⁸	54
7.12.2016	injunction to vote – PSD vs PNL: <i>Stay home if you want to have a penal prime minister; go to vote if you want a moral one.</i> ⁹	68

Table 3: Raluca Turcans's popular posts

In her posts, the injunction to vote prevails over attacks, insults and critiques, as a result of her quasi-invisible position in the leadership of the Party. Any how she combines instructions/invitations to vote (“Go to vote if you want a moral prime minister”) with a magister dixit argumentum (her legitimacy to do that is based on her colleagues’ and on the president’s of the country support).

But what prevails in the comments on her webpage, are the insults to her mental abilities (which maximize face damage Culpeper (2011:213); these insults are emphasized with capital letters and punctuation marks (recent multimodal expressive markers in social media- cf. also Angouri and Tseliga 2010). The use of emphatic capitalization, along with the

⁷ Original: *Am văzut Campania de dezinformare si atac lansată de PSD pe toate canalele impotriva candidatului PNL.*

⁸ Original: *Numai prin vot putem orienta Romania pe calea cea dreaptă.Cu un preşedinte serios și responsabil Klaus Iohannis.Cu un prim ministru profesionist.Dacian Ciolos.Cu un Parlament capabil să facă legi în interesul publicului*

⁹ Original: *Stați acasă dacă vreți un ministru penal:mergeți la vot dacă vreți unul moral.*

imperative “go home, CURCAAAN”, associated with an informal register, aggravates the face damaging effect. The offensive connotation is cumulative: on the one hand the graphic emphasis, and on the other hand the unfortunate semantic content of her last name: TUUURKEY- symbol of pride and stupidity in the Romanian collective imaginary.

Cristina Pocora. Posts and comments

With a reduced total number of posts (12) and 94 comments, the young liberal Cristina Pocora contradicts previous researches on young parties and actors who favor new media, especially Facebook in order to reach targeted audiences, and first and foremost the young, educated public (general public of PNL).

The average number of posts is 1,71 per day and the number of comments 13 per day. The posts play only on the dichotomy ‘choose honest not dishonest candidate’ and forwards/backwards, Ciolos/Dragnea. (Ciolos is the liberal new candidate, Dragnea is the socialist candidate in office).

Date	Post	Comments
6.12.2016	injunction to vote: <i>Forwards with Ciolos or backwards with Dragnea; Go voting!</i> ¹⁰	19
7.12.2016	<i>Choose between honest or dishonest, between Ciolos and Dragnea</i> ¹¹	11
9.12.2016	<i>Let’s vote on Sunday 11 December, let’s vote for #RomainaForwards#VotePNL</i> ¹²	16

Table 4: Cristina Pocora’s popular posts

In all three candidates’ posts prevails the collective Party connotation (the National Liberal Party’s program, victory, etc.) and the demonization of the socialist leaders currently in office through the *populist rhetoric of good and evil*, enhanced by the *negative impoliteness strategy*: belittle the other, explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect. Also, the three candidates use in their posts the same negative speech concerning the opponents (PSD leaders and party) .

Moreover, embracing the stereotyped feminine qualities - empathy, care- (Roventă-Frumușani, Daniela, 2002), the three candidates employ mainly an *affective language describing*

¹⁰ Original: *Ciolos inainte.Dragnea înapoi.Mergeți la vot!*

¹¹ Original: *Alege între cinstit și necinstit.Intre Ciolos și Dragnea*

¹² Original: *Sa mergem la vot sambata 11 decembrie, sa votam pentru #RomâniaÎnainte! #VoteazaPNL*

their own Party and their life and family “how can we not love him?”(Alina Gorghiu presenting a famous elderly surgeon or “The people I fell in love with, in the literal sense ", " I am moved ", “since I became a mother too ", " I voted thinking of my child " - Alina Gorghiu).

At the same time, like all the male candidates, they don't forget to use assertiveness and directivity; she stresses her firm decisions: exclusion of any possible PNL-PSD alliance "I am not playing with my political career or with my credibility" - Alina Gorghiu).The presentation of self is realized directly (personal narratives, images, etc.) and extended by *mediatization* (advertising the presence in the online press and TV, complemented with live meetings).

Raluca Turcan prefers more informative, persuasive discourse - "The people of Sibiu know they are going to vote PNL", “PNL has reformed at the request of the Romanians”; she proposes solutions for the development of Romania and presents the conclusions of the electoral meetings (with the business community and the university environment). During her campaign she accomplishes first and foremost the National Liberal Party promotion, praises the PNL mayors, the president of Romania and Ciolos Cabinet, and builds the self-promotion as well in her posts: TV appearances, electoral program, discouragement of vote for other liberal parties ("a vote for a small party with inexperienced members is a lost vote").

With less posts and also less comments Cristina Pocora privileges Facebook promotion through the friends' pages, continues the attacks against PSD as antinomy forwards / backwards (PSD represents the past and the mistakes, PNL represents the future and the progress). She also relies on gender identity: “I am proud to vote as a woman citizen after 89”.

The three candidates have in common the self-promotion of the electoral campaign on FB, the promotion of the Party and of its main leaders (Iohannis, Ciolos, liberal mayors and prefects); the PNL-PSD comparison is strongly polarized and perceived as an ethical and temporal disjunction (moral/vs/penal and backwards/vs/forwards; if Gorghiu and Turcan have the same negative discourse towards PSD, in Pocors'a posts this criticism appears indirectly in the PNL/PSD polarization .It is worth mentioning that Raluca Turcan and Cristina Pocora answer occasionally to the followers' comments.

Conclusion and future direction

Even if we witness nowadays a trend of personalization and privatization in politics, women leaders emphasize and value in their messages the *strength and quality of the group*

(party, community, etc.) and its legitimacy; on the contrary, the public- Facebook followers, men and women as well reject women candidates first of all because they are women and as such illegitimate in politics.

We find evidence that women politicians are more heavily targeted than men politicians by uncivil messages but only among highly visible politicians (Gorghiu as compared to Pocora).

In their uncomfortable position, double bind (Cornelia Ilie 2018) women imagine temporary identities, in permanent reconfiguration imposed by the constraints and changes of the context. If the mediatization of politics is gendered (Raicheva-Stover and Ibroscheva, 2014, Ross 2020) and the media portray women political actresses as prisoners of their corporality, identity constructions on social networks could be strategically performed by these actresses and their teams.

In our corpus there is an interesting correlation between the gender identity of the actors and power and the insulting message (cf also Perelmutter, 2013, Vochocova et al. 2016). Men commentators on FB wish sometimes good luck to the ‘beautiful woman’, “respect women”, but consider politics “a men’s space” and don’t hesitate to insult women and “send them to their place”. In the tension between the freedom of expression and the avalanche of abusive messages addressed to women in ordinary as well as extraordinary events, the *rhetoric of face attack* (repetition and escalation of taboo words and name calling) prevails. Men use more uncivil comments than women in general and more specific insults in particular such as name calling; men use frequently the sexual objectification of women and stress their mismatch in leadership political positions.

In the patriarchal postcommunist society men assign a unique role to women: the family role *Too bad that PNL came to be led by a woman. I have all the respect for women but I think politics is the place of men. It is a well known saying "where the hen sings, she sings of poverty"*. Insulting messages actualize an escalation dynamics (Breeze 2019) present in our corpus also; it is worth noting that in our FB electoral campaign interaction individual comments align several uncivil lexical and syntactic forms and structures „Woe to our country run by (...) a *mechanical doll* like you (...) I see you *screaming like crazy* at all the electoral meetings” subsumed to the generalized call „go home”.

The Web 2.0. developments provide citizens with more possibilities to interact and to engage in discussions about politics and public issues. Skeptics or pessimists of communication blame the social platforms (websites, blogs, FB) for promoting *uninhibited*

and impolite communicative behavior online (due to the high level of anonymity). This study supports previous findings that impoliteness and incivility abound in online interactions (Papacharissi, 2004; Rowe, 2015; Santana, 2014, Seely 2018, Sinkeviciute,2018, Kenski et al 2020). But online discussions “may serve as a useful outlet to express political frustrations. Ultimately, compromises may have to be made—unpopular ideas and uncivil expressions are tolerated in order to allow for the expression of constructive and valuable ideas” (Seely 2018:57).

Probably further analysis of threads of comments as opposed to individual comment could provide a better insight into how the structure and theme of discussion may influence the level of (im)politeness (cf. also Papacharissi 2004:287).

In fine the gendered approach to political communication on Facebook should be deeper investigated through the lens of emotional investment. “This means that being polite or impolite through language arouses strong feelings of like and dislike among participants, further promoting or curtailing their relationships – a finding which places the study of im/politeness firmly at the center of the fascinating and little explored interface of language with emotions” (Terkourafi, 2016:233).

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Appendix

Romanian Parliamentary Parties in 2016

The Social Democratic Party (PSD) is the major political party in Romania and the largest party in Parliament. The Social Democratic Party which is the big winner in almost all elections after 1989 was founded by Ion Iliescu, the first elected president, and an ancient member of communist *nomenklatura*.

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) is a liberal political party in Romania, founded on 19 June 2015 from a merger of the Liberal Reformist Party (PLR) and Conservative Party (PC). On December 2016, party co-presidents Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu and Daniel Constantin signed an agreement with the Social Democratic Party (PSD) leader Liviu Dragnea to form a new coalition government with ALDE.

The National Liberal Party (PNL) claims the legacy of the first major Romanian political party created in 1875. This conservative-liberal party was refunded in 1990 and is nowadays the main opposition party. PNL was second winner at the last parliamentary elections.

Save Romania Union (USR) is a very young party founded following the success of the Save Bucharest Union (USB) party in the 2016 local elections. It is currently the third largest political party in the Romanian Parliament after the 2016 legislative elections and runs an anti-corruption platform.

The **Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR)** is a political party representing the Hungarian minority of Romania and a constant presence in the Romanian parliament after 1990.

People's Movement Party (PMP) is a centre-right political party created in 2013 by supporters of the ex-president Traian Băsescu.

GMMP WOMEN AND NEWS IN ROMANIA TWITTER ANALYSIS

Valentina Marinescu¹, Ines Razec², Anda Rodideal³

Abstract: *The topic of role distribution on a gender basis remains a constant of our society even at present, regardless of the development in mentality that naturally took place along with the technological innovations that grant access to an impressive amount of information from various sources and people. The constant news flow that are easily accessible from almost any device makes us both witnesses and participants to a redefinition of the world as we know it, setting up the premises for breaking the glass ceiling that separates women and men. However, the research conducted on social media platforms, with a particular emphasis on Twitter, reveals a different reality that perceives women based on stereotypes, and reduces their activity as reporters and news anchors to a limited amount of subjects that are considered as suitable for them only based on their gender, and with little to no consideration for their intellectual or professional capacities. This reality is the direct consequence of successive decades portraying women as inferior to men, which progressively lead to the internalization of such behaviours even by the new generations, through the propagation of gender stereotypes by the media.*

Keywords: *women; Twitter; news; Romania; analysis; gender; stereotype; social media; online platforms; society.*

Introduction

Women's struggle for equality with men represents a constant of society, which has transgressed the centuries, giving rise to a large number of feminist waves, that started in France, in the nineteenth century, as a consequence of women's acute need for the same political rights as men. In general, feminist movements focus on the problem of women's exclusion from politics, which also affects the role dynamics within the democratic system.

According to researcher Eleni Varikas, the claim for gender equality illustrates the workings of a society in which the masculine presence prevails:

“The demand for parity highlights a simple and banal reality: in an authentically democratic system, that is, without systematic discrimination, the presence of women, like any other group, in political decision-making bodies should be more or less

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equivalent to their actual proportion in the population”⁴.

In the meantime, the encouragement of gender stereotypes by the media has led to the progressive internationalization of the essentially political reasons that govern feminist movements and to a shift in perspective towards superficial aspects that have become the definition of women and feminism. In this regard, Liliana Popescu gives a very relevant definition of feminism, namely: “Feminism is a political movement, supported by certain theories, attitudes and actions directed towards the affirmation of women and the development of partnerships between women and men”⁵. In this context, the term “political movement” is used in order to emphasize women’s claim to essential rights, such as: political, economic and legislative, which they have been deprived of until recently in history. According to the author, denying these rights means dehumanizing women. The reasoning continues by highlighting the importance of these rights, which, over time, have become norms of a patriarchal society, within which only men were considered individuals, because they were the only ones who had rights. Faced with this reality, women have developed a sort of dependence on men, based on their need to benefit from the natural rights that were systematically denied to them by the political system, such as: a bank credit, the involvement in the political world, the right to vote⁶. Therefore, due to the lack of the elements considered as essential in order to live in a society that pretends to be democratic, women have started to be perceived as inferior to men, because they did not have the necessary legal power in order to become more deeply involved in the professional life of the society, they lived in.

Feminism, as a social phenomenon, has two interpretations, out of which one is given by women in relation to the movements they have organized over time to demand their release under male dominance and the other one is given by men who consider the movements as a threat against the natural order by excellence. A third part involved in this tacit power play is represented by the media, which seem to promote the male mentality, by integrating gender stereotypes into the process of communicating the information to the public and by promoting

⁴ Varikas, Eleni, Une représentation en tant que femme? Réflexions critiques sur la demande de la parité des sexes, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 81–127, 1995, JSTOR, (www.jstor.org/stable/40619605). (« La demande paritaire met en lumière une réalité simple et banale: dans un système authentiquement démocratique, c’est-à-dire sans discrimination systématique, la présence des femmes, comme de tout autre groupe, dans les instances de décision politique, devrait être plus ou moins équivalente à leur proportion effective dans la population »).

⁵ Popescu, Liliana, *Politica Sexelor*, București, Maiko, 2004, p. 112. („Feminismul este o mișcare politică, susținută de anumite teorii, atitudini și acțiuni orientate spre afirmarea femeilor și dezvoltarea de relații partenoriale între bărbați și femei”)

⁶ Idem, p.112.

an image of women that is deeply centered on their physical appearance. Nowadays, “beauty” is a *sine qua non* condition of a woman who aspires to a position at least equal with men, because the physical aspect has become an instrument that can guarantee the success of women in society: “In assigning value to women in a vertical hierarchy according to a culturally imposed physical standard, it is an expression of power relations in which women must unnaturally compete for resources that men have appropriated for themselves”⁷.

Fifty years after the publication of Gaye Tuchman’s theory about the symbolic annihilation of women through the media⁸, gender inequality is still a constant in today’s society. Over time, the concept of “feminism” has gained political validity, while constantly changing and adapting to the image of society delivered to the public by the media. This perception, generally accepted about feminism perceived as an attempt to suppress the masculine power has progressively distorted the meaning of women’s struggles for liberation under the male dominance, whose trigger has always been the achievement of equal rights between the sexes:

“In essence, Feminist thought rejects linear subjectivity, while promoting a mobile entity, a network of interconnections. By encouraging a “polyglot” collective being, female practice builds and deconstructs the similarity of women as a second sex, highlighting the complexity of the material and symbolic conditions in which real women live, breathe, agitate, inhale”⁹.

In a world ideologically dominated by the cohesion between the political factor and the media, society’s reluctance towards women in positions of power is, according to Karen Ross, a direct consequence of “fear”¹⁰ when confronted with an equitable role distribution between the genders, that was not known until now. The European Union has been actively involved in a fair redistribution of roles, which has not been known until now. This is how male domination

⁷ Wolf, Naomi, *The Beauty Myth : How images of Beauty are used against Women*, Harper-Collins e-books, 2002, p. 15.

⁸ Tuchman, Gaye, *The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media in Images of Women in the Mass Media*, 1978, (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263693192_The_Symbolic_Annihilation_of_Women_in_Globalization_Discourse_The_Same_Old_Story_in_US_Newsmagazines)

⁹ Roventă-Frumușani, Daniela, – Identitatea feminină și discursul mediatic în România postcomunistă, p. 21-22, în „Femei, cuvinte și imagini”, Polirom, 2002, („Gândirea feminină refuză subiectivitatea lineară, promovând o entitate mobilă, o rețea de interconexiuni. Cultivând o devenire colectivă „poliglotă”, practica feminină construiește și deconstruiește similaritatea femeilor ca deuzieme sexe, evidențind complexitatea condițiilor materiale și simbolice în care femeile reale trăiesc. Speră, se frământă, năzuiesc.”)

¹⁰ Ross, Karen, *Gender, Politics, News: A game of three sides*, Introduction, John Wiley and Sons, West Sussex 2017, p. 2.

is imposed with even greater force, distorting the perception of women about themselves, thus determining them to accept inferior positions:

“If a woman’s act of usurping male authority not only wins her the party leadership but also the job, or at least puts it within her grasp, the coup takes on a ground breaking connotation...Such extraordinary events play out in the media as political melodrama, allowing metaphors of war to animate the performance of power and inveigling gender to act as proxy for emasculation”¹¹.

From a psychological point of view, the difference between women and men consists in the more acute orientation of women towards the emotional factor, in comparison with men, for whom the rational is the most important. It is for this reason that women prefer to avoid contradictory situations, just because they see the world as an environment based on mutual understanding, within which relationships are consolidated by empathy. Taking into account the most widely held theories on women, Lisbet von Zoonen divides feminism into three categories: “liberal feminism”, “radical feminism” and “social feminism”¹². She believes that the goals of liberal feminism are the following: women have the same opportunities as men, thus granting their entry into fields dedicated to men, and are able to engage in the accession to power¹³. In this respect, the media play a very important role as the main channel for the transmission and dissemination of gender stereotypes: „It is thought that media perpetuates sex role stereotypes because male media producers are influenced by these stereotypes”¹⁴.

Women and Media

Nowadays, the immersion of the new technologies in our lives leads to a fast development of social media, which is often intertwined with the gender. The role of the media as the main tool for communication in today’s society sets the premises for a deeper analysis of its influence over the collective mind in relation to gender, starting with the question: “To what extent are the social media responsible for creating a certain image of women?”. We live in a world in which, whether we want it or not, we are overwhelmed by an impressive amount of information conveyed by television, radio, social networks, without necessarily being able to properly distinguish between what is true and what is fake. This inevitably places us in a

¹¹ Idem. p.2.

¹² Von Zoonen, Lisbet, *Feminist Perspectives on the Media*, Feminist Media Studies, London, Sage, 1994 (https://s6cmedia.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/zoonen_liesbet_van_-_feminist_perspectives.pdf),p. 33

¹³ Idem, p. 34.

¹⁴ Ibid.

very difficult position of having to accept any piece of information, most often than not without attempting to understand its meaning. As a consequence, manipulating the masses has become so easy. This issue was addressed in a very comprehensive way in an article titled „Les sciences de l’information et de la communication : une discipline *Gender blind* ?”¹⁵ (“The communication information sciences: a *Gender blind* discipline?”), published in 2009, by the journal “Questions de Communication” (“Communication issues”). In this article, Marlène Colomb-Gully emphasizes the importance of the gender dimension, as a basis for the information dissemination and communication sciences: “After an in-depth analysis, it turns out that, besides the status and the ethnic relations that govern it, all the communication is, by definition, gendered”¹⁶. Following the logic of this assertion, the journalist infers that, in essence, all the subjects conveyed by the media are based on gender differences.

According to Karen Ross, excessive media coverage of stereotypes about women builds the foundation for a new type of pressure on women, materialized by unrealistic expectations towards their personal and professional life: “We want women either to change everything or to change nothing, but, either way, we have an expectation of women which we do not have of men”¹⁷. Nowadays, the pressure imposed by the double standards determines women to internalize the critiques that are constantly addressed to them by men, which invariably leads to the development of inferiority complexes that have been very well defined by the concept of “confidence gap.” This term translates the constant anguish of women for whom trusting their own powers is the element that determines their entire career path. Moreover, there is a growing trend in the media to promote and encourage defamation of women’s authority through implicit sexist remarks and emphasis on the physical aspect: “For their part, the media perpetuate these gender stereotypes, deploying a set of regulatory controls which attempt to “fix” women in their proper place, including women politicians.”¹⁸

Subsequently, the phenomenon of objectification of women is increasingly present, especially in the audio-visual industry, by accentuating the negative side of behaviours displayed by women that find themselves in unworthy situations created on purpose to increase

¹⁵ Coulomb-Gully, Marlène, Les sciences de l’information et de la communication : Une discipline Gender blind ?, Questions de communication, 2009, pp. 129-153

(<https://journals.openedition.org/questionsdecommunication/518>)

¹⁶ Ibid., « Plus profondément encore, de même qu’elle est travaillée par des rapports de classe et des rapports ethniques, toute communication est par définition genrée »

¹⁷ Ross, Karen, Gender, Politics, News : A Game of Three Sides, John Wiley and Sons, 2017, p. 4.

the audience.

According to a study carried out by APA in 2007¹⁹, based on a sociological research conducted by specialists active in the field,

“Sexual comments and remarks generally appear on television, and research shows that the sexual objectification of women for whom they are responsible affects women in a predominant way... The majority of these comments (85%) were from men.”

Media’s influence on individuals is even more important, as it begins during the childhood. The development of the new technologies sets the premises for a higher exposure of children to the ideologies conveyed by the media, thus playing an important role in their later development. In a world where gender stereotypes still play an important role in the collective mind, the male public is naturally more sceptical about the validity of information provided by a female journalist than by a male journalist:

“The feminist researchers who examined the journalistic environment argue that women journalist are exposed to a sexist work environment, characterized not only by an uneven distribution of social capital between the genders, but also by the symbolic power of the men over women”²⁰.

In this sense, through the propagation of gender stereotypes, the media contribute to the construction of a social representation that pictures women as essentially superficial individuals, capable of reflecting only on frivolous subjects, hence the preference for women journalists in writing articles on psychology, sociology, beauty, but not economics, politics or sport. This also justifies the preponderance of women on television, compared to men who are preferred at the radio. According to a GMMP report, conducted in 2010, in Romania, only 32% of political sector reporters are women, unlike television, where women have a predominant presence of 100% as news anchors, and 60% as reporter, in opposition to men, who have a 60% presence on radio²¹. The study also shows that there is a greater likelihood that articles on women encourage gender stereotypes than articles on men.

In the next pages, we will focus on interpreting the results of a Twitter analysis,

¹⁹Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007 (<https://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report-full.pdf>)

²⁰ Melin (2008), Van Zoonen (1994;1998), apud Apostol, Nicoleta-Elena, *Dimensiune de Gen și Muncă în Jurnalism*, Editura Universității din București, 2018 („Cercetatoarele feministe care au examinat ocupația jurnalistică argumentează ca jurnalistele sunt expuse unui mediu de muncă sexist, caracterizat nu doar de o distribuție inegală a capitalului social între genuri, ci și de privilegierea simbolică a masculinului”).

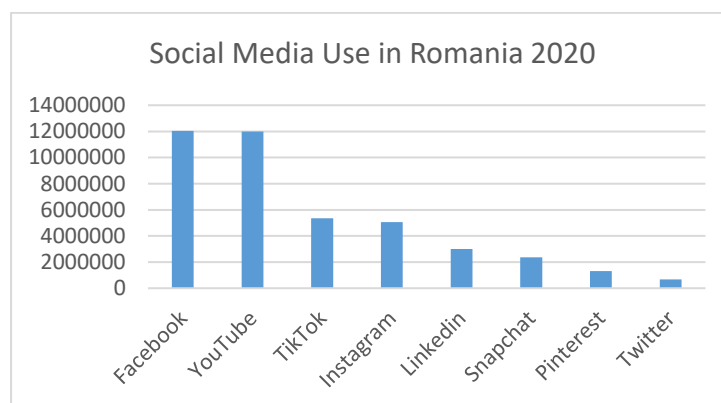
²¹GMMP, Annex 3, 2010 p. 94 (http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2010/global/gmmp_global_report_en.pdf)

conducted between 2020 and 2021 on the female presence in delivering news on Twitter in Romania. Even though, in our country, this platform does not benefit from the same popularity as other social media platforms, the results of the study are the reflexion of a society that still actively relies on the traditional interpretation of the role division between the genders.

Twitter use in Romania

In Romania, the use of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as YouTube has increased over the recent years. However, the presence on Twitter is much more scarce. In 2018, Facebook had 10 million users, YouTube, over 3 million, and over 1 million people used Instagram, compared to only 379.000 Twitter users, out of which, less than 50.000 were actively using the platform²².

The global ascending trend of the social media users increase is also being maintained in Romania. For example, in 2020, Facebook already had 12 million users, closely followed by YouTube, with a difference of 40.000 less users, followed from a big distance by TikTok and Instagram, each with approximately 5 million users. Although the number of Romanian Twitter users has recently increased, even doubled since 2018, the platform ranks 8th in the top, with only 668 000 users, half of the previous one. Pinterest, on the other hand, has more than 1 300 000 users. A compilation of data obtained from several sources shows the situation of social media users in Romania of the year 2020²³.

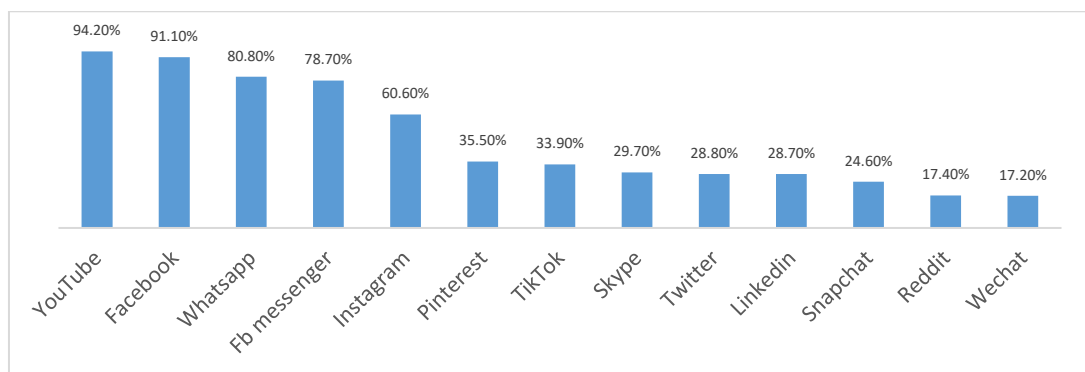


In 2021, the number of social media users increased by 1 million compared to 2020,

²² HotNews, 2019, Câți utilizatori români sunt pe fiecare rețea socială și care au fost cele mai populare postări în 2018, online: https://economie.hotnews.ro/stiri-media_publicitate-23004462-cati-utilizatori-romani-sunt-fiecare-retea-sociala-care-fost-cele-mai-populare-postari-2018.htm

²³Cele-mai-utilizate-rețele-sociale-in-romania-2020, online: <https://www.doada.ro/cele-mai-utilizate-rețele-sociale-in-romania-2020/>

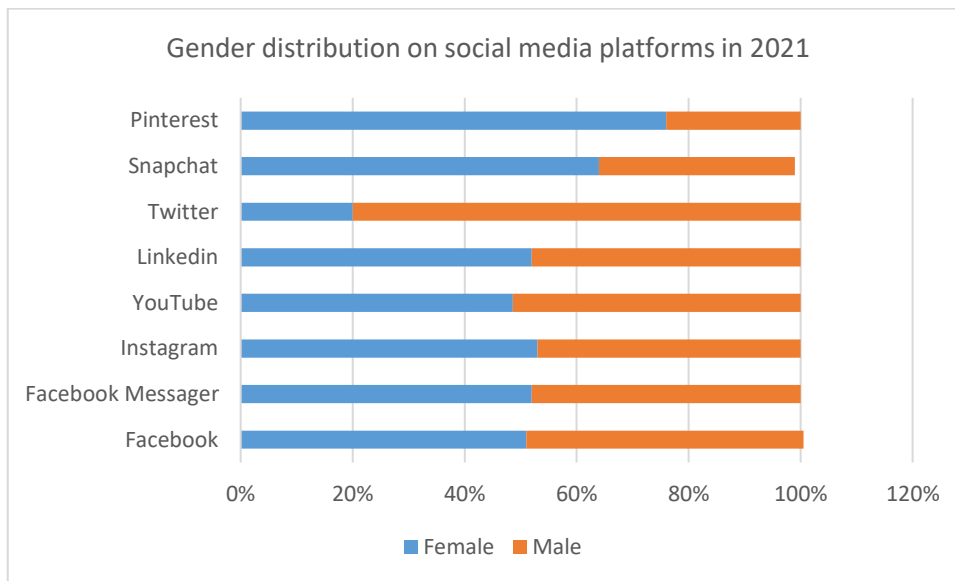
which means 62,6% of the total population of the country, while 80,7% of the population uses the Internet, 97% have a smart mobile phone and 135,6% have a mobile connection, respectively. Some Romanian citizens have more than one mobile subscription²⁴. Out of the 7 hours and 26 minutes' total spent on average daily using the Internet, 2 hours and 16 minutes are spent on social media, on average, daily. When it comes to accessing social media, 98,1% do it from their mobile phone, and there are some overturns in the list of social media accessed during the Covid19 pandemic: YouTube surpassed Facebook in the preferences of Romanians in 2021, Instagram and Pinterest surpassed TikTok, and LinkedIn fell right under Twitter, which remains stable, as can be seen in chart 2.



As for the Romanian Twitter users, there are small differences between 2021 and 2020, with the total number remaining at approx. 650 000, out of which only 20% are women, a significant difference in audience genre compared to all the other similar networks, such as: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, where the difference between the number of women and men is of almost 5%²⁵.

²⁴ Kemp, S, 2021, Digital 2021: Romania, online: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-romania>

²⁵ Ibid.



Considering the fact that there is such a small difference between the genders when it comes to social media use for the most popular platforms, conducting a more in-depth analysis of the female presence by topic would require a more elaborate study, the usage of a bigger sample, and the analysis of different periods of time. However, for the purposes of this paper, we decided to use Twitter as reference, for three main reasons. First of all, based on the information disclosed above, the platform is considered relatively new in Romania, which makes it available to only a part of the population, mainly consisting of journalists and public individuals, whose Tweets are later used in electronic journals. Secondly, the low number of Romanian Twitter users allows us to focus on a smaller sample, which, sets the premises for a more developed analysis, where the topics are clearly determined and easily singled out, according to their relevancy in the context. Thirdly, Twitter did not represent a viable tool for analysis until now, due to the decreased interest in using the platform, which increases the importance of the present study. The following chapter reveals both a general overview, and a breakdown of major new topics, with a particular emphasis on the subjects most frequently addressed by women on Twitter.

Twitter analysis – General context and data

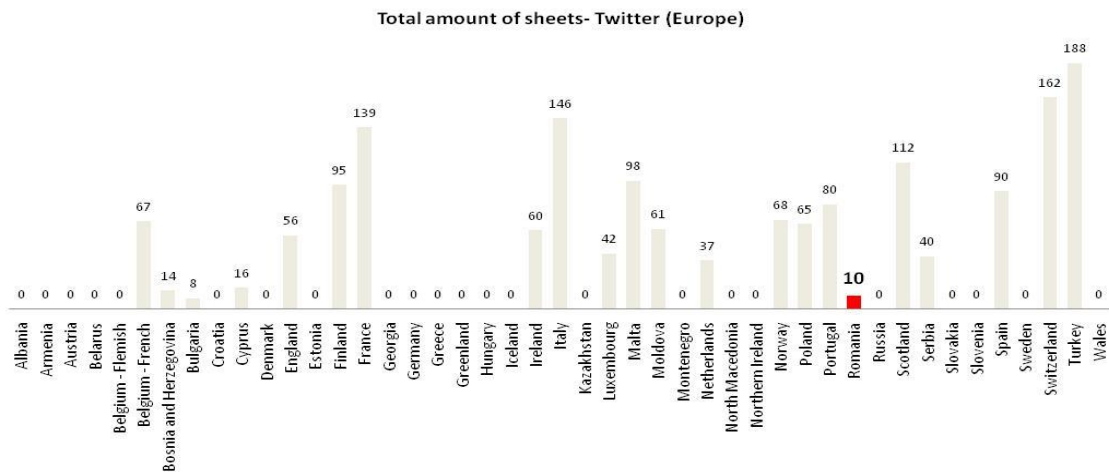


Figure 1.

The overall chart suggests the scarce presence of Romanians on Twitter, compared to other countries, such as Turkey (188), Italy (146) and France (139).

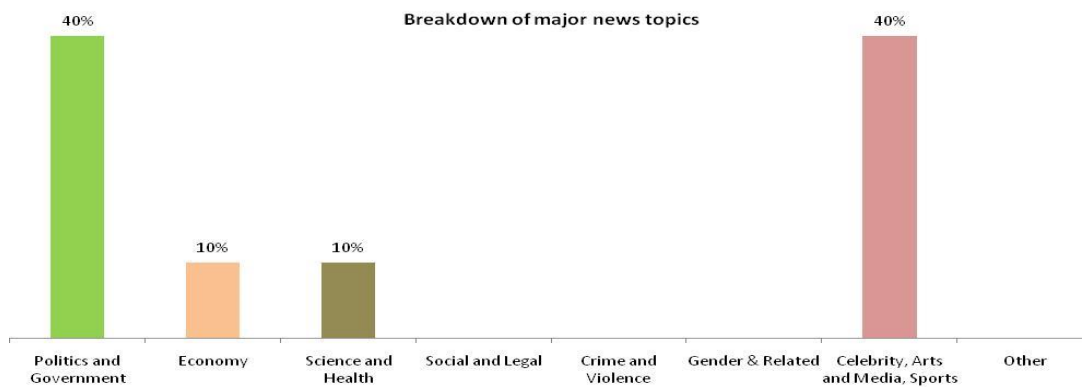
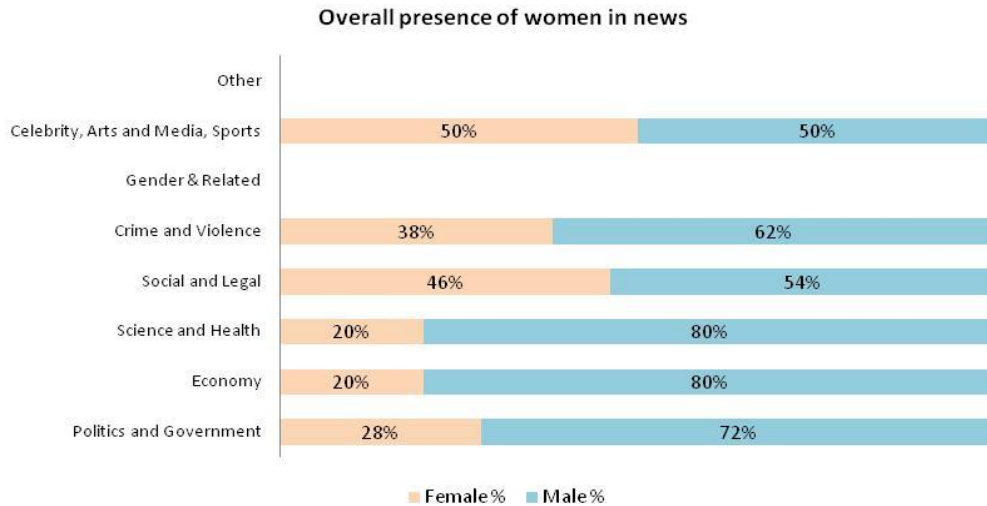


Figure 2.

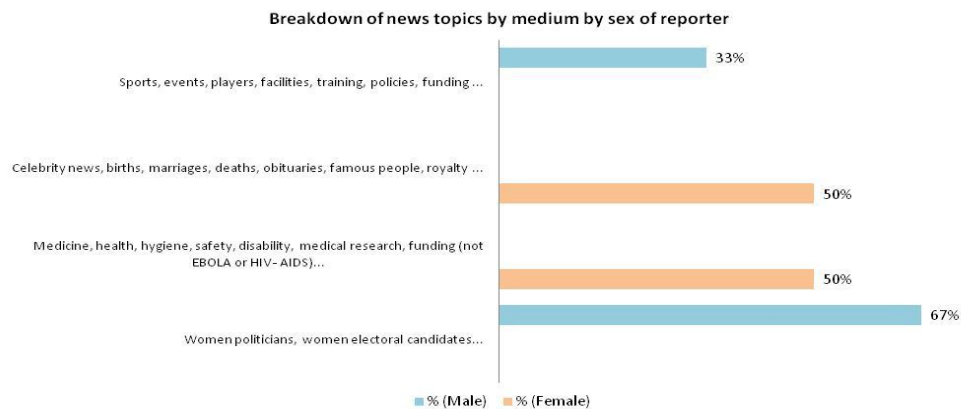
This chart reveals a reality that also suggests Romanians' increased interest for topics such as politics, government and celebrity, arts and sports, in comparison with topics related to the economy, science and health.

An interesting and relevant aspect for our discussion is the fact that the public seems not interested in gender related topics. However, when analysing women's presence in news, the gender stereotypes seem to play an important role, as women's presence is clearly surpassed by men's in all the topics related to crime and violence, social and legal, science and health, economy, politics and government. The next chart reveals an obvious discrepancy between the genders, especially regarding more serious matters, which are usually taken over by men. However, when it comes to delivering news on subjects related to celebrities, arts, media and sports, the presence is equally divided between women and men. Moreover, news

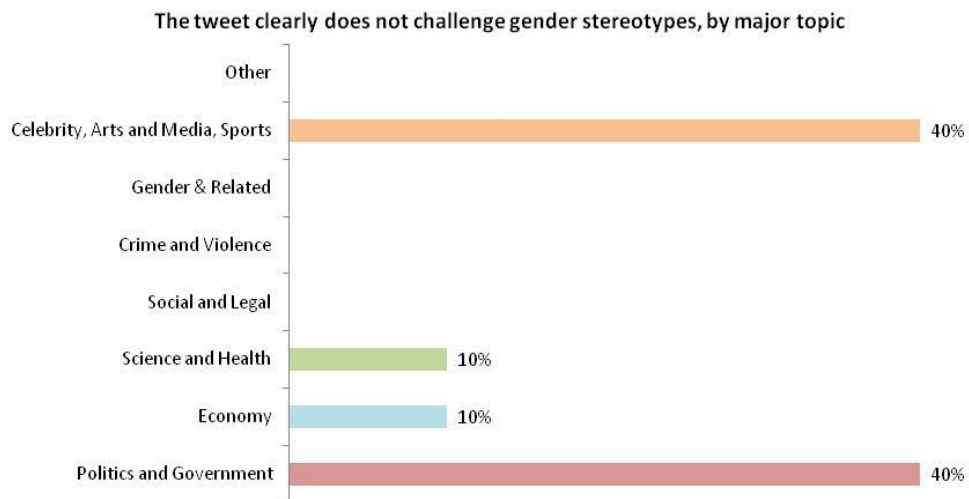
related to gender are either missing completely or are given a different interpretation, which changes their meaning in order to fit in one of the other categories revealed in the chart below (Figure 3).



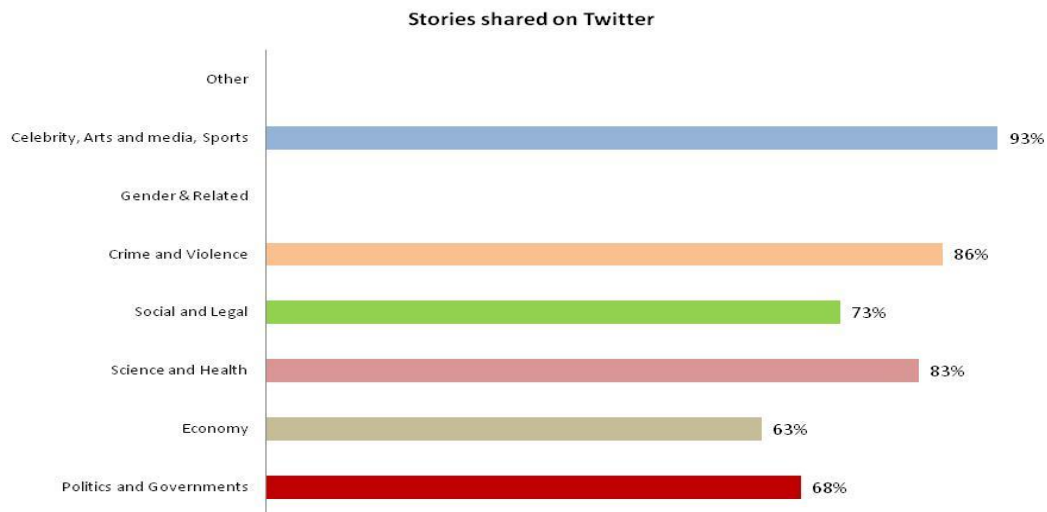
The next chart offers a more in-depth exploration of the news topic by sex of the reporter, thus proving the existence of a clearly established difference between women and men that prevails even on rather new and less used social media platforms in Romania, such as Twitter, the results showing a presence of 50% of women delivering information regarding celebrities, and social aspects of the public life. The same percentage of women (50%) is also involved in delivering news related to medicine and health. An interesting aspect revealed in the power dynamic between the sexes, as shown in the Figure below is men’s preponderance in delivering the news related to women politicians (67%), which could mean that this type of news is delivered following a male mentality, and are often susceptible of being impregnated with the same stereotypes that have always prevailed in the Romanian society.



Based on the above discoveries, and starting from the premise developed in the previous chapter that “all communication is essentially gendered”, it is also important to analyse how many of the tweets do not challenge gender stereotypes by topic. The results prove the premise for the following topics: gender, crime and violence, social and legal, where gender stereotypes are used to reinforce the delivered information, followed closely by topics related to celebrity, arts and media (40%), and the ones on politics and government (40%). The smallest presence of women stereotypes is shown in topics related to science and health (10%) and economy (10%), which represent subjects that target all the members of the society, thus impacting them directly, since they are more related to the individual as a human being and a member of the society, and less to their gender of other ethnical and political affiliations.



The next chart reveals the main topics that interest the Romanian audience based on the stories shared on Twitter. According to the results, the main topic of interest concerns the news related to celebrities, arts and media, and sports (93%), followed closely by stories related to crime and violence (86%) and science and health (83%), subjects which benefit from a shared interest from the two genders. This discovery offers an insight on Romanians culture, based on their interests for various topics, manifested through their presence on Twitter.



According to a study conducted By Pew Research Center in 2019 on Twitter use in America, “Twitter users are younger, more educated and more likely to be Democrats than general public”²⁶. Moreover, the study also highlights the essentially political nature of the tweets, which is not always the case in our country, based on the above displayed figures. However, the research reveals a cultural reality that could also be explored in a more in-depth sociological and anthropological analysis on the Twitter use in Romania.

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²⁶ Pew Research Center, April 24, 2019: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2019/04/24/sizing-up-twitter-users/>

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GMMP ROMANIA 2015-2020. AN ANALYSIS OF RADIO NEWSCASTS

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Abstract: *The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) took place every five years since 1995 and GMMP 2020 took place on 29th September, days in which volunteers from all over the world measured the way in which women are represented in newscasts, radio newscasts, television newscasts, internet news websites and news media twitter accounts. In this article we will focus on the representations of women in the newscasts of Romanian radios. Based on a qualitative reading of GMMP data gathered in 2015 and 2020, we will present a brief insight on the way the representation of women in radio newscasts from Romania has changed in the past 5 years. To this insight we will add the comparison of different historical, social and economic contexts in which the two monitoring took place and the way these contexts might have influenced the social realities presented in radio newscasts.*

Keywords: *GMMP; women subject of the news; women journalists; radio newscast analysis.*

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the longest-running and most comprehensive study of gender in news media. The project was launched on January 18, 1995, when volunteers from 71 nations started monitoring the representation of women in their national radio, television, and print news. By 2020, the six monitoring processes that took place (January 18, 1995; February 1, 2000; February 16, 2005; November 10, 2009; March 25, 2015 and September 29, 2020) had extended from 71 to 140 countries. Based on the national media density, each participating country was assigned a specified number of newspapers, radio and television newscasts, and later on, internet news sites, and Twitter feeds to monitor. This was done to guarantee an accurate reflection of the spread of news media while also taking into account the requirement to balance findings from smaller and larger countries. The selection of media outlets represents the density and variety (in terms of audience, ownership, language) of media for each of the analyzed countries. Measures were taken to guarantee that the approach was understood and used uniformly across the world. There were detailed instructions on how to code and all the countries involved in the process used the same coding system. Face-to-face or virtual training (especially for the 2020 edition) proved beneficial to certain regional and national coordinators, while online tutorials were valuable to others (the

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larger global volunteer teams). Monitors in each state coded the most relevant daily radio newscasts.

GMMP 2015 and 2020 - methodology

Romanian radio stations included in GMMP 2015 and GMMP 2020

In Romania, according to the National Audiovisual Council of Romania (2016)³, in 2015 there were a total of 624 broadcasting licenses (owned by 185 companies) were still in force. Only 28 of these licenses offered broadcasting via satellite, the rest being terrestrial. There were six private broadcasting licenses with national coverage, each with their own number of emission centers: Radio Trinitas (51), Europa FM (45), Digi FM (39), Radio 21 (39), Național FM (34), Pro FM (31). The National Audiovisual Council of Romania also checked 46 complaints filed by listeners in 2015, most of these concerning radio stations such as Radio România Actualități (18), Radio ZU (16), and Kiss FM (16). Moreover, a total of 3,779 radio shows were monitored by the audiovisual authority, the majority of these broadcasts belonging to Pro FM (542), Radio 21 (435), and Kiss FM (429). Only five sanctions were given to three radio stations in 2015: Radio ZU, Europa FM, and Sport Total FM⁴.

The 2020 report of National Audiovisual Council of Romania⁵ mentioned 614 broadcasting licenses owned by 163 companies. Only five broadcasting licenses were given for nationwide coverage. Ordered by the number of emission centers, these were: Radio Trinitas (58), Europa FM (46), Digi FM (41), Virgin Radio (39), and Național FM (38). The number of filed complaints was 55, most of these referring to: Europa FM (18), Radio România Actualități (14), and Digi FM (13). In 2020, the audiovisual authority monitored 21,245 radio shows, but 20,164 concerned commercials and the Government's campaign against the spread of COVID-19. In 2020, the GMMP day coincided with the local election results in Romania. The radio stations which were monitored the most on election day were: Digi FM (554), Radio România Actualități (336), and RFI România (126). There were only seven sanctions in 2020 for the national radio stations, but no fines.

The radio stations included in the 2015 analysis were Radio România Actualități, Europa FM, Pro FM, Kiss FM, and Radio ZU. According to the Romanian GMMP results,

³ National Audiovisual Council of Romania. *Raport anual 2015 CNA*. 2016, March 21. Web. 28 June 2021. <https://www.cna.ro/IMG/pdf/Raportul_de_activitate_al_CNA_2015.pdf>

⁴ *Idem*

⁵ National Audiovisual Council of Romania. *Raport anual 2020 CNA*. 2021, June 01. Web. 28 June 2021. <https://www.cna.ro/IMG/pdf/1_CNA_Raport_de_activitate_pe_anul_2020.pdf>

women represented roughly one third of the news subjects across all media, their presence in radio being the lowest (19%). However, when it comes to radio news reporting, women are far more present: only 8% of all Romanian radio reporters, announcers, and presenters were men. For the 2020 Romanian GMMP analysis, the number of monitored radio stations doubled. The radio stations included in the analysis were Radio România Actualități, Radio Antena Satelor, Digi FM, Europa FM, Kiss FM, Marosvásárhelyi Rádió, Pro FM, Radio Trinitas, Radio ZU, and RFI Romania.

Radio România Actualități (RRA) is Romania's first radio station in terms of coverage, listenership, and it is also the first Romanian radio station ever to broadcast. The radio station is managed by the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company. RRA is a public radio station that broadcasts information on both local and international events on a daily basis. RRA is Romania's only national station broadcasting to 99,3% of the country's population, using a developed system of emitters – 64 for FM and 23 for AM⁶. It also features the greatest network of reporters. RRA provides the most sophisticated news programs to its audience, with Radiojournal having been a well established brand for decades. Moreover, the radio also airs programs with social, political, cultural, and economic content.

Radio Antena Satelor (Radio Villages' Antenna) is centered around Romanian rural life aspects, offering a wide range of shows, such as live news, reports, interviews, monographs, and expert advice, as well as descriptions of traditions and crafts. The radio station appeals to all citizens interested in Romanian traditional values and folklore. Radio Antena Satelor makes use of the largest musical folklore archive, the Romanian Golden Tape Library. Even though there had been a long tradition of radio shows dedicated to the rural audiences, starting in 1930, this stand-alone station aired for the first time on December 25th 1991, but only covered the south of the country. Starting with 2006, the station is broadcasting nationwide⁷.

Digi FM is one of the main radio stations in Romania, airing on 39 frequencies across the country. Digi FM offers a blend of modern pop music, hourly news updates, and talk-shows on subjects such as politics, business, or entertainment. Digi FM took over the radio frequency previously owned by Info Pro (a news station, discontinued) and Pro FM (a general station) in

⁶ Radiocom. *Broadcasting Radio – Analogic, Radio digital (T-DAB)*. 2018. Web. <<http://www.radiocom.ro/business/servicii/broadcasting/broadcasting-radio/>>

⁷ Antena Satelor. *Noi între ai noștri*. 2018. Web. <<https://www.antenasatelor.ro/noi-%C3%AEntre-ai-no%C8%99tri.html>>

late 2015⁸.

DigiFM is part of a media conglomerate owned by RCS&RDS, a well-established telecom operator (cable, satellite, landline, mobile, internet) that is also present in countries like Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Spain, Croatia, and Serbia⁹. The RCS&RDS media group is also behind what was once one of the most popular radio stations, Pro FM. This radio station was founded in 1995 as part of MediaPRO empire owned by Adrian Sârbu, which encompassed Mediafax (the first independent press agency in Romania), Pro TV (the standard for Romanian commercial television), Pro TV Magazin (popular weekly magazine), MediaPRO Music (record company), MediaPRO Pictures (film production and studios), and many other brands throughout the whole media spectrum. As of 2008, Pro FM also has an exclusive internet division with 19 online radios. In 2009, MediaPRO was bought by the American group CME¹⁰. In 2015, Pro FM was acquired by telecom operator RCS&RDS¹¹ and added to the media portfolio, alongside Digi24, Digi Sport, DigiFM, Digi World, Digi Life, Digi Animal World, Film Now, and UTV. According to the Romanian Association for Radio Audience¹² (2021), which conducted a study on a sample of more than 11.000 respondents, Digi FM was one of the leading radio stations nationwide in late 2020 (August 31st – December 31st), especially popular with the commercial audience, ranging from 18 to 49 y.o., scoring a daily reach of 342.000 (5% market share) in urban areas and 309.600 (7.9% market share) in rural areas. Overall, the radio station's average daily reach for that time interval was 915.600, with a market share of 4.6 Romanian Association for Radio Audience.

Europa FM is Romania's first privately-owned radio station with nationwide coverage.

⁸ Bunea, I. *Digi FM este ON AIR de astăzi. Cum se împart frecvențele între Digi FM și Pro FM*. Paginademediia. 2015, November 11. Web. <<https://www.paginademediia.ro/2015/11/pe-ce-frecvente-se-va-auzi-digi-fm-si-unde-pro-fm/>>

⁹ Digi24. *RCS & RDS va furniza servicii de telefonie mobilă în Ungaria*. Digi24.Ro, 2014a, September 29. Web. <<https://www.digi24.ro/magazin/timp-liber/divertisment/rcs-rds-va-furniza-servicii-de-telefonie-mobila-in-ungaria-300379>>

Digi24. *RCS & RDS își completează portofoliul media cu 4 posturi de radio: ProFM, InfoPro, Music FM și Dance FM*. Digi24.Ro, 2014b, December 23. Web. <<https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/evenimente/rcs-rds-isi-completeaza-portofoliul-media-cu-4-posturi-de-radio-profm-infopro-music-fm-si-dance-fm-338722>>

¹⁰ Hostiu, C. *Adrian Sarbu: Cea mai importanta achizitie pe care o face astazi CME este echipa PRO*. Ziarul Financiar, 2009, July 28. Web. <<https://www.zf.ro/companii/adrian-sarbu-cea-mai-importanta-achizitie-pe-care-o-face-astazi-cme-este-echipa-pro-4703202>>

¹¹ Goldic, F. *RCS&RDS a finalizat preluarea posturilor de radio ProFM, Info Pro, Music FM și Dance FM*. ProFM.ro, 2015, May 30. Web. <<https://www.profm.ro/stiri/rcs-rds-a-finalizat-preluarea-posturilor-de-radio-profm-info-pro-music-fm-si-dance-fm-24122>>

¹² Romanian Association for Radio Audience. *Audiențe radio*. Audienta-Radio.ro, 2021. Web. <<http://www.audienta-radio.ro/userfiles/items/Audienta%20radio%20-%20Valul%20de%20Toamna%202020.pdf>>

Europa FM was launched in 2000, as part of the Lagardère group, and featured tennis legend Ilie Năstase as one of the radio station's managers¹³. The French media group, who owns Paris Match and Europe 1, was also behind Romanian stations Radio 21 (now Virgin Radio) and Vibe FM. In 2018, the station was acquired by Czech Media Invest, after Lagardère sold its radio stations from Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania as part of a 73 million euro deal¹⁴. The station's most used slogans are "the best music from the '80s to present day" and "a radio of millions of Romanians". Europa FM established itself in the last years as a top source of political talk-shows and debates.

Kiss FM is probably the most popular Romanian radio station and its format can be labeled as pop radio, top 40, or contemporary hit radio. Kiss FM is not only present in Romania, but also in Chişinău, the capital of Moldova, where it is the third most listened station in urban areas¹⁵. Kiss FM launched on November 5th 2003, replacing Radio Contact, owned by a Belgian group. Radio Contact was the first private radio station in Romania, founded in 1990 by Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu (Romanian Prime Minister, 2004-2008), with help from Guy Verhofstadt (Belgian Prime Minister, 1999-2008; MEP). The Radio Contact headquarters were vandalized in the 1990 Mineriad¹⁶.

Marosvásárhelyi Rádió (in Hungarian) or Radio Târgu-Mureş is a territorial studio of the Romanian Broadcasting. Radio Târgu-Mureş is a multicultural station which airs on two frequencies: a program in Romanian (24 hours per day) and a program for minorities (16 hours per day) in Hungarian, German, and Romani. These separate frequencies were inaugurated on the occasion of the radio's 55th anniversary in 2013. Radio Târgu-Mureş continues to be the most popular radio station in the city and the rural areas it serves and it is also a major competitor on Transylvania's media market, which is often regarded as the most dynamic in the country, with over 60 public or commercial radio stations that broadcast nationally, regionally, zonally, or locally. Marosvásárhelyi Rádió's transmissions are aimed mostly

¹³ Bambu, R. *Aniversare. Europa FM face 20 de ani de la prima emisie. Ilie Năstase era în conducerea stației în 2000*. Paginademedia.ro, 2020, May 26. Web. <<https://www.paginademedia.ro/2020/05/20-de-ani-de-europa-fm/>>

¹⁴ Business.ro. *Lagardere vinde radiourile din estul Europei, inclusiv Europa FM, către investitori cehi*. Business.ro, 2018, April 17. Web. <<https://www.businesscover.ro/lagardere-vinde-radiourile-din-estul-europei-inclusiv-europa-fm-catre-investitori-cehi/>>

¹⁵ Xplane Marketing Research. *Audiența zilnică a posturilor radio din RM*. Xplane.md, 2020. Web. https://xplane.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Xplane_Radio-Audienta-2020-01_RO-1-1.pdf

¹⁶ B1TV. *Povești neștiute: Radio Contact, înființat de Tăriceanu în 1990, a reprezentat, de fapt, o donație primită de la actualul europarlamentar Guy Verhofstadt*. B1TV.ro, 2018, October 27. Web. <<https://www.b1tv.ro/eveniment/radio-contact-infiintat-de-tariceanu-donatie-guy-verhofstadt-246409.html>>

towards ethnic minority residents of the counties of Mureș, Brașov, Harghita, Covasna, and, to a lesser extent, Sibiu, Alba, Bistrița-Năsăud, and Cluj-Napoca¹⁷.

Radio Trinitas is the first Christian-Orthodox station, officially run by the Romanian Patriarchate. Founded in 1996, the station had its main studio in the Golia monastery, where the Trinitas printing and publishing houses were already operational. The transmitter and antennas were placed at the Cetățuia monastery in Iași. The first live transmission took place in 1998, from the Iași Metropolitan Cathedral. Radio Trinitas promotes both Christian civic ideals and Romanian social and cultural values in a European and international framework. Radio Trinitas has established itself as a distinct and valued voice in the Romanian mediascape, broadcasting 24 hours a day¹⁸.

Radio ZU claimed the top spots in the people's preferences since its inception. The secret to its success is explained by the legacy of its predecessor, the already renowned Radio 21¹⁹. Radio ZU is part of the influential media group Intact, which also includes TV stations Antena 1, Antena Stars, Antena 3, radio station Romantic FM, newspaper Jurnalul, and many more websites and internet services²⁰.

RFI România is a bilingual Romanian-French radio station. It is a subsidiary of Radio France Internationale, a channel of the French state-owned France Médias Monde. RFI is one of the most well-known international radio brands, along with the BBC Radio and Voice of America. In 2006, according to editor-in-chief Luca Niculescu, the Romanian division was RFI's largest and served as a model for upcoming subsidiaries in the Balkans²¹. RFI's interest in Romania began in 1990, when a partnership with the Politehnica University of Bucharest was established. This led to the appearance of Radio Delta, which, along with its own shows, included re-broadcasts of RFI Monde. Between 1992-1998, Radio Delta also held internships for journalism students at the University of Bucharest. In 2006, Radio Delta RFI becomes RFI România²².

¹⁷ Spiru, C. *Radio România Târgu Mureș împlinește 62 de ani*. Agenția de presă Rador, 2020, March 2. Web. <<https://www.rador.ro/2020/03/02/radio-romania-targu-mures-implineste-62-de-ani/>>

¹⁸ Radio Trinitas. *Despre noi*. 2012. Web. <<http://www.radiotrinitas.ro/despre-noi/>>

¹⁹ WallStreet.ro. *La sase luni de la lansare, Radio ZU devine cel mai ascultat post de radio din Bucuresti*. Wall-Street, 2009, June 2. Web. <<https://www.wall-street.ro/articol/Marketing-PR/65607/La-sase-luni-de-la-lansare-Radio-ZU-devine-cel-mai-ascultat-post-de-radio-din-Bucuresti.html>>

²⁰ Intact Media Group. (2016). *Diviziile noastre*. IntactMediaGroup.ro, 2016. Web. <<https://www.intactmediagroup.ro/diviziile-noastre/>>

²¹ Roumanie.com. *RFI Roumanie, futur point de coordination de RFI dans les Balkans*. Archive.org, 2006. Web. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120514043801/http://www.roumanie.com/Entreprises_roumaines-Radio-France-Internationale_RFI_Balkans_Moldavie_Bulgarie_Serbie_Macedoine-A1645.html>

²² RFI.ro. *(Pe)trecerea de la Radio Școală la Radio Delta RFI și RFI România*. RFI.ro, 2011, September 29.

According to the Romanian Association for Radio Audience²³ (2021), which conducted a study on a sample of more than 11.000 respondents, Digi FM was one of the leading radio stations nationwide in late 2020 (August 31st – December 31st), especially popular with the commercial audience, ranging from 18 to 49 y.o., scoring a daily reach of 342.000 (5% market share) in urban areas and 309.600 (7.9% market share) in rural areas. Overall, the radio station's average daily reach for that time interval was 915.600, with a market share of 4.6 Romanian Association for Radio Audience.

Overview: GMMP 2015 and GMMP 2020

Representation of women and men in Romanian radio newscasts

In the newscasts analyzed during the GMMP 2015, Wednesday, March 25 was a day that at the national level were no out of the ordinary events, but at the international level there was a breaking news event. – on the morning of that day German wings Flight 9525 that crashed in the French Alps, 150 people being killed. The peculiarity of this crash was that it was caused by the co-pilot which locked himself in the cockpit and deliberately directed the plane towards the mountainside. The international event was the top story of the Romanian newscasts, followed by political news and celebrity and entertainment news²⁴. The 2015 monitoring revealed that in the radio newscasts women are mostly represented as anchors, but they were the subject of the news only in 19% of the news on celebrities and media (46%), health and science (41%), and on violence, and socio-legal issues (38%). But although the percentages remain low looking at the balance of women in the population and their place in society (on the basis of education and status), compared to the 2010 monitoring, the figures improved and this is the measure that need to be taken into consideration.

In the newscasts analyzed during the GMMP 2020, Tuesday, September 29, the focus was on two main topics – the national local elections that took place on September 27 and the pandemic. Gender-wise, the anchor role was predominantly given to women, field reporters usually being women. Regarding the content of the news one might observe that in very few cases the gender of the person included in the news in mentioned. For example, the news

Web. <<https://www.rfi.ro/articol/stiri/societate/petrecerea-radio-scoala-radio-delta-rfi-rfi-romania>>

²³ Romanian Association for Radio Audience. *Audiențe radio*. Audienta-Radio.ro, 2021. Web.

<<http://www.audienta-radio.ro/userfiles/items/Audienta%20radio%20-%20Valul%20de%20Toamna%202020.pdf>>

²⁴ GMMP. *Romania. Global Media Monitoring Project 2015. National Report*. 2015. World Association for Christian Communication

presented in all the radios newscasts referred to the fraud allegations in the competition for mayor of Bucharest's District 1 (Sector 1). The two contestants for mayorship of Bucharest's wealthiest sector were Clotilde Armand (USR-Plus) and incumbent Dan Tudorache (PSD). The former won the race by a small margin. There were no remarks or insinuations based on the candidates' gender, keeping a neutral tone throughout by only mentioning the name of the candidates - , not even to mention that Clotilde Armand would be the first women mayor of District 1. Neither one of the candidates had direct interventions in any of the three newscasts analyzed.

People that were just referenced in the programs (without being the main news subject) were mostly men, for example – 2 men, 1 women (at DigiFM), 3 men and 1 women (at ProFM), and 2 men and 1 women (at KissFM). Expert women were interviewed in the news bulletin – meteorology. There were no references to gender equality or to human rights legislation. None of the stories highlighted issues of inequality between women and men. None of the story challenged gender stereotypes. Due to the specific socio-political context in which the analysis took place, we consider that it is difficult to compare the data from GMMP 2015 to those obtained in 2020, as the social realities of 2020 was profoundly changed by the pandemic situation.

Conclusion

The GMMP 2015 and GMMP 2020 seem to have been data collected a “world apart”, not because the methodology was completely different, but due to the context in which they took place. Both years were marked by significant international events, but the disruption they brought to the social life was the one that made the difference. 2015 was a year marked by the floods of refugees coming to Europe as a consequence of Syrian Civil War, according to the United Nation Refugee Agency, by 21 December 2015, 972 500 refugees crossed the Mediterranean Sea²⁵, with later reports revealing that in 2015 over 1.3 million refugees asked for asylum in a European country²⁶, and by the end of 2016 UN reported that 5.2 million refugees reached Europe's shores coming mostly not only from Syria, but also from Irak,

²⁵ UNHCR/IOM. *A million refugees and migrants flee to Europe in 2015*. UNHCR, 2015, December 22. Web. <<https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2015/12/567918556/million-refugees-migrants-flee-europe-2015.html> >

²⁶ PeW Research Center. *Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015*. 2016, August 2. Web. <<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/>>

Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria Afghanistan²⁷. As for the rest of the globe, beginning from 2012 until today (2021, July 1st) UN Refugee Agency estimates that worldwide there are 82.4 million refugees as a consequence of conflict, persecution and human right violations, 68% of these refugees coming from five countries – Syria (6.7 million), Venezuela (4.0), Afghanistan (2.6 million), South Sudan (2.2 million) and Myanmar (1.1 million). Why is this event important for the GMMP? The cultural and societal change the refugees determined in the countries they are now residing big numbers (for example Turkey – 3.2 million refugees) can impact the perceived place of women in social life, and thus, her representation in newscasts.

As for 2020, on 19 March the World Health Organization declared the pandemic of Covid 19, their declaration being recognized by most of the world's countries. Moreover, their guidance and recommendations for managing the sick and the spread of the virus have been followed closely and implemented by each country in which the pandemic was recognized. The common, global response to the pandemic meant, for example – month, a year, and possible years of lockdowns (as the pandemic is still in place at the moment we write this article's conclusion, July 2021); wearing face masks (covering the mouth and nose in all public spaces – indoors and outdoors) harsh restrictions of global mobility; month of tele-work/work from home imposed by the governments; limitations of people gatherings and the reasons for gathering (most of the usual convivial gatherings being forbidden). These restrictions had and still have numerous social and economic negative consequences as other problems be they medical (except Covid 19), social, cultural, and/or economic, have become second level problems to be resolved after the virus emergency. Thus, problems like domestic violence towards women that were forced to live in the same house with the oppressors, as they had/have the same domicile, were under reported as the women feared the violence would escalate. Moreover, for many months the main stream media had as the most important and largest daily news, the pandemic, and patients and the population in general, were most of the times just faceless persons without their gender being mentioned or emphasized, as masks made harder to read one's gender identity.

If social condition come back to the realities of the pre-pandemic times, maybe the best comparison one could do is between the data of GMMP 2015 and GMMP 2025 (in the fortunate event the pandemic is going to end by then and social life is going to heal its current

²⁷ UNHCR. *Refugee Crisis in Europe*. unrefugees.org, 2021. Web.
<<https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/refugee-crisis-in-europe/>>

wounds).

In case the social condition continue to change due to the pandemic related restrictions and the exponential growth of technology and its use in everyday life, maybe the recurrence of the monitoring should be changed from 5 years to 3 years, as the acceleration of technological change accelerates the rhythm of social change. As in the past year we noticed two unexpected trends in the use of the digital technology and internet – for some users giving up social media and reducing, in some cases to zero, the use of internet; for others changing the social media platforms they use – GMMP 2025 could take into consideration adding channels like Telegram. Also, for future monitoring, the analysis of the data collected by GMMP should consider the amount of news being compiled by news room algorithms, the principles used to write the algorithms, and also, the rise of the news bots having no clear gender identity.

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GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER ROLE PORTRAYALS IN TV ADS

Maya Haj Hassan

Abstract: *This paper discusses the stereotypical portrayal of men and women in today's TV ads, which is problematic for many reasons (Coltrane and Messineo 2000), first of all for producing and perpetuating gender stereotypes, which may erode gender equality and harm society at large (MacKay and Covell 1997, Oppliger 2007). In spite of massive recent empirical research, it is still not clear how a country's culture reproduces gender identities or shapes gender roles in TV ads across time and among different places as well as it is not clear how both gender identities and roles are being influenced as a result of their representations in TV ads. Grounded on a multitude of empirical analyses, the current study demonstrates that there appears to be a global pattern of gender stereotyping still at work in TV advertising, which in itself influences gender-role and identity stereotypes in the Lebanese society, further perpetuating gender roles and gender inequality.*

Keywords: *gender identity; TV ads; gender role portrayal; Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM); Gender Inequality Index (GII); The Hofstede model.*

Gender identity is considered someone's personal conception of him/herself as a male or female. This concept is intimately related to the concept of gender role, which is defined as the outward manifestations of personality that reflect gender identity. Many advertising companies have claimed that advertising effectiveness is dropping due to the fact that some women do experience negative effects by comparing themselves to highly attractive models in advertising (Bower & Landreth, 2001). As a result, the "Financial Times" has lately reported that Nike is jumping on the "real women movement," using more ordinary women images as opposed to the perfect image of models. In other words, advertising professionals tend nowadays to design advertisements with female images that women consumers can easily identify with. On this basis, deciding if female advertising images, which conform with female consumers' self-concepts can enhance advertising effectiveness or have an impact on women's self-concepts, can enhance advertising effectiveness or have an impact on women's self-identity, is a well-timed attempt.

Moreover, the past four decades have witnessed a plethora of studies on gender-role portrayals in advertising on television (Cheng 1997, Furnham and Voli 1989; McArthur and Resko 1975, Milner and Collins 2000; Pacilli et al. 2016., Paek et al 2011). According to marketers and advertisers, gender is a principal division variance in developing marketing strategies and defining target groups (An and Kim 2007; Milner and Collins 2000). Also, gender representations possibly affect the corporate images and purchase intentions of consumers (Ford and LaTour 1996). From the perspective of some advocates, advertising councils, or policy regulators; however, the stereotypical portrayal of men and women in today's ads is problematic for many reasons (Coltrane and Messineo 2000), among those is that promoters produce and perpetuate gender stereotypes, which may erode gender equality and harm society at large (MacKay and Covell 1997, Oppliger 2007).

Furthermore, gathered empirical research evidently proposes that social gender roles are exceedingly stereotypical and cliched in television ads (Eisend 2010 ; Furnham and Mak 1999, Furnham and Paltzer 2010). Nevertheless, in spite of this resilient research, it is still not obvious how a country's culture reproduces gender identities or shapes gender roles in TV ads across time and among different places as well as it is not clear how both gender identities and roles are being influenced as a result of their representations in TV ads. Thus, it is a two-dimensional relation between society, culture and gender identity and roles in TV ads.

Therefore, the aim of the study in hand was to observe how the elements of TV ads have deployed gender social image in the one hand and had their impact on reproducing gender identity and gender social roles, mainly for women on the other and, also, to examine the socio-cultural motives that have led to bringing forward the image of women as a commodified object. It is worth noting, in this regard, that research on gender role portrayals in different European and Asian countries has led to the consent that gender roles are greatly stereotypical in television advertisements (Eisend 2010; Furnham and Paltzer 2010) across a range of commonly explored elements pertaining to the gender of the primary character, the gender of the voiceover, the age of the primary character, and the setting associated with the primary character.

First, examinations on how TV ads present the gender of the primary character showed that the majority of ads revealed male predominance over females, while some others demonstrated the opposite, and still others finding almost no difference (Eisend 2010 Furnham and Paltzee 2010).. Besides, the age of the primary character is another widely observed element, where most ads used female figures at younger age (under 35) and more utilized male figures in the middle and older age (above 40) (Furnham and Paltzer 2010). In addition, the preponderance of male voiceovers "voice of authority" is more pronounced in Asia compared to other regions (Furnham and Mak 1999). Further research by (Paek et al. 2011) has signposted an upsurge in the probabilities of male voiceover over females. Equally, there has been noticed an association between women and body, beauty, and personal care products along with household and cleaning products (Furnham and Paltzer 2010). On the other hand, male characters were more associated in TV ads with telecommunications, electronics, technology, computers, or cars. Moreover, the setting is another element that has often shaped an obvious gender discernment, having women images more associated with a home setting in a merely stereotyped role of cooking, cleaning the house, or raising kids (Das 2011, Uray and Burnaz 2003, Valls-Fernandez and Martinez- Vicente 2007). Any close observation of TV ads in the Arab region demonstrates that the odds of women being depicted at home (vs. at work) are approximately 3.5 times higher than for men (Eisend 2010). Another reflection on TV ads also disclosed that more men than women are presented in a workplace setting (Prieler and Centeno 2013 Valls-Fernandez and Martinez- Vicente 2007).,

In addition to these mainly studied elements, a focus on the functioning role of the primary character in any ad has its impact on the Lebanese identity in general and gender identity in particular (no working role, high status worker, and lower status worker). Although classifications varied, numerous studies aimed to examine whether the primary character was working (Coltrane and Messineo 2000 ; Das2011, Uray and Burnaz 2003) or was a

homemaker (Uray and Burnaz 2003 Valls-Fernandez and Martinez- Vicente 2007), - both leading to remarkably stereotypical images and roles that acquiesced more males than females are employed and more women than men are portrayed as homemakers. Therefore, it is, then, expected that female primary characters in TV advertisements are more likely to appear in subordinate status working roles compared to male primary characters, who are more 'credible' to be portrayed in higher ranking roles.

To abundantly comprehend gender-role representations in TV advertisements, academics have recurrently called attention to the vital role of ethnic and cultural variances. The furthestmost broadly implemented cultural prototype in advertising research is Hofstede's (2010) cultural dimensions (Okazaki and Mueller 2007, Hofstede 2011), including the four dimensions that are: power distance, individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and the masculinity dimension (De Mooji and Hofstede 2010). The most pertinent dimension for the purposes of the present study is Hofstede's masculinity dimension, which has been used in cross-cultural content analyses on gender in TV advertising, embracing studies exploring and comparing two countries (An and Kim 2007 Huang 1999 Moon and Chan 2002 Odekerken-Schröder et al. 2002 and some comparing three or more countries (Milner2005, Milner and Collins1998. 2000; Paek et al 2011. Wiles et al1995). Nevertheless, very few studies have corroborated a correlation between the masculinity index and gender depictions in TV ads (Huang 1995 Wiles et al.1995, while more studies have led to miscellaneous conclusions (An and Kim 2007, Milner and Collins 2000) or to outcomes that were mostly opposite from those presumed by Hofstede's masculinity index (Milner 2005, Moon and Chan 2002, Odekerken-Schroder et al2002 Paek et al.2011).

In view of the mixed results of the preceding research generally and Hofstede's study (2001) particularly and its masculinity dimension that integrates two sub-dimension, including the characteristics of society and gender role differences (Emrich et al.2004 ; Hofstede 2001), it is critical to use supplementary guides, such as the more contemporary context from the GLOBE project (House et al 2004) due to its theoretical significance in advertising research (Okazaki and Mueller 2007,Taylor 2010). Still, the GLOBE project has been rarely used in gender stereotyping research nowadays. Contrary to Hofstede's study, the GLOBE study discriminates between social practices, which are determined through questions concerning "what is" and values that are measured through inquiries regarding "what should be" (House et al. 2010).

Hofstede's 6 Dimensions to Understanding National Cultures

Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions' framework ascertains principal cultural patterns, which influence people's identity and attitude in substantial ways (Arasaratnam, 2011, p. 45). The framework brought a different quantitative comparative approach to analyzing cultures through identifying and measuring central facets of world cultures (Hofstede, 2011). The theory, described as the dimensional paradigm, or 6-D model, was first disclosed in Hofstede's (1980) book *Culture's Consequences*. Hofstede's unique model presented in that

work featured four dimensions for examining and perceiving national cultures, yet successive research resulted in the addition of two more dimensions (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). The six dimensions that currently make up Hofstede's framework are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, long-term orientation, and indulgence (Arasaratnam, 2011, pp. 45-50; Chen & Starosta, 2005, pp. 51-54; Dainton & Zelle, 2011, pp. 182-188; Hofstede, 2011).

First, the dimension of *power distance* specifies the extent to which a particular culture adjusts to inequities of power distribution in relationships as well as in corporations. His study discriminates between those "belonging to high power distance and low power distance cultures, with the former categorized by reasonably greater hierarchical gaps among individuals on the basis of differentiators such as age, gender, generation, and social status," (Chen & Starosta, 2005). In high power cultures, power tends to be more centralized with a great appreciation granted to ranking and social status (Dainton & Zelle, 2011). In contrast to authoritarian relationships in high-power cultures, which represent a vertical interpersonal communicative style, low-power-distance cultures demonstrate much more horizontal modes of social interaction. Hofstede's research in cultural dimensions has resulted in the quantification of power distance scores for numerous countries, where status and rank distinctions matter less in countries with low power distance score than in countries with high power distance score, signifying a great influence in the country's culture and value system.

Moreover, *uncertainty avoidance* "measures the extent to which a culture can accept [vague] situations and tolerate uncertainty about the future," (Chen & Starosta, 2005, p. 52). According to Arasaratnam (2011), cultures that are described high in the level of uncertainty avoidance tend to be more traditional and prefer stability over creativity than countries with low uncertainty avoidance score.

Besides, *individualism* refers to a particular mindset which concentrates on the individual and personal achievements and emboldens independence (Arasaratnam, 2011, p. 45). In such societies, "self-concept" (Chen & Starosta, 2005, p. 51) is highly accentuated in contrast to cultures imbedded in collectivism, where "social framework" is the superseding concern. In other words, cultures with high scores in individualism give more importance to the individual, personal identity, and personal societal role than countries with low individualism score that appreciate family commitments and view personal choices from a very different perspective.

Furthermore, Chen and Starosta (2005) describe the *masculinity* dimension as "the extent to which stereotypically feminine and masculine traits prevail in the culture" (p. 53). Accordingly, "in masculine cultures, men are estimated to be more self-assertive, determined, and competitive, whereas women are supposed to be [sympathetic], supportive, nurturing, and [tender]," (Dainton & Zelle, 2011, p. 186). So, masculine cultures obtain a higher score than feminine cultures.

Also, cultures with a *long-term orientation* are considered economic, persevered, and goal-oriented much more than consuming countries, where people seek "immediate gratification ..., place emphasis on the past, stability, universal morality, nationalism, and luck; conversely, long-term-orientation cultures place emphasizes the future, adaptability,

situational morality, internationalism, and effort” (Hofstede, 2011).

Along with the above mentioned dimensions, the 6th dimension is *indulgence*, which suggests the societal allowance of relatively free gratification of basic and natural human needs that make people enjoy life and have fun (Hofstede, 2011, p. 15). Basically, cultures with low indulgence scores lean toward restraint, compared to cultures with high indulgence scores, which place greater value on seeking happiness.

In view of this, the researcher has opted to spot light on societal practices, which reflect gender representations through the way society truly performs, whereas values are about how societies should perform (House et al.2010, Okazaki et al.2010) Albeit Hofstede’s (2001)masculinity index affected the GLOBE study (the GLOBE dimensions include: Performance Orientation, Uncertainty Avoidance, Human Orientation, Institutional Collectivism, In-Group Collectivism, Assertiveness, Gender Egalitarianism, Future Orientation, and Power Distance), the latter separated this dimension into gender egalitarianism and assertiveness. *Gender egalitarianism* was defined as “the degree to which a society minimizes gender role differences while promoting gender equality” (House et al 2010. p. 118). In such societies, there is less work- related gender segregation, where more women in the labor force occupy positions of authority, and commonly a higher status for women.

Furthermore, despite the call to use the dimensions of the GLOBE research about advertising (House et al.2010 Okazaki and Mueller 2007, only a few studies have referred to them till now. Such research has comprised the dimensions of assertiveness (Okazaki et al 2010 Terlutter et al 2010, performance orientation (Okazaki et al 2010, and humane orientation (Diehl et al 2012 ; besides, they have designated some correlation between the GLOBE dimensions and advertising evaluations. Accordingly, very few studies so far have used gender egalitarianism as a theoretical framework or used Project GLOBE dimensions in content and discourse analysis.

In addition to analyzing the predictive power of cultural models for gender stereotyping, other dimensions relevant to gender re/production have been taken into consideration, mainly that previous research has shown that the representations of gender identities and gender role may be influenced by a certain country’s gender development (Eisend 2010 Paek et al. (2011) found that the predictive role of the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) appears to be marginalized regarding the gender of the prominent character in any TV advertisement. Nonetheless, they also reported that the probabilities for using a male voiceover (narration) significantly increased as GDI scores declined. Eisend (2010), in his meta-analysis, used another gender index created by the UNDP, explicitly, the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and realized a correlation between the GEM and gender stereotyping in TV advertisement. This chapter extends those studies by testing whether the GDI (UNDP 2014a, the UNDP’s Gender Inequality Index (GII) (UNDP 2014b, which replaced the GEM due to criticism, and the World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Index (GGGI) could presume gender stereotypes (Hausmann et al.2014. All of these keys are based on demographic data, noting that the GDI is based on gender gaps in life expectancy, education, and incomes, the GII is

grounded on reproductive health and empowerment positions; such as the share of parliamentary seats and higher education levels along with labor market participation, and the GGGI is the most comprehensive, being criterion-based on gender gaps on economic, political, educational, and health (Hausmann et al.2014 UNDP2014 b). Likewise, based on Hofstede masculinity index, the GLOBE gender egalitarianism index, the Gender-related Development Index (GDI), the UNDP's Gender Inequality Index (GII), and the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGGI) to analyze the re/production of gender identities and gender-role portrayals in television advertising.

Accordingly, the current study would first analyze gender role stereotypes in TV ads in Lebanon through examining how TV ads are using the elements of advertising, in the light of the 5 aforementioned indices, to impact the reproduction or stereotyping of gender identities/roles in Lebanon in addition to the socio-cultural motives that are behind bringing forward female images in the Lebanese TV ads. For this purpose, the study aimed to analyze the content of a # of TV ads as well as to reflect on producers' and Lebanese citizens' perspectives regarding gender identity and role as well as concerning the motives that are bringing forward women images in TV ads.

Hitherto, it has been observed that gender is tightly related to the depiction of primary characters, regardless of whether such association could be elucidated in terms of cultural, ethnic, and societal factors... The researcher could then explain the specific level of the research independent variables (elements of TV ads besides social motives) in terms of their causal effect on the individual-level variation in the dependent variables (re/production or stereotyping of gender identity and role besides bringing forward female images in TV ads), while statistically analyzing this variation. Precisely, we would examine how the reproduction of gender identities and roles in TV ads and character depiction could be explicated thru the five indices formerly introduced. Also, regarding why and how the female image is brought forward in TV ads, a survey would be employed, besides ads content analysis, to discern if female primary characters are more likely to be viewed in lower status working roles compared to male primary characters, who were theorized to be seen in higher status working roles or not and whether female primary characters were less represented in any operational role compared to their male counterparts.

As well, the main focus would lie on the interaction between the gender of the primary character and the 5 previously mentioned gender indices. This interaction examines whether disparities in the effects of how ad elements and social motives on the outcome dependent variables can be traced back to variations in the five gender indices. Conclusions would be made on gender identity and gender-role portrayals in advertising, using comparable TV programs to illuminate the effect of culture on gender-role portrayals. In addition, it would test the role of gender indices for gender-role portrayals in advertising using multiple gender indices as independent variables and multiple gender-role and identity variables as dependent variables. It would spot light on whether Lebanon shows traditional or non-traditional gender-role portrayals in TV ads.

The effect of a specific culture in shaping advertising messages could be either smaller or bigger than commonly thought. Eisend (2010) affirmed that "gender stereotyping in

advertising [relies on advances] relevant to gender equality in society.” It is, then, assumed that such analysis could possibly confirm that an increase in gender inequality index leads to an increase in gender stereotyping. It is as well probable to ascertain a definite relationship between the cultural variables and stereotyping since gender portrayals in advertising are lagging some years behind actual developments in society (Eisend 2010 Kim and Lowry 2005). This could be adequately examined through reflecting on a sample of TV ads over time. It could, likewise, be observed that gender stereotypes in advertising could be either dropping or increasing over time (Eisend 2010), reflecting a declining influence of culture. Explicitly, while advertising and its gender-role portrayals may still vary across cultures, in some cases, they may become more universal due to global markets and networked publics (Paek et al.2011).

Conclusion

To conclude, it is possible for the current study to demonstrate that there appears to be a global pattern of gender stereotyping still at work in TV advertising, which in itself influences gender-role and identity stereotypes in the Lebanese society, further perpetuating gender roles and gender inequality (MacKay and Covell 1997 Oppliger 2007). The researcher hopes this research could help to spur a discussion among academics and advertisers on the global dominance of gender stereotyping and the re/production of gender identity and role in TV advertising. By the same token, the cultural dimensions, developed by Hofstede with remarkable contributions from Bond and Minkov, has had its significant impact in how cultures are perceived, and gender identities are either re/produced or stereotyped, affecting and affected by relevant advertisement. Those are considered both as a practical tool to understand a certain culture as well as a framework used by researchers across several disciplines, including advertising, to investigate the consequences of culture on society, gender identities, roles, attitudes, and their portrayal in media.

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DO ONLY BALANCED BILINGUALS CODE SWITCH? EXAMINING LANGUAGE USE IN URBAN GHANA

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Abstract: *It has often been argued that switching codes is a phenomenon among interactants who are fluent in two languages or interactants who share a common bilingual identity. The present study shows that Ghanaians who cannot speak English fluently also switch codes when they encounter people whom they do not share a common indigenous language with. They draw on the little English they have in their linguistic repertoire in order to communicate with interactants who speak English fluently but do not speak any Ghanaian language. It was realized that mainly, these non-fluent English speakers converge by switching to English to reduce the language barrier.*

Keywords: *communication; code switching; multilingual; interaction; language alternation.*

1. Introduction

Ghana is a multilingual country and, in many respects, similar to that of other African and postcolonial contexts. There are about 81 spoken languages and they belong to the various branches in the Niger-Congo language family (Dakubu 1996; Eberhard et al. 2019). English, Akan, Ghanaian Pidgin English, and Hausa function as languages of wider communication in the country (Dako and Quarcoo 2017). Just as in other Anglophone African countries, English is the defacto national/official language of Ghana and it is used in many domains. It is largely used as the medium of instruction in formal education, government business, the mass media, legal and religious settings and many other sectors (Adika 2012; Ngula 2014; Dako and Quarcoo 2017). Due to the multilingual situation in Ghana, many citizens have the ability of using two or more languages in their daily interactions (Thompson 2019). As a result, they are able to alternate effortlessly between two languages within a speech event – “code switching” (Bullock and Toribio 2009; Amuzu 2010). However, there are also instances where two citizens do not share a common indigenous language. For some of these people, especially the

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elites, the readily available language they resort to in order to overcome the language barrier and have an effective communication is English.

Many scholars have attempted to define code switching in different ways and the debate still rages on (Gardner-Chloros 2009; Agbozo 2015). There is also the debate on what constitutes code switching and what does not (Gardner-Chloros 2009). Muysken (2000), for instance, distinguishes code switching from code mixing although the features of the two are not so lucid. Gardner-Chloros (2009) states that although there has emerged competing terminologies, code switching gained prominence over time against its competitors like language alternation, code mixing, congruent lexicalisation, and insertion, etc. In this paper, we define code switching as the alternation of two or more languages in an interaction, as such it can occur inter-/intra- sententially. Intersentential switching involves switching between languages at sentence or clause boundaries, while intrasentential switching occurs within a sentence involving a phrase, a single word or across morpheme boundaries (Myers-Scotton 1993a; MacSwan and Faltis 2019).

Code switching occurs naturally (unmarkedly) under some conditions. This include: (1) The speech participants must be 'bilingual peers'- they must see their mutual bilingualism as a marker of their solidarity; (2) The participants must be relatively proficient in the languages involved in the code switching event; (3) If proficiency in the languages used in code switching is not sufficient, the participants must possibly evaluate the social values attached to those languages (see Myers-Scotton 1993b,119). The first two conditions above suggest that code switching, as a linguistic strategy, must occur among interactants who are bilinguals of equal or near-equal degree. They must have a wider variety of linguistic items of both languages in their repertoire that enable them to switch codes freely in different circumstances and for different reasons. However, the third condition hints that code switching for some reasons may occur in some discourses where the interactants do not share the same bilingual identity or same level of proficiency in the languages involved in a speech event.

In line with the above-mentioned conditions, many scholars agree that speakers with varying degrees of fluency in two languages can make use of their linguistic resources to alternate between the languages in a speech event. Nevertheless, the existing literature is highly concentrated with research that is inclined towards balanced bilinguals. This study comes along to show that code switching does not only occur among people with equal or almost equal fluency in two languages. People with relatively less fluency in a second language, in this case English, can switch codes as well.

The present study aims to examine code switching involving a Ghanaian language and English among people who are highly fluent in one or more indigenous Ghanaian languages, but for certain reason have relatively very little fluency in English. These people are referred to as the GLEF [Ghanaians with low English fluency] in this study. The study finds the category of people the GLEF code-switch with and explores the role of any other communicative strategy they employ during code switching speech events. In the broader perspective, the study highlights the main motivations for code switching among the GLEF.

2. Methods

Participants for this study were sampled in 3 randomly selected districts in the Greater Accra Region (GAR) of Ghana namely, La Nkwantanang Madina Municipal District, Adenta Municipal District, and Accra Metropolis District. Reports from the last official national census indicate that GAR is the most densely populated region (1235.8 persons/km²) with a population of about 4 million people. It is a highly cosmopolitan urban setting which attracts migrants from all other parts of the country, mainly because its district capital, Accra, is also the national capital. The inhabitants speak a wide range of languages even though the dominant language of the region is Ga. The language situation in GAR based on the last census is presented in Table 1 below. In addition to having a significant proportion of other major Ghanaian ethnic groups, GAR houses the seat of government, and also has a well-developed transportation network. It is highly accessible to foreigners and the place where government businesses and other major socio-economic activities take place. The GAR was chosen for this research mainly because it reflects the socio-economic and demographic diversity of the general Ghanaian population.

Table 1 Language Situation in GAR

Speakers	Language
1, 528, 722	Akan
1, 056, 158	Ga
775, 332	Ewe
200, 735	Mole Dagbani
73, 409	Guan
62, 435	Gurma
48, 822	Grusi
28, 656	Mande
75, 568	Other languages

Source: (Ghana Statistical Service Report, 2012)

Data collection for this study started in May 2018 and ended in July 2018. The data involved recorded spontaneous speeches as well as interview responses. Three bachelor-prepared research assistants (RAs) trained at the University of Ghana helped with the data collection. These RAs had participated in several other research projects and had the experience, cultural and linguistic skills needed to communicate with participants. Thirty participants (35-50 years of age) were recruited through the snowball sampling method. They were people with a high level of fluency in two or more Ghanaian languages but low level of fluency in English due to lack of (or inadequate) formal education.

The participants agreed to contribute to the study on assurance that any information they give out will be used for academic purposes only, with anonymity and confidentiality. They all gave their consent to participate in the study about two weeks before commencement and were observed within the data collection period on the basis of their availability. The RAs identified utterances involving code switching in various spontaneous speech events the GLEF engaged in and recorded them for analysis. The observation and recordings were supplemented with an interview to find out the degree of their use of the English language and their motivations for code switching. The interviews lasted from between 05 to 30 minutes. Key points obtained from the interviews were summarized.

3. Results and Discussion

We present some characteristics of people identified as GLEF in this study and identify the types of code switching they often engage in. We also show what drives the GLEF to alternate between languages during a speech event.

3.1 Characteristics of the GLEF

It is clear from Appendix 1 that most of the participants speak Akan as a first or second language. This finding confirms the assertion that the Akan language, with its several dialects is the most widely spoken language both as a mother tongue and as a lingua franca, since non-native speakers can speak it with varying degrees of proficiency (Ansah 2014; Thompson 2020). None of the participants identified English as one of the languages that they speak. It is evident in this study, however, that the GLEF engage in Akan-English code switching, Ewe-English code switching and Ga-Pidgin English code switching. They stated that they basically acquired the little English language they use now in school and through social activities. As

young students who passed through English-based school systems, they acquired some English, but with a low level of proficiency as they dropped out of school for various reasons including lack of financial support. They added that their low level of proficiency in English does not affect their routines, as they usually interact with people in other languages apart from English. They self-reported that they were able to mix some English words or phrases with their indigenous languages although they were not fluent in English. That is, they are often able to code-switch intrasententially.

About 40% of the participants claimed that though they are able to sing some English songs, they are not able to sustain a conversation in English. They said they are able to gain comprehension however and as such could enjoy movies, soaps and sitcoms in English. They are also able to understand English utterances and even long speeches, such that in an interaction where an interlocutor speaks English, they are able to give the appropriate response in their native languages. The remaining 60% explained that they sometimes try to imitate what they often hear in movies, discussions, news, and some entertaining programmes on television or on radio. At other times, they try to imitate their children and some elites in their various communities. However, often, they refuse to speak English for fear of not being able to carry their intended message across and for fear of being ridiculed especially by the younger ones. These responses show how people living in a multilingual community with English as the official/national language, but with less proficiency in English are able to pick some lexis and structures, and exhibit these in their utterances.

3.2 Types of code switching among the GLEF

Normally, when the GLEF are faced with situations where they have to communicate with English speaking foreigners, and even Ghanaians with whom they do not share a common language, (for instance, an Akan trader with a Dagomba customer), they are compelled to use some form of English since they do not share a common language. They, therefore, draw on the little English they have and sometimes supplement it with gestures, in addition to their indigenous Ghanaian language(s). The use of gestures is of communicative value to the listeners in that they compensate for an oral linguistic deficit and express the same meaning the speaker intends (Wu and Coulson 2007). The listeners are able to rely on the gestures to decode the communicative intent and arrive at an enhanced understanding (McNeill 1992; Calbris 2011). The use of gestures also shows strategic competence on the part of the GLEF and serves as a compensatory element which helps them to make up for their lack of fluency

(Trosborg 1994). The combination of English and body language in addition to the native language of the GLEF in a communicative event serves as a means of enhancing communication success and the creation of interpersonal relationships.

It was observed that the GLEF engage in both intersentential and intrasentential switching like other bilinguals. Consider the following examples:

1. *Eno dee enye problem, se woaba ha no na ehia.*
'That is no problem', the most important thing is that you are here.

A woman came to a shopkeeper who is her friend for a discussion and was lamenting the fact that another friend of theirs had given her some items to give to the shopkeeper, which she forgot at home. The example above is the response the shopkeeper gave. The switch in this example is intrasentential as it contains only one English word, *problem*.

2. *Mefrɛɛ no like three times wamfa, akyire yi na ɔno ara frɛɛ.*
'I called him three times and he did not pick up, but he called back later'.

The switch in example 2 involves the phrase, *like three times*, the speaker was reporting to a friend that a customer he tried to reach on the phone on several occasions, called back later. This switch, like example 1 is also intrasentential.

3. *Gyae wo nsa nom, mese stop eating your hand.*
'Stop sucking your finger, I said stop sucking your finger'.

In example 3, the switch is intersentential. Here, we see a mother instructing her three-year old daughter to stop sucking her finger. Although it is obvious that the English sentence is ill formed, this study is only concerned with the structure but not keen on the appropriateness involved.

The foregoing shows that speakers of varying degrees of bilingual ability can switch codes and that they all make use of the same types of code switching.

3.3 Motivations for code switching among the GLEF

Generally, code switching has been observed among balanced bilinguals, that is, people who are fluent in two languages; for instance, a Ghanaian language and English, as a way of exploiting their linguistic resources (Dakubu 2000; Amuzu 2010). Code switching can be regarded as an intentional act, in cases where it is used as a communicative strategy to signify bilingual identities, change in interlocutor, shifts in topic, or change in interpersonal or social

relationships (Raschka et al. 2002; Coulmas 2005; Bullock and Toribio 2009; Callahan 2009). Also, speakers can switch codes and adapt to some form of language structure, accent, speech rate, and lexical diversity in order to gain the approval of one another, maintain a social status, negotiate or encode social meanings effectively, and enhance socialization (Amuda 1994; Gallois et al. 2005; Zitouni and Saaid 2019). In cases where code switching is unintentional, it is usually considered as a result of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic variables that the speaker is not consciously aware of, which involves speakers adapting their speech style to that of their interlocutors, and/or norms and expectations of the community (Kharkhurina and Wei 2014). The GLEF in this study switch to English, as a means of reducing the language barrier, when talking to people who do not share a common language with them. The act of code switching in this study is a tool for communication success and the creation of interpersonal relationships.

Generally, some identified motivations for code switching include quoting or reporting what someone earlier said; repeating a message either literally or in a modified form; and/or finding appropriate words or expressions to fill lexical gaps in a language (Langdon and Saenz 2015; MacSwan and Faltis 2019). Other reasons such as indexing one's social identity, hedging, paraphrasing, using idioms and figurative expressions, interjections, etc. also motivate code switching among bilinguals (Auer 1995; Ritchie and Bhatia 2004). Code switching among the GLEF, like among balanced bilinguals, is usually employed as a communication strategy in various speech events. The GLEF claim to switch codes for various reasons, but principally as a means of accepting the linguistic identities of their interlocutors. Below is a discussion of five motivations for code switching among the GLEF in various instances identified during the observation process. Unlike balanced bilinguals, whose decision about language choice is usually tied to elements of the social situation, such as the age of the addressee, intimacy of the relationship, topic of conversation, etc. (Raschka et al. 2002; Coulmas 2005), the GLEF have not shown evidence of this.

3.3.1 Code switching as a linguistic convergence strategy

The GLEF converge by switching to English to reduce the language barrier between them and their interlocutors for effective communication and interpersonal relationships. Consider the following excerpt between a foreign student and a cleaner at Legon Hall, University of Ghana:

4. Foreign Student: Have you finished cleaning the bathroom?

Cleaner: O I finish I finish; *Wotumi kɔ kɔdware*.
'I have finished, you can go and bath'

The student can speak and understand only English. The cleaner on the other hand is very fluent in Akan as compared to English. The cleaner therefore utters the main informative word '*finish*' in English but switches to Akan to end the statement. The cleaner in this case used English-Akan code switching very tactfully and strategically to manage the difference in their levels of language competence. A similar situation is displayed in excerpt 2 below between a Nigerian (buyer) who speaks English and a seller who speaks Ga. The seller starts speaking Ga but switches to Pidgin English as a way of reducing the language barrier.

5. Man: Can I have some water? ... Water... Water
Seller: *Enye sɔn* you go buy?
'How much do you want to buy?'

The foregoing discussion gives credit to the view of Hülmbauer et al. (2008) that language users draw on their multi-faceted linguistic repertoire and select the most effective linguistic form for their particular purposes, depending on the circumstance(s). The language selected could be a foreign language (e.g. English), a pidgin or any other language that lends itself to the development of mutual understanding among interlocutors.

3.3.2 Code switching as a strategy to fill in language gaps

Among balanced bilinguals, code switching can occur when individuals are challenged by selecting appropriate translations in terms of words or simple expressions for the vocabulary of items that do not originally exist in the language of interaction at a given time. Similarly, in instances where the GLEF do not readily find appropriate referential terms in their native languages, they switch in order to enhance the communication flow. In the excerpt below, a trader was talking to a friend about how a football team of which he is a fan lost to Chelsea.

6. Trader A: *Yɛahyɛ me team no o*
'My team has lost'
Trader B: *Saa! ɛbaa no sɛn?*
'Really! What happened?'
Trader A: *Chelsea ahyɛ wɔn four nil.*
'Chelsea won by four goals to nil'.

Here, trader A uses the English word *team*, and the phrase *four nil*, to prevent difficulties in finding their appropriate equivalent in Akan, even if there are. Likewise, in examples 7 and 8 below, the speakers in their attempt to successfully make their assertions, switch and use the words *passport* and *network* respectfully to fill the lexical gaps in the language.

7. *Obiara hia passport ansa na watu kwan.*
'Everybody needs a passport to travel'.
8. *MTN deε wɔn network nyε baako mpo.*
'MTN (a telecommunication network) has poor network services'

From examples 6, 7, and 8 we observe that the speakers switched to English where they could not retrieve from their linguistic repertoire the conversational vocabulary in Akan.

3.3.3 Code switching as a strategy for direct quotation

The GLEF switched code in some instances to say exactly what someone has earlier said by maintaining the language in which the person spoke. Example 9 is an instance where a speaker switches from Ewe to English as a way of direct quotation to her friends some utterances of a prophet:

9. *Yie miyi tsɔtsi etsɔa, Prophet la yɔ nɔvinyea le ameawodome ye wo bie be* 'you are a pastor'. *Nɔvinyea ɔo ηuti ne be yes.* *Propheta gblɔ be, 'day ya wo anoint wo la, woafeme voduwo do dziku ye ko wo wo frustratem...'*
Prophet a gblɔ ne be 'you are powerful pastor, a powerful person' si gbɔna mission house ga aɔe tuge...
'When we went to church yesterday, the prophet called my brother from the crowd and said 'you are a pastor'. My brother replied 'yes' and the prophet said that, 'the day you were anointed, the gods in your home got angry and started frustrating you'... The prophet said to him 'you are a powerful pastor, a powerful person' who will build a big mission house...'

In this extract, the speaker switches to English and uses the utterances, *you are a pastor*, *you are a powerful pastor*, *a powerful person*, as a way of quoting what the prophet said directly. The above example can be related to the notion that code switching may be employed in the case of reported speech to mark the change of footing which occurs whenever speakers shift "from saying something" themselves to "reporting what someone else said" (Alfonzetti 1998, 205). It is also clear that the strings in English are used on the part of the speaker as an attempt to honestly report what the 'prophet' had said.

3.3.4 Code switching as a strategy to repeat messages for emphasis

The GLEF deem it necessary to repeat a particular message for certain reasons; to emphasize, to express its importance or make it clearly understood to the listener? However, to repeat the same message in the same language makes it quite monotonous. In an attempt to avoid the monotony of the message, the speaker may choose to repeat the message in another language to lay emphasis on what has been said earlier. Examples:

10. *Mempe se wo phone no besee o*; **I don't want your phone to be spoilt o**
'I don't want your phone to get spoilt; I don't want your phone to get spoilt.'

11. *Gyae wo nsa nom, gyae wo nsa nom*; *Mese* **stop eating your hand**
'Stop sucking your fingers, stop sucking your fingers, I said stop sucking your fingers.'

In example 10, the statement *mempe se wo phone no besee o* carries the same meaning as *I don't want your phone to be spoilt o* (I don't want your phone to get spoilt). Nevertheless, by repeating it in English, the speaker is trying to portray the intensity of his wish that his friend's phone should be well kept. In example 11 too, the sentence *gyae wo nsa nom* is first repeated in Akan and then the English form *stop eating your hand* is given as the mother's way of laying emphasis on the instruction she is giving her young daughter. It is obvious that English sentences in both examples 10 and 11 are ill formed, but as posited by Das (2012), instances of this unusual form of language use occur when a speaker has to explore alternate ways for the transmission of an intended message. In order to get these alternate ways, the speaker may expand his communicative resources, without necessarily considering appropriateness of the language. The speaker in such cases may employ compensatory strategies, such as paraphrasing, coinage, interlingual transfer, or code switching. The speakers in examples 10 and 11 employ code switching as their compensatory strategy.

3.3.5 *Code switching as a strategy to display the availability of English in a speaker's linguistic repertoire*

It has been shown earlier in this work that speakers tend to switch codes as an attempt to fill lexical gaps and enhance communication flow. This is not always the case. The GLEF sometimes switch to English to display the English vocabulary habituated in their linguistic repertoire or switch to English as a language of preference. The following examples will demonstrate this:

12. *Woawie wo bathroom no?*
'Have you finished cleaning your bathroom?'
13. *eno dee, enye problem.*
'This is no problem.'
14. *Madam, ye no fast na si.*
'Madam, get down quickly.'
15. *Ma mɔɔbo efam ha beye three times nne.*
'Today, I have mopped the floor three times.'

As seen in the utterances above, the speakers' use of the English words, *bathroom* in (12), *problem* in (13), *fast* in (14), and *mop* and the phrase *three times* in (15) is not due to non-familiarity of their equivalents in the Akan language. The Akan equivalents *adwaree* 'bathroom', *ehaw* 'problem', *ntem* 'fast' *pipa* 'mop' and *mprensa* 'three times' are widely used in the Ghanaian society. It seems that though speakers know these words in their language, they preferred the English equivalents in these contexts.

In this regard, Romaine (1995, 143) points out that, although it is popularly believed by speakers themselves that they mix or borrow because they do not know the term in one language or another, it is often the case that switching occurs most often for items which people know and use in both languages. The switcher just has a wider choice since he has at his disposal, the vocabulary of both languages.

Holmes (2000) and Poplack (2004) argue that switches especially at the intrasentential level, are often borrowed words or loan words in the language. Contrary to this notion, the forms found in this study are not loan words. This is because, if they are, they should be integrated into and recognized as part of the native language lexicon and grammatical structure to the extent that even if the host language forms of these words exist, they will not be in use or will be minimally used (Field 2002; Winford 2003; Poplack and Dion 2012; Backus 2012). Many of the English words in this study have their Ghanaian languages (Akan, Ewe, Dagbani, Ga, Gonja, etc.) equivalents that are widely used and available in the linguistic repertoire of the GLEF. These forms, therefore, are switches and not borrowed forms.

4. Conclusion

All the communication strategies via code switching discussed in this study have shown that this linguistic behaviour does not occur in a vacuum and is also not always a sign of linguistic deficiency or inadequacy. It can rather be a discourse strategy based on the communicative

intents of speakers. This implies that a speaker may not only need to convey the referential meanings of the words which he utters in his speech, but also to accomplish various intents as discussed in the foregoing. It is shown that the GLEF also switch codes as an effective strategy to exactly express a message they want to convey in a particular manner. This study contributes to the understanding of why the GLEF use the little English they have in their linguistic repertoire and argues that it is not only balanced bilinguals that switch codes.

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the GLEF

Respondent	Age Range	Educational level	Language(s) spoken
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1	45-50	Class 2	Akan
2	30-35	Class 2	Akan
3	40-45	Class 3	Akan
4	45-50	Class 4	Ewe, Akan & Hausa
5	35-40	Class 6	Akan
6	30-35	Class 2	Ewe, Ga & Akan
7	45-50	Class 4	Akan
8	45-50	Class 6	Akan
9	40-45	Class 6	Ewe, Akan
10	30-35	Class 4	Ga, Ewe & Akan
11	40-45	Class 2	Akan
12	40-45	Class 6	Ewe, Akan
13	35-40	Class 3	Ewe, Akan
14	45-50	Class 4	Akan
15	40-45	Class 4	Ewe, Akan & Ga
16	30-35	Class 3	Ga & Akan
17	45-50	Class 4	Ewe & Ga
18	40-45	Class 2	Dagbane, Akan
19	30-35	Class 2	Akan
20	40-45	Class 3	Ewe, Ga & Akan
21	45-50		
22	30-35		
23	40-45		
24	45-50		
25	40-45		
26	30-35		
27	30-35		
28	40-45		
29	40-45		
30	45-50		

THE RELEVANCE OF DRAMATIC MODELS OF INDIVIDUAL-MASS CONFLICT FOR UNDERSTANDING CONTAGION IN 21ST CENTURY SOCIETIES

Claudiu Goga¹

Abstract: *This article aims to discuss how the individual-mass relationship takes the form of a dramatic conflict in three important plays of the universal drama: "The Rhinoceros" by Eugene Ionesco, "An Enemy of the People" by Arthur Miller and "The Visit of the Old Lady" by Friedrich Dürrenmatt. I broached this question during the "Mass Trilogy", a staging project that I developed between 2011-2016. The difficult question of treating / and representing the masses as the main character in each of these plays required a good understanding of the phenomena of contagion and resistance, given the extent of social contagion in our societies of the 21st century. The theoretical framework of my study is provided mainly by the psychological theory of the masses of Gustave le Bon and the cultural criticism of Ortega Y Gasset and Elias Canetti. The results of the comparative analysis applied at different levels during the staging process support the relevance of dramatic models of individual-mass conflict as a cognitive framework for understanding the confusing realities that shape our lives and societies in the 21st century.*

Keywords: *individual, mass, collective behavior, mass man, theater of the absurd, dramatic action, dramatic conflict.*

Introduction

This study deals with the individual-mass relationship, a question that I addressed during my directing project *The Mass Trilogy* (2011-2014) and developed through a comparative analysis of various dimensions and results of this project. The first objective of the research and staging was to explore how the individual-mass relationship takes the form of dramatic conflict in texts of universal drama.

The second aim was to address their relevance to deepen the understanding and awareness of contagion in a more extensive spatial-temporal and aesthetic framework, as a creative tool to develop a fundamental cognitive structure for exploring and understanding contagion in our technological societies in the 21st century.

As a director and theater teacher, I based my research on certain referential studies and theories, mainly the psychological mass theory of Gustave le Bon and Freud, and the subsequent developments of this problem in the critical cultural theories of Ortega Y Gasset and Elias Canetti.

In his book *The Revolt of the Masses (1922:1930)* Ortega Y Gasset defined the masses in antinomy with the elites and dissociated them from social classes. The mass defined by him

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consisted in a sum of individuals whose unity is the 'mass man'. The mass man in Gasset's vision is the individual who has given up his individuality and reason in favor of primary reactions, emotions and instincts². According to Mario Vargas Llosa "The Revolt of the Masses is structured around a troubling intuition: the elites supremacy is over; the masses erupted in political life in a decisive way, causing a profound disturbance of civic and cultural values and social behavior"³.

Psychological crowds portrayed in three texts of universal drama

An experience lived in the middle of the crowd by the Swiss writer and anti-Nazi activist Denis de Rougemont, as witness of a contagion phenomenon, has become the reference Eugène Ionesco said (*Notes et contre notes*, 1962: 2011): "It is probably the starting point of the Rhinoceros". Ionesco resumes that scene that took place in 1938, when de Rougemont was caught in the midst of a large crowd awaiting Hitler's arrival in Nüremberg. In the late 30s, de Rougemont was already a prominent anti-Nazi voice, as one of the founding members of the Gotthard League, a group of young intellectuals opposing the increasing Nazi influence on political life in Switzerland at the time. The account tells two shots: the changes in crowd behavior between the moment Hitler and his suite appeared in the distance and they approached the writer's place (exterior shot) and de Rougemont's own reactions in the middle of it (interior shot). During this short time a previously quiet crowd becomes restless and hysterical while de Rougemont recalls that, inexplicably and against his will, he was driven by the flood of general hysteria. He later confessed that, despite a tremendous effort to "resist that rage which tried to invade him, this delirium electrified him and left him a deep sense of loneliness" (Ionesco, 273).

The theory of contagion and resistance allows a description of de Rougemont's condition, which apparently did nothing else than to oppose the phenomena of suggestiveness and contagion, but his testimony also captures, warns and culturally communicates contagion as a force of levelling and aligning individuals, a transformation that Ionesco's play makes visible by triggering the forces of dramatic conflict intensifying awareness of symbolic and ethical levels.

'The Mass Trilogy' project design

The first selection criterion and common denominator of the texts chosen for the mass

² During the 30s, Ortega Y Gasset developed a cultural theory of masses which values the 'democracy of individuals', a concept in line with the Enlightenment rationally based model of democracy. The diverse studies on mass generally took over Herbert Blumer's 4 types of collective behavior- the Crowd, the Public Opinion, the Mass and the Social movement and Blumer's distinction between 'collective behavior' and 'collective action'(1951, p 68). Collective behavior is "as less "institutionalized" than ordinary behavior" while the *collective action* is "the pursuit of goals by more than one person", explaining social movements. By identifying integration and cleavage factors that explain *what differentiate collective action at different times and in different places*"

Apud WikiProject Sociology

³ The Economist, "The Call of the Tribe" Mario Vargas Llosa on freedom, liberalism, dictatorship and ideas, interview, April 8, 2018.

trilogy (beyond their notoriety and their unanimously recognized value in the world of theater) was that the individual-mass relationship is one of the important themes addressed in the dramatic text, chosen for an appropriate articulation between research and application.

On the contrary, a second criterion had a role of differentiation, the selected pieces having to be differentiated by the technique of dramatic writing to offer the possibility of approaching this relationship from three different stylistic perspectives, identified by a comparative analysis with eloquent results. .

The texts chosen were *Rhinoceros* by Eugène Ionesco, *An Enemy of the People* by Arthur Miller (a version by the American playwright from the play by Henrik Ibsen, which I personally translated and which was performed for the first time in Romania) and *The Visit of the Old Lady* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

The Rhinoceros allowed the approach of the individual-mass relationship from the point of view of the Theater of the Absurd, *The Visit of the Old Lady*, in terms of poetic, grotesque and surrealist realism, while *An Enemy of the People* in terms of realistic-psychological theater.

All of these plays were staged at the “Vasile Alecsandri” National Theater in Iași in 2011, 2015 and 2016, respectively.

Among the reasons for which I chose Miller's play over Ibsen's, the first is that Miller's version is less theatrical, and surprisingly from the first reading of the text (*An Enemy of the People*) it becomes evident that Miller has remained extremely loyal to the Norwegian playwright. It respects the story, the play's themes, the characters, and the relationships between them, but largely manages to avoid the major flaw of Ibsen's play it's too thesistic character for a text written in the style of psychological theater. What Miller has subtly changed was the end of the play. For example, at Miller's house, the house where Dr. Stockmann lives is surrounded by a crowd that gradually shows signs of irritability. In this way, Dr Stockmann and his family are under increased pressure. And even if the end of the play is open - we don't say how the conflict between the crowd and Dr. Stockmann will end - the end is predictable. Moreover, in front of the presumed siege, Miller's Doctor Stockmann is less sure he will resist, it is less pointed in his judgment than Ibsen's Stockmann, which from our point of view gives the play and character a greater credibility. The second reason why I chose Arthur Miller to the detriment of Ibsen was the conviction that a contemporary translation of the play and the fact that Miller's writing technique is more modern, will help update the text.

One last observation: in all three texts, we had among the director's objectives their update. By updating, not understanding a dramatic action in a certain time (possibly in contemporary times), but the removal of the action of the play from its initial time placed by its author and introducing it into a continuous present.

Findings resulting from the comparative analysis of the staging of the three plays

By comparing and contrasting the texts and the performances as distinct levels of the project:

1. In each of these three texts, the individual-mass relationship reaches at a certain point (threshold) a dramatic conflict between individuals and the mass. However,

this transformation was not performed identically, different specificities differentiate among authors and texts.

2. As an entity of the dramatic conflict, the masses become one of the main characters of the dramatic text and require to be treated and represented (from the point of view of the means of expression) as such in the performance (this conclusion is obviously a consequence of the first).
3. Psychological states influence to a large extent the process of mass formation. Taking in consideration this principle of the mass theory, it develops ways in which the individual-mass dramatic conflict starts, evolves and ends.
4. The fundamental differences in the transformation of the individual-mass relationship into a dramatic conflict between individuals and mass stem from the differences in the dramatic technique used by the three authors.
5. Knowledge of mass theories helps, on the one hand, to analyze the dramatic text and, on the other hand, it can be an inspiration both for solving some dramatic situations proposed by the author and for inventing new ones. This in turn will lead to the development of the themes of the piece related to the masses, but also to the increased theatricality of scenery situations.

The argument of this first conclusion is subject to the present article for three reasons. The first of these is pragmatism - the argument that all the conclusions would be far beyond the space added to a magazine article. The second reason, the substance one, is that from the point of view of the practitioner, this is the most important of the five conclusions which reached its goal to bring to stage a conflict with major implications, both in the dramatic action and revealing the depth of the play. The third issue is that the existence of the individual-mass conflict offers an important reflection theme - on which I shall launch for debate, if I may say so - will the individual-mass conflict still exist in the 21st century? (Clearly, the argument of the first conclusion will pay out the circumstance and the argument of the others).

A first observation, which emerges from the analysis of the texts and from which my approach starts, is that in the beginnings of all three plays, the masses do not exist. They have a dramatic action at a time. As we know from the above, one of the conditions necessary for a mass to be formed is that the people who make it up have a common goal. In *An Enemy of the People*, the common goal that makes the entire community (the city) to become a mass is to keep in operation the Morten Kiil's factory and the city's public baths that provides people with jobs and minimal prosperity. The moment the fear of losing their jobs arises, people in the city unite themselves by coagulating their beliefs around a common goal - preventing this achievement to happen.

The fact that this common goal is born following a double manipulation, from the political factor and the press, only highlights one of the characteristics of the masses, which is that they are easy to be manipulated. The fact that the people want to ignore the scientific arguments given by Dr. Stockmann in proving the fact that the factory pollutes drinking water and the water in the city's public baths highlights two other characteristics of the masses - the fact that individuals can act against their own personal interest and the fact that rational

arguments cannot change or form the views of the masses. In *The Visit of the Old Lady*, the common goal that makes the entire community (the village) to turn into a mass is the desire to get rid of poverty in a convenient way. And even if the price to be paid for this is killing a man (and not just any man, but one respected person in the community- Alfred III), the fear that they will not get rid of poverty determines them to pay this price. We see here another property of the masses - the face that they have as criminals. Shielded by the anonymous characteristic of the masses, the individual belonging to it is capable of murder because moral and legal liability dissipates itself up to cancellation.

Another important thing to emphasize here is the presence of the fundamental element that - as Elias Canetti showed us, is the basis for the constitution of the masses since the beginning of mankind: fear. The second condition for a mass to be formed is that it has to produce that which Elias Canetti called the phenomenon of discharging:

“The most important processes that takes place inside the mass is *discharging*. Before it, the mass actually does not exist, the discharging truly completes it. It is the moment in which those who belong to it release themselves from differences and feel *identical*”.

In *An Enemy of the People*, the phenomenon of discharging occurred in the public assembly scene in Captain Horster's house - (in my show, this assembly took place outside, which allowed the use of a large number of actors, which turned the scene of the final confrontation between Doctor Stockmann and the City Mayor into a mass scene) – when it is obvious that the entire community is on the side of the Mayor and against Dr. Stockmann. The scene reveals three other characteristics specific to the masses: their credulity and suggestiveness (people believe in the Mayor's promises) and their need for a leader. In *The Visit of the Old Lady*, the discharge phenomenon occurs when all people in the village decide to spend money on debt to get out of poverty. From a theatrical point of view, this is presented (both in text and in the performance) progressively. One after the other, from the most insignificant people to the nobility, culminating with the Policeman, the Teacher and the Mayor, they all buy various things, increasingly expensive, on duty, ignoring the fact that their actions are only getting closer to the time Alfred the III *must* be killed.

Alfred III and Doctor Stockmann also have a clear purpose, of which they are constantly aware – (and for which each acts specifically) – the first defends his life (only until up to certain time), and the second defends the scientific truth and his own reputation.

Obviously, their aims are totally opposed to the aims of the masses. This contradiction of the purposes of the two entities - the individual and the masses - makes them enter into an open conflict. Let's also note that the moment when this conflict started is the moment when mass discharge occurs. This leads to the conclusion that, in both cases, the masses are the initiators of the conflict, which only emphasizes another fundamental characteristic of them – aggressiveness.

In *The Rhinoceros* the plot happens in a totally different way. It is not known why, how and what is the goal for which people turn themselves into rhinoceros. Like Kafka's story, *Metamorphosis*, where one morning Gregor Samsa found himself turned into a beetle, there is no reasonable explanation for this metamorphosis. Nor should there be, because this particular

lack of rational explanation gives the quality and specificity of the style of writing. In other words, in the case of *The Rhinoceros*, the esthetic of the Theater of the Absurd forces Ionesco (and the director who is setting up the play) not to provide an explanation why people turn into rhinoceros. Therefore, in *The Rhinoceros*, the masses have no purpose for which they are formed, or, more precisely, we are not revealed either the cause or the purpose for which they are formed.

The only thing that matters from the point of view of the esthetics of the Theater of the Absurd is that the masses have formed. As far as my analysis is concerned, what matters is that they were formed outside the dramatic action. The enigmatic appearance of the first rhinoceros in the city suggests that the phenomenon of discharging has already taken place, at a time before the dramatic action began.

The transformation of people into rhinoceros (sometimes "on the spot" as is the case with Jean, Bérenger's friend), which is being progressively carried out during the dramatic action (both in text and in the performance), does not highlight the phenomenon of mass formation, but one of its fundamental characteristics – its need for growth: "The impetus to growth is the first and most important quality of a mass. It shall accompany anyone who can be contacted."

In this way, we can say that the mass in *The Rhinoceros* is an open mass, that is, a mass "which can grow infinitely" – and it is precisely on this exponential increase that Ionesco has focused its attention – while by comparison, the masses in *The Visit of the Old Lady* or *An Enemy of the People* are closed masses, that is, masses whose growth at one time, for various reasons, stops. Indeed, in both plays, the village community or the city does not add outside people to the conflict with Alfred or doctor Stockmann, respectively.

As Ionesco does not offer a purpose for mass-forming, he does not offer Bérenger a purpose for which, or in whose name he should act during the dramatic action. Ionesco wants a Bérenger with no rational explanation for opposing rhinoceritis: "Bérenger does not know very well, for the time being he can resist rhinoceritis, and this is proof that his resistance is genuine and profound". Of course, both Ionesco and theater critics have equated rhinoceritis to ideology. In this context, the dangerous trap that could arise in the directorial interpretation could be that Bérenger resists rhinoceritis in the name of another ideology (that is, to have a goal). Ionesco, however, strongly opposes this: "If I were to oppose a ready-made ideology to other well-made ideologies tangle brains, I would only oppose a system of rhinoceros slogans to another system of rhinoceros' slogans."



Fig.1 *The Rhinoceros*, by Eugene Ionesco, “Vasile Alecsandri” National Theatre, Iasi, Director Claudiu Goga⁴
<https://www.teatrulnationaliasi.ro/echipa/claudiu-goga-regizor--97.html>

Therefore, I believe that any directorial attempt to customize the significance of rhinocerotis or the purpose for which Bérenger opposes is a mistake not only because it would be in contradiction with what Ionesco wanted or with the esthetic principles of the Theater of the Absurd, but because this would greatly restrict the meaning and the main idea of the play.

In a theoretical analysis is not difficult to say that a character has no a purpose. But in theatrical practice, things get complicated because any actor (whatever style and convention he would act) will act without knowing what is the purpose he fulfills acting on stage. That is why I have told the actor who is interpreting Bérenger that he is opposed to rhinocerotisati as a human instinct, but that he is not aware of this for a moment because he does not raise this issue.

Let us also note that Bérenger does not oppose rhinoceros, he opposes rhinocerotis. He does not oppose the masses but opposes the idea of mass-forming. It tries to remain outside the masses. Like Denis de Rougemont, Bérenger is trying to resist the temptation to be part of the mass.

In this way, in the case of *The Rhinoceros*, the individual-mass conflict can be assimilated to an internal conflict of Bérenger.

Therefore, even if in the three texts under consideration, the individual-mass relationship takes the form of a dramatic conflict between individuals and mass, this has significant specific differences:

- a. In Miller and Dürrenmatt, the motive of mass formation is revealed to us, while in Ionesco’s play it is not revealed.

⁴ <https://www.teatrulnationaliasi.ro/echipa/claudiu-goga-regizor--97.html>

- b. In Miller and Dürrenmatt the masses are formed during the dramatic action, while in Ionesco's they are formed at a time before the beginning of the dramatic action.
- c. In Miller and Dürrenmatt, the individual-mass conflict is direct, while in Ionesco's it is assimilated to an internal conflict.
- d. In Miller and Dürrenmatt individuals are aware of why they conflict with the masses, whereas in Ionesco's this is not the case.
- e. In Miller and Dürrenmatt, the individual-mass conflict is initiated by the masses, while in Ionesco's it is initiated by the individual.
- f. In Miller and Dürrenmatt, the masses that conflict with the individual are closed masses, while in Ionesco's they are open masses.



Fig.2 “An Enemy of the People” by Arthur Miller, Iasi National Theater,2016, Director, Claudiu Goga⁵



Fig.3 *The Visit of the Old Lady*, by Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Iasi National Theatre, 2015, Director, Claudiu Goga⁶

⁵ <https://www.teatrulnationaliasi.ro/echipa/claudiu-goga-regizor--97.html>

⁶ <https://www.teatrulnationaliasi.ro/echipa/claudiu-goga-regizor--97.html>

The way the individual-mass relationship took the character of an individual-mass conflict created a clear segregation between Miller's and Dürrenmatt's texts on the one hand and Ionesco's text on the other hand. This is due to the fact that Miller and Dürrenmatt's dramatic writing techniques are very close (even if not identical) and are radically different from Ionesco's writing technique, specific to the esthetics of the Theater of the Absurd.

Another major difference between the three texts is the fact that only in *The Rhinoceroses* the relationship of the individual with the masses highlights the issue of mass-community theme. As a matter of fact, as Eugène Ionesco himself confessed, the generalization of masses is the central theme of the play. In his last line, Bérenger says, "I am the last man, I shall remain a man to the end. I shall not surrender. This suggests that near-total rhinocerotisation / massing has already occurred. If Bérenger manages to resist the rhinocerotitis is an option that Ionesco leaves to the director's decision. The end of my performance, too, leaves this to audience's viewpoint. Thus, in the last scene, the tired Bérenger, bleeding from the incidentally induced rhinoceros wounds while he had run after Daisy, sat on his bottom on the table in his room, holding carelessly a revolver in his hand. During this time the scene was flooded by rhinoceros walking without any purpose. Only their growing number (there were almost 30 actors) made an unclear threat float in the air and then progressing. The last line of the play he said to himself, quietly, without passion or incandescence, without any feeling. He was beyond fear. He was beyond courage. He could have capitulated. He could have resisted. Or he could have committed suicide and thus defy the masse by death. It was now the audience's duty to imagine the end. Being the "last man", if he couldn't resist the rhinocerotitis, human race would have disappeared. What Ionesco wanted – and myself tried to build this – was to understand that total massing is equivalent to the disappearance of the human race. The warning given by Ionesco was that massing is not only a danger to the individual, but to humans as species, to humanity itself.

Towards an eco-cultural approach of human behavior in current technological contexts

If we go back to the space of concrete reality, we see that the specter of massing is not just a literary exaggeration. Globalization, along with all its set of ideologies that it has delivered, such as consumerism, progressivism, and others, beyond values that they promote and which cannot be denied, increasingly tends to blur differences between people. The development of digital technologies, the emergence of the virtual world has led to the emergence of "new masses" within it, which have at least partially, characteristics as those described by Le Bon, Gasset or Canetti, some of them even more pregnant. Virtual crowds "mix" with those physical and socially active, making almost impossible to dissociate, thus forming a greater real/virtual hybrid with a greater social impact.

I took into consideration different views on mass behavior that account for the

complexity of this field of studies⁷ and also the changes of mass behavior in technological contexts that transform our 21st century societies. For example, Manuel Castells (2008) points out that in the network society - the social form raising from the development of technology and 'interconnectedness' - the role of cultural elites is competed or even substituted by engineers (Castells, 2008), while the elite's (justified) opinion is aligned to the content of the millions of users.

Regardless of the chosen perspective, the importance of the mass problem is justified by the intensity of this phenomenon that shapes both public opinion and political life and even the daily life of our societies. This constitutes both a practical experience and a theoretical issue, due to the emergence of events, movements, and protests. Crowds gather hundreds of thousands or even millions of participants, often evolving spatially in several cities and countries, carrying messages, expressing political, social, and cultural discourses. Last but not least, various forms of violence, like fires generating casualties, deaths and incidents are part of this dynamic of the crowd. As pointed by Carter (2015:2) understanding these phenomena requires a multidisciplinary and intersectional approach linking various sciences and fields of studies:

“Understanding people *en mass* has always been challenging. Should they be regarded as just the total on many individual ego or does a crowd amount to more than the sum of its part? Perhaps as has often been claimed a large number of people together in one place should be considered as less than its sum, people losing their identity and aspects of their humanity in the anonymity of the mass. These possibilities and questions connect with many different social sciences, social psychological aspects of individual and group processes, sociological concerns, communication and media studies, political implications modelling crowds behavior, questions of management and control, to list just the most obvious. None of these perspectives can be treated effectively in complete isolation from the others, making the study of crowds a truly multidisciplinary endeavor” (Thomas, 2009:2)

Some of the research trends that argue the importance and topicality of mass issue in the 21st century societies are those on deindividuation and gangs behavior -in line with le Bon's theory (apud. Postmes and Spears, 2009)-, the social representations mainly around Serge Moscovici's research and theories, and also recent attempts to resituate Canetti by shedding a new light on his contribution to mass theory.

In *Elias Canetti's Counter-Image of Society: Crowds, Power, Transformation*, Aronson and Robert (2004) assigned Canetti's deep interest for the mass subject to a 'deciding experience' he lived during two events: the assassination of Rathenau in June 1922, and the

⁷ Theories of collective behavior :the *Contagion theory*(by le Bon and Freud), the *Convergence theory*(developed by Floyd Allport), the *Emergent-norm theory*(developed by Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian),the *Value- added theory*(developed by Neil Smelser who explains CB as” the value for build-up tension within social system”) the,*Complex Adaptive System theory*(by Jaap van Ginneken in terms of synergies, emergence, autopoiesis, self-creation of patterns (Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_behavior)

fire in the Vienna Palace of Justice in July, 1927 during violent mass revolts. Accordingly, these experiences informed „the anti-concept of crowd, witnessing otherness in a negative way, and comes along Canetti’s radical questioning of modern Western culture and civilization across a number of thematic complexes: 1. individual and social psychology; 2. totalitarian politics 3. religion and politics 4. theories of societies, power and culture (Aronson, Robert, 1999:2003)

Brighenti (2011) developed Aronson’s interpretation through highlighting Canetti’s conceptual distinction between *mass* and *power* – a distinction that led him to oppose and criticize le Bon and Freud’s psychological theories. He suggests to focus on Canetti’s style of inquiry which provides “a series of precious insights into the epistemology of resistance”. He argues their value “specifically in the context of the humanist vs post-humanist debate and, more generally, at a historical moment when a growing dissatisfaction with the alternatives between subjectivist and objectivist approaches, on the one hand, and between neo-positivist and interpretive approaches, on the other hand, is becoming apparent in social theory and the social sciences at large” (Brighenti, 2011:74). Another attempt, the research program “ASCA emotional-democracy“, unfolded by Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis has developed a central focus on “the connection between *emotional democracy* and *aesthetic culture*“ using a more extensive framework, in terms of a disciplinary cluster and collaboration among „practitioners from diverse disciplines (Philosophy, History, Sociology, Political Science, Media Studies, Theater Studies) enabling a “post-democratic” approach in times of globalization”.

Instead of conclusions

The realities we live in today's technological societies are blurring or eliminating the differences between individuals as users of the global network of the Internet, thereby the transformation of society remain difficult to observe as a psychological dynamics of the 'real'. Canetti's definition of contagion as "ambiguous multiplicity" and his radical cultural critique, as well as the dramatic individual-mass conflict in Ionesco's play, provide us with a fundamental cognitive structure that helps us understand the confusing fluidity and multiplicity of events in our 21st century societies. This is of great interest for two reasons: first, for the opportunities offered to integrate theatrical research with the challenge of exploring mass behavior and its recurrence with a critical mind; on the other hand, to revalue the dramatic models and the staging itself as an aesthetic of resistance and of individual choice, providing epistemological insights into resistance, a subject whose importance increases with the scale of contagion in the technological contexts of 21st century societies.

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