

# COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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*“Communication Management: Theory and Practice  
in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”*

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## FOREWORD

### COMMUNICATIONS PERSPECTIVES: THEORY, PRACTICE, MANAGEMENT, TENDENCIES

PROF. DR. VESSELINA VALKANOVA

The current volume “Communication Management: Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” consists of the articles presented at the international scientific conference of the same name, which was held in Sofia in June 2019. The event was organized by the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, in cooperation with the ECREA Central and East European Network and the CEECOM Consortium.

Both the scientific forum and the current volume are dedicated to an important anniversary for the Bulgarian scientific and academic community – 45 years of the founding of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication (FJMC) at the Sofia University as an independent academic unit with the aim to educate students in the fields of social communication, journalism and media.

Built upon the solid academic tradition of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” – an institution in Bulgarian science and education, the oldest academic program at the FJMC – “Journalism”, will soon celebrate its 70-year anniversary. It started as a specialty within the Faculty of Slavic Studies. Several thousand highly qualified professionals in the media field from over 50 countries have graduated the program.

The education in the “Public Relations” program is also founded upon the rich academic tradition within the faculty. It has already been active for over a quarter of a century. Among its key achievements are the changes in the professional sphere and the development of the educational programs in public relations and advertising.

The BA in “Book Publishing” was until recently the newest academic program within the faculty, surpassing 20 years in existence. It contributes for the higher levels of professional culture in Bulgarian book publishing, in accordance with the aim set by the department and the faculty at the program conception.

With the founding of the newest specialty – “Communication Management”, the faculty responded to the changes in the labor market and the new professional requirements towards the specialists in the fields of communication,

information and media content management, as well as to the search for a new type of professionals.

I have always been grateful to all colleagues from the department, FJMC and the Sofia University, to our part-time lecturers, guest lecturers and lecturers from abroad for the dedication and the attention towards teaching students in journalism, public relations, book publishing and communication management and for their research, monographs, articles and textbooks, which develop the scientific field of communications, journalism and media, to the benefit of our students, doctoral candidates and young teachers but also to the benefit of the professionals – journalists, editors, managers, PR specialists, advertising professionals, book publishers, communication managers.

45 years of independent existence is a significant academic tradition for the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication. An anniversary, which makes us think about our achievements and challenges, search for new perspectives in research and educational activities.

If we look back towards the academic tradition of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, we will notice that since its conception in 1974, the Faculty offers to the students from Bulgaria and many other countries professional and academic training in contemporary and important for the functioning of social communication specialties both in bachelor and master programs, as well as education in a multitude of successful doctoral programs in the fields of journalism, media, public communication, publication activities, creative industries, advertising and communication management.

During the last four and a half decades, the key words that summarize the educational, scientific and research activities of lecturers and students at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication are: quality and aspiration to high academic results. The education is focused on practice, aiming to respond to the complicated and fast-changing conditions of the contemporary professional field by preparing highly qualified specialists. However, the lecturers and the management of the faculty have always adhered to a higher standard and the academic community has always aimed not only towards practice but also towards the development of research and scientific programs.

In order to fulfill its mission – teaching solid knowledge and skills in order to achieve an effective professional and social realization of its graduates in the field of public communication, the team of FJMC is constantly aiming to renew its curriculum and programs, and to attract to its lecturing team researchers and young scholars, as well highly-educated academic additions, as well as pronounced professionals from the fields of media and communication. It is the

combination of its educational practice, contemporary scientific research and the publishing of research results that enable the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication to build its academic profile over the years as a leader in the scientific and professional field of social communications and information sciences in Bulgaria and as a respected center for education and science in Europe.

The 45-year anniversary of the FJMC was commemorated accordingly with the organized 12<sup>th</sup> Central and Eastern European Communication and Media Conference, which took place between 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019 in Sofia. Over 160 scholars, lecturers and researchers from 28 countries took part in the conference. The main topics of discussion were focused on the key issues in social communication, its management and tendencies.

The character and the diversity of the topics of the articles collected in the six sections of the present volume - “Theory and Practice in Political Communication in the 21st Century”, “Regional Perspectives on Media Reporting and Communication Management”, “Communication Management, Technology and Integrated Marketing Communications”, “Disruptions in the Contemporary Media Landscape”, “Cross-Border Perspectives on Political Movements”, “Theoretical Perspectives on Contemporary Journalism and Communication Management”, hint the scientific searches of the scholars of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication and those of our partners from Bulgaria, Europe and the world.

The publications in this volume shed light upon the latest tendencies in the field of communication and media. They highlight the perspective and the development of an important scientific field, and are a testimony of the high capacity of the colleagues in Bulgaria and abroad. Even more, the articles and the presentation of the colleagues who took part in the conference show the undisputed scientific achievements of the scholars in the field of public communication and information sciences, as well as their reflection of societal problems, the dynamic media development, communications, social processes and tendencies, as well as the professional responsibility and civil position, which they undeniably transfer to their students and doctoral candidates.

I sincerely hope that international meetings and conferences will continue to gather researchers of media and communications, to synthesize new ideas in public communication and information sciences, to present and opportunity for Bulgarian and foreign researchers to compare their results, to extend their knowledge in the field, to search for collaborations with neighboring academic fields, to distribute original research in the field of “Media and communications”.

This is the positive direction – via discussions, free exchange of opinions, and building of a creative and collegial environment, to educate well-prepared professionals with an active civil position, thinking, looking for the truth and defending the societal right to unbiased information!



# THE FIRST ROMANIAN FEMALE PRIME MINISTER IN THE NATIONAL NEWS: TOPICS AND PATTERNS OF MEDIA COVERAGE

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*Abstract:* Since January 2018, the government of Romania is headed by a woman, Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, the first female prime minister in the history of the country. Beyond other controversial issues relating to the political situation in Romania, especially those in connection with the frequent changes of prime ministers in recent years, media covered the appointment of Mrs. Dăncilă as prime minister with special scrutiny, paying attention to details that were not regarded as such in the case of the prior appointed male prime ministers. Thus, discussions could be encountered in the press, on themes mostly or only related to women, such as: how does this person look, how she dresses, how is her hairdo, what “female tricks” she uses, through what specific female strategies did she manage to have this rising political career or what man she owes her success.

The present paper deals with the analyse of the media coverage of the appointment, as well as the political activity and public appearance in the first months in office of the first Romanian female prime minister. On the basis of the results of a content analysis in the Romanian online news, the major topics on the subject are identified, and the main characteristics and patterns of media coverage of the first woman in a political executive leading position in Romania are outlined.

*Keywords:* female prime minister, media coverage, media framing, mediatization, Romania

## **Introduction**

The parliamentary elections in Romania on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 were won by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) with approximately 45% of the votes. In order to establish a government, the SDP made a coalition with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE). However, within a year, two governments, led by Sorin Grindeanu (4 January – 21 June 2017) and Mihai Tudose (29 June 2017 – 15 January 2018), were dismissed/ had resigned, mostly as a result of disagreements between the prime ministers and the chairman of that time of the SDP, Liviu Dragnea.

On January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, member of the SDP, was nominated as prime minister by the Executive Committee of her party, and on January 29<sup>th</sup> she became the first female premier in the history of Romania. Her appointment as head of the Romanian government was controversial, not so much because she was a woman, but especially because she was already the third prime minister designated by the SDP within only a year.

Yet, the fact that she has been the first female prime minister of the country has not been ignored by the Romanian mass media, who started to discuss issues such as the extent to which a woman is suitable for this position, the ways she managed getting into power, what and who is behind her ascension, but also how does she look, how she dresses, what “female tricks she uses” etc.

This paper presents the results of a research regarding the media coverage of the topics related to the first woman in a political executive leading position in Romania, such as her nomination and her political activity and public appearance in the first months in office. For that purpose, a content analyse was conducted on the Romanian online news in the time frame of January – April 2018.

## Conceptual framework

One of the central concepts for the present approach was that of “media framing”, which is used to describe the process through which the media place the events and topics they relate to in a particular perspective or in certain “frameworks” (O’Sullivan et al., 1994). By framing, to the events are given a field of meaning within which they can be understood (Severin and Tankard, 1992). Moreover, the media hints on events and topics can also be used by the people to make sense of their experiences and social situation (Baran and Davis, 2014). “Frames” are “patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, selection, accentuation and exclusion”<sup>1</sup> of some thematic aspects, ways of structuring the elements that build up a media discourse (Beciu, 2011). Frames used by the media in stories contribute to defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgements, and suggesting remedies. Hence, media frames call the attention to some things while obscuring others (Entman, 1993). The reality presented in the news can rarely be an accurate representation of reality, because by simply choosing the topics, by relating them from a certain angle or point of view, by using certain sources, by the constraints determined by working practices, etc.,

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<sup>1</sup> Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left, With a New Preface* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 7.

journalists construct the reality through a selective process, without necessarily meaning that they intend to distort the truth (Graham, 2015). As such, without being by all means scrupulously chosen, the frames for a given story represent the effort of the journalist to convey a story in a direct and meaningful way (Iyengar, 1987). News frames are frequently grown out of shared cultural narratives and myths, reflecting on them, and resonating with the larger social themes to which journalists tend to be keenly sensitive.

“Mediatization” refers to the process through which the media contribute in modern societies to the shaping and framing the public issues and generally the institutions and society in which they exist. The mediatization of a topic is understood as the concern or adaptation to the media attention rules. Among the most important theories from a journalistic perspective is the news values or “newsworthy” theory from the gatekeeper research that states that the more news factors that apply to a topic or event, the greater the likelihood of being included in media coverage (Boyd, 2001; Caple and Bednarek, 2013). Pursuant to this theory, some significant factors determine the “newsworthiness” of an event or a subject, and the ways the news are constructed. Galtung and Ruge (1965) spoke about three basic hypotheses regarding the news value of a topic: the additivity hypothesis, according to which the more factors an event satisfies, the higher the probability that it becomes news, the complementarity hypothesis that states that the factors tend to exclude each other, and the exclusion hypothesis according to which events that satisfy none or very few factors are not likely to become news. Among the factors that play the role of criteria for the newsworthiness can be mentioned frequency, familiarity, predictability, meaningfulness, but also unexpectedness, competition, personalization, conflict and negativity. Nowadays one can speak about a trend in journalism toward negativism and sensationalism (many articles appear under a negative, sensationalistic sign), personalization (topics are tied to people) and conflict, respectively scandalization (whenever and wherever possible a conflict or a scandal is revealed).

The media coverage of Romanian female politicians has been approached from different perspectives, among which there can be mentioned: the analyses of media framing of female politicians on the occasion of the various elections in Romania (Dan and Iorgoveanu, 2013; Roventă-Frumușani and Irimescu, 2018), as well as those of the visual self-framing during the election campaigns (Cmeiciu and Pătruț, 2014); examining the preponderance of the trivializing framing, the tabloid one, of women in politics compared to men in the same field (Dan and Iorgoveanu, 2013); their media coverage in glossy magazines (Surugiu, 2012); the analyses of the construction of the public image (Roventă-Frumușani, 2015)

and the ways of self-presentation and self-exposure, often in an erotic manner, of the female politicians, through the means and communication opportunities offered by the Internet, such as personal blogs, Facebook pages, etc. (Băluță, 2010; Roventța-Frumușani and Irimescu, 2018), as well as the approaches that aimed to analyse the extent to which some female politicians (as was the case with Elena Udrea) willingly present themselves through the exposure of their own body in the media as sexual subjects/ objects of sexual desire – symbols, in their view, not just of the sexual power, but of the political power too (Surugiu, 2012; Kaneva and Ibroscheva, 2014).

Although women have become more active in Romanian politics lately, succeeding not only in parliamentary positions, but also in some local power functions (such as Gabriela Firea's victory in 2016 as General Mayor of Bucharest), they still remained generally underrepresented in politics (Surugiu, 2012; Kaneva and Ibroscheva, 2014), and especially in the significant positions of power and decision-making (Băluță, 2010; Surugiu, 2012). A challenge for this latter aspect has emerged, however, in early 2018, when, for the first time in Romanian history, a female politician became prime minister, marking a new political context, defined by the tenure of the higher executive power position of a woman, Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă.

## **Methodology**

The research whose results are presented in this paper can be placed at the intersection of the studies on media framing, specific to the sociology of journalism (Borah, 2018) and the analyzes on the social construction of various topics of general public interest, specific to the constructivist sociology. Methodologically, the study can be placed on the line of researches that use content analysis to make inferences in systematic identification and emphasizing the features of messages (Deacon et al., 2010; Krippendorff, 2018).

The general objective of the research was to identify and analyse how the first female prime minister in the history of Romania was (re)presented in the online media, both national and regional, starting with the date of her nomination for this position of power and continuing with the first three months in office.

The major research questions were: What are the topics covered primarily in connection with the nomination, appointment and political activity of Mrs. Dăncilă as premier? What are the topics covered mainly in relation to this person, not only regarding politics, but in general? Which are the main character-

istics and patterns of media coverage of the first woman in a political executive leading position in Romania?

The method used was the content analysis, which included both qualitative and thematic elements (Anderson, 2007; Altheide and Schneider, 2013; Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013), and implied the application of the basic principles of content analysis (delimitation of analytical units, working with categories, etc.) in two qualitative methodological processes: the inductive development of categories and their deductive application (Gunter, 2000; Mayring, 2000). The grid of analysis comprised 18 items, each with a number of categories ranging from two to 15. Depending on the unit of analysis, the categories were either exclusive or multiple.

The corpus of analysis consisted of press articles selected from national and regional media in Romania in the online version. Regarding the procedure for sampling the articles included in the research, in the online search engine [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) I used the keyword “Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă”. In the Google menu, I chose “News” and in “Tools” I selected “Recent” in order to be able to delimit the time frame. This was determined by choosing “Custom Range” and limiting the search to the time interval from January 15<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The media articles of the first sixteen pages resulted from the Google search were included in the analysis. The total number of articles included in the analysis was 162. All considered entries were exclusively online Romanian press articles, in Romanian language.

## **Results**

As regards the main topics covered in the articles analyzed in connection with the first Romanian female prime minister, based on the research findings, several categories can be delimited.

Firstly, one category of topics comprises relatively neutral and common subjects in the context of the journalists’ covering political life in general, and of the appointment of a new prime minister in particular. Thus, more than half of the articles analyzed had as one of the main themes the current political activity of the premier: 75 articles were related to her meetings, visits, events, viewpoints, stands, statements, interviews, etc. and 16 articles covered her current political activity at a general level. Other topics that can be also included in this category were: Mrs. Dăncilă’s nomination and appointment as prime minister of Romania (theme covered in 57 articles); the political strategy (of her and/or of her cabinet,

topic in 21 articles), the history of her political and/ or professional activity (20 articles), and the economic strategy (of her and/or of her cabinet, in 12 articles).

Secondly, an additional category of topics that were frequently covered includes less neutral themes, many of them (such as the language skills) being less common in the context of media coverage of the nomination and appointment of a prime minister. For the most part, these topics have been negative and critical media coverage of the premier. Thus, 59 articles had as one of the main themes the mistakes, faux pas, gaffes, solecisms or gaps of the prime minister in general – both speech and cognitive blunders (due to lack of knowledge and general culture, poor understanding of terms and concepts, etc.), and blunders in terms of diplomatic protocol. 46 articles treated as the main subject the premier's lack of language skills: faux pas, solecisms, mistakes and gaps (as for grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc.) mainly in Romanian (topic in 38 articles), but also when speaking English (in 8 articles). Other main topics of the articles that can be included in this category were: Mrs. Dăncilă's lack of political/ strategic/ administrative/ organizational skills, her failure and inability with regard to political strategy (19 articles dealt with this theme), as well as the wealth of the premier (her and that of her family, accumulated by questionable means – a topic centrally discussed in eight articles).

This latter topic has often been addressed together with another one: the corruption in relation to the Social Democratic Party, to which Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă belongs (central theme in 27 articles). In many of the articles that referred to the prime minister's wealth, there were made links between her political rise in the SDP, then as the head of the Romanian government, and the generous amounts donated by her and her husband to the Social Democratic Party – a way to do political career through corrupt means. In addition to corruption, another set of issues related to the SDP were with reference to the party's incompetence, in particular to the inabilities of its current leaders to run Romania (topic in 19 articles).

Finally, two other categories of main topics discussed by the media referred again exclusively to the prime minister, but not to her political activity, her strategies, etc., but: a) on the one hand, to her outward appearance (such as how she looks, how she dresses, her hair, eyelashes, makeup, etc.), Mrs. Dăncilă being often treated in these articles (15) as an "object", both in a negative and a positive way (the latter one particularly in tabloid newspapers); b) on the other hand, to the (positive) fact that a woman has come to occupy a position of political power/ leadership in Romania, such an approach being uncommon in the articles analyzed, but still present in six of them.

Regarding the last mentioned topics covered by the media in relation to the premier, noteworthy is the fact that various aspects related to the outward appearance of the first female prime minister of Romania have been specified in relatively numerous articles (but without these aspects being necessarily the main topic of the articles): aspects of how she generally looks (in 16 articles); how she has the hair-do (in 14 articles); how she dresses (in 4 articles); how she makes up, what “tricks” does she use for her face (in 3 articles); what sex appeal she has (in 2 articles). These topics were treated by journalists in some articles with criticism and especially irony towards Mrs. Dăncilă, as for example by ridiculing her look and fashion taste, or by comparing her with a peasant woman or a housewife, or even calling her “fish wife” (țafă in original in Romanian), a pejorative word used to designate a tasteless, vulgar woman. Among the most ironic and virulent approaches in media referring to the outward appearance of the premier in the period considered, ranked the comparison that the journalist and writer Cristian Tudor Popescu has made on January 16, 2018, starting with Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă’s hairstyle at the time, between the prime minister and the monkey specie hamadryas baboon. The comparison itself, as well as what followed – the own ex officio referral of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) regarding the journalist’s statement, the fine that the journalist was given by the NCCD, and the ironic response of C. T. Popescu to the fine that he received (and which he later contested) –, were taken over and discussed in numerous articles from different media.

And yet, most of the positive remarks in the Romanian media about Mrs. Dăncilă referred also to her outward appearance, especially her fashion taste and her hairstyle. In other words, what in many media was criticized and ironized, in some other media was praised or appreciated. It is worth mentioning that most of these positive remarks about the external appearance of the prime minister can be found in articles published in tabloid newspapers, characterized by a journalistic style based on sensational news, gossips and rumours about celebrities and public figures, as well as by excessive use of attracting attention photos (Burlison Mackay, 2017). Such an article, with a title containing the exclamation “*Look what an elegant premier we will have!*”, was published on 19.01.2018 by the tabloid *Click!* (<https://www.click.ro/>), with numerous photographs and explanations about premier’s preferences regarding clothing and accessories. The front page of this article is shown in Figure 1:

**Click!** NEWS VEDETE SPORT UTILE ENTERTAINMENT

SOCIAL NATIONAL BUCURESTI IN LUME VREMEA #SUPERJOB

Acasă > News > National > Uite ce premier elegant vom avea! Viorica Dăncilă adoră accesoriile și gențile

# Uite ce premier elegant vom avea! Viorica Dăncilă adoră accesoriile și gențile

2 Comentarii



Viorica Vasilica Dăncilă a prezentat lista cu noul Cabinet  
foto: Inquam Photos / George Calin

Ceasta tot despre: Viorica Dăncilă, tinute, haine, îmbracaminte, premier, guvern, psd

**TOP ARTICLE**

- 1 Excluziv Brigitte, apariție de 15.000 de euro, pe șantier. O vezi la
- 2 Rena Hartman s-a revăzut în Franța cu fratele, Sumeyla, după ce s-a
- 3  Cum arată Andreiș, prima soție a lui CRȘU, de corbă
- 4 Teoria conspirației după incendiul de la Notre Dame. Ce făcea omul
- 5 Nopți Smiley, mesaj adorabil pentru fetele lui Șantoc, de ziua ei

**Libertatea**

 **Libertatea**  
Brigitte 1981, soțului la Ferma. Totj au fost cu ochii pe ea

 **Libertatea**  
Răsturnare de simțuri. Ce sa întâmplă acum cu Tudorel Toader. Ce decizie a luat

 **Libertatea**

Figure 1. The homepage of the article Look what an elegant premier we will have! Viorica Dăncilă loves accessories and handbags, the website of Click!, 19.01.2018

Source: <https://www.click.ro/> Screenshot from: <https://www.click.ro/news/national/uite-ce-premier-elegant-vom-avea-viorica-dancila-ador-a-accesoriile-si-gentile>

Copyright: Click! / Inquam Photos / George Calin

<https://inquamphotos.com/photos/bucuresti-viorica-dancila-psd-83548>

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Other tabloid newspapers, as well as some television channels on their websites, noted and drew the attention, also in a positive way, to Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă's change of hairdressing, and implicitly change of look, with that she publicly appeared at a press conference on January 23, 2018, a few days before her investment as prime minister of Romania on January 29, 2018. Thus, for example, the tabloid newspaper *Cancan* announced this change in an article with the exclaiming title *Radical transformation of look. How the appointed Romanian premier, Viorica Dăncilă, publicly displayed herself!* (<https://www.cancan.ro/>, 23.01.2018), along with a lot of revealing photos, while the TV channels PRO-TV and Kanal D also noticed the change on their websites, though in a more detached way, but still using more than one photo per each article.

Of the 162 articles analyzed, there could be identified only one article that made a more detailed analysis of the negative, criticisable, and vulnerable elements, but also of the positive aspects and of the hopes related to the first female prime minister in the history of Romania. This article, titled: *Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, beyond hairdressing, Romanian blouse [embroidered peasant chemise/shirt] and Teleorman* (original title in Romanian: *Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, dincolo de coafură, ie și Teleorman*), was published on 17.01.2018 by the women's magazine *Elle* (<https://www.elle.ro/>). At the beginning of the article there are listed the aspects criticized by other media in connection with the prime minister: "Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă has been SDP's proposal for the post of prime minister of Romania after the resignation of Mihai Tudose, a reason for a lot of websites to analyse ... the hairstyle (which is unfortunate), the outfits (with folk influences) and the native place, Teleorman, the county that gave the country also the leader of SDP, Liviu Dragnea". Although, at first glance, interpreting the explanatory brackets, it may be understood that *Elle* also adheres to these criticisms, reading the article further, we find a dismantling of them in the analysis made under the subtitle: Thence, who is Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă? According to this analysis, "her affinity for Romanian blouse [embroidered peasant chemise] is less superficial than seems now", and "the talks about her hair resemble dreadful those who were done around the budget Hillary Clinton dedicated to hairdressing, for example". Moreover, there is a second part of the article, with the subtitle: Still, a good part too, in which there is drawn attention, as few media have done, to the fact that Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă: a) is the second woman nominated by SDP for the post of prime minister, after Sevil Shhaideh and b) (in a later edit) was appointed prime minister, becoming thus the first woman to take up this position in Romania. The rise of a woman in a position of power is remarked positively in the article, there being highlighted, as I have not encountered in other media,

the change that this fact represents and the hopes that derives from it regarding the various problems faced by women in Romania (domestic violence, women's dignity, etc.): "We are in a country where Parliament was, two decades after the Revolution, composed of an enormous number of men and a few women. So, we could say that any woman in a position of power is good. [...] We can give this woman a chance – until she decides to cancel it by herself".

## **Discussion and conclusions**

The investiture for the first time of a woman as prime minister of Romania has raised a great interest of the media, discussions and debates on various political and personal aspects. The nomination, the appointment and the political activity of the female premier Dăncilă have formed into topics in more than half of the articles analyzed. However, the fact that, for the first time in its history, Romania has a female prime minister, has not been highlighted as such in many mass media, but other elements, rather controversial, were predominantly emphasized and debated.

Besides the media subjects that covered the political career and actions of the premier, there could be delimited many themes that highlighted her blunders and mistakes, especially the linguistic and logical ones, but also those of thinking and knowledge. As a result, many articles have had a negative and critical tone. Because in her first months in office Mrs. Dăncilă has made numerous faux pas, gaffes, solecisms, errors and provoked a lot of awkwardnesses, her media coverage has quickly transformed into a real "hunt" of mistakes and blunders, who have become in many news the leitmotiv associated with her actions and her person in general.

Moreover, in the considered time frame, there were topics of articles that did not have to do with the political activity of the prime minister, but more with her outward appearance. Some of them were also sarcastic, taunting and even offensive, addressing ironically the look and the fashion taste of the premier. On the other hand, the same external appearance was the reason for the appraisals and compliments of some other media, especially of tabloid newspapers. These were for that matter among the few positive aspects mediatized in the considered period in relation to the first woman in the position of prime minister of Romania.

One aspect should be highlighted in this context, although no comparison has been made with the media coverage, in the same conditions (nomination, first months in office) of a male prime minister, but based on the great interest

showed by the media in the case of the first Romanian female premier. Namely, it can be said, that, probably, the outward appearance, the clothing, the hairdo, etc. of a man would not attract the same attention of the journalists and the media as that of a woman in the same position. A possible conclusion, which requires further research to confirm it, is that media attention to the external appearance of a person in a position of power is much greater when the person is female, thus confirming the social gender-related expectations and roles: a woman, even in a position of power, must “remain a woman”, that is, she should strive “to look good”; in the case of a man, if he is a good leader, makes good decisions and has the desired results, the external aspect is more or less negligible.

As has been stated, the media framing calls the attention to some things while obscuring others (Entman, 1993). The main frames in the media coverage of the first female prime minister in Romania, as evidenced by the content analysis carried out on her appointment and in the first months in office, were mainly the negative and controversial aspects, though not those related to her gender, but those related to her subordination and political obedience to some political leaders who run in fact the country, out of the shadow, as well as those related to her political inability and incompetence, illustrated by the numerous political blunders, linguistic faux pas, and diplomatic protocol gaffes. Furthermore, it can be said, as shown by the research results, that the only frame that is set out by the premier’ gender and which has also been used often in the media coverage of Mrs. Dăncilă, this time not only in a negative, but also in a positive way, was her outward appearance. Thus, 15 of the analyzed articles addressed the external appearance or semblance of the prime minister as the main topic, and other articles also mentioned subsidiary such issues.

The fact that, for the first time in history, a woman holds the higher executive power position, and the challenges, the hopes and changes that this instance can bring, were only little or insignificantly addressed by the media. Instead, most articles analyzed highlighted the lack of the qualities of the female prime minister, her deficiencies on multiple areas, her failures, as well as the dubious or at least suspicious means and motives, such as the consistent donations to SDP, which led to her political rise. She was not media represented, at least in the considered time frame, as a model of a strong woman, but rather as a model of a docile, obedient female, servant to the interests of some strong men who in fact lead not only a party, but also Romania. That is why in some press articles she even has been characterized by the journalists as a “political puppet”.

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# COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF THE MACEDONIAN OPINION LEADERS IN ONLINE MEDIA BEFORE THE VOTING ON CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN MACEDONIAN PARLIAMENT

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*Abstract:* During the last two years Macedonia experienced days of major historical and political changes. After the decennial dispute with Republic Greece over the use of the constitutional name of the state, and after the Greek veto for NATO and EU integration processes of Macedonia, the both sides signed Prespa Agreement. Regarding this agreement Macedonia was obligate to change the constitutional name. After the referendum, the crucial vote in the Macedonian Parliament on the constitutional changes followed.

The research objective is recognition of Macedonian opinion leader's communication strategies in online media during the period after referendum and before crucial voting in the Macedonian Parliament: from 30 September to 11<sup>th</sup> of January.

In this research Opinion Leaders (OLs) are defined as journalists or experts (not politicians) from different fields who give their opinions on the constitutional changes in online media. Journalists, members of the largest professional organization Association of Journalists of Macedonia, identified the influential members of the group on Opinion Leaders used in the research.

The method of media content analysis was applied and the unit of analyze was column of the identified Ols, published in online media during the critical period. Two main aspects of communication strategies was analyzed: opinion argumentation and identification of the techniques for argument manipulation. Research findings have shown that argumentation was rarely used and in the most of the columns the techniques for argument's manipulation can be identified.

*Keywords:* Constitutional name change, Republic of Macedonia, online media, Opinion leader, Communication strategies

## **Contextual background**

This paper is based on the survey focused on the columns of the Opinion Leaders published in online media in the period from referendum for the change of the constitutional name of Macedonia (30.09.2018), to the day when the change of the name was adopted in the Parliament (11.01.2019).

The change of the constitutional name was result of a dispute between the Republic of Greece and the Republic of Macedonia that was intensified after the breakup of Yugoslavia. The settlement of the dispute resulted with the agreement, so called Prespa agreement (Virtual Macedonia, 2019) being signed by representatives of both sides. As a result of the agreement, the name of the state was changed for both internal and external use. The question on the referendum was: “Are you for membership in EU and NATO by accepting the Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece?” which make change of the name condition for NATO and EU integration process. According to the Constitution (Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia) if over 50% of voting population vote then the referendum is valid. In this case, the turnout was 36.9% and jet it was announced as a successful referendum (BBC).

The historic viability of the name is closely linked to the centuries-long striving to preserve national identity, culture and language. The “refreshing” collective memory through art, folklore and literature have the function to reinforce collective memory. (Markovikj et all 2019). This defines the concept of national identity particularly when Macedonian citizens experienced the changes of the national symbols, again under the political pressure of Greek government in 1995, and after the many ethnic conflicts which resulted with the war conflict in 2001. The change of the name (any name), can be “controversial” and is a big issue and “rename of the whole country is critical” was notified in a BBC article titled “Why do name matter so much?” (Savage 2018). Opinion leaders in this situation has a serious challenge to make influence on public opinion to encourage citizens in both way: to show resistance to changing the name or to promote support for accepting the name change.

## Theoretical background

Opinion leaders have a role in presentation and definition of the relevant issues, and then in orienting, influencing public or individual opinion toward them. Also, they (particularly in domain of politics) have a potential to attract attention upon some topic in the media, to influence the opinions, attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and behaviors of others (Valente, 2008) because of their special position in the social network, nowadays online social network (Bodendorf and Kaiser, 2009).

The term opinion leader (OL) appears for the first time in the theory of the two-step flow of mass communication (Katz, 1987), developed by Lazarsfeld and Katz (DeFleur, Melvin, Lowery, Shearon, 1983). This theory has several changes in several directions (Bennett & Manheim, 2006), but the constant is the meaning of the term which underline that OLs have social support and they use social pressure to make influence on their individual or social networks (Dubous and Gaffney, 2014). One to be recognized as OL should be seen as somebody who has knowledge/expertise, having a following and has in a position in community to exert social pressure and support (Dubous and Gaffney 2014, 1262-1264). A particularly important aspect for researchers is to give the answer who are OL and what make them influencers on public opinion.

In this paper we assume OL as authors of the columns in the online media who have different professional background, not politicians and they are writing about the change of the constitutional name of the Macedonia. The focus of their intentions is to make influence on public opinion in both ways – to accept or not to accept the name change. Why Public opinion is important? The concept of Public opinion in twentieth century is closely connected with the progress of democratic societies. To make public opinion democratic, majority is not enough, minority should also share the same opinion not by force of fear and aggression, but by conviction (Ziolkowski 2001, 183-186).

In modern society the fastest and the most comprehensive way to influence public opinion is to promote message through mass media. Mass media has potential to distribute opinion to large number of recipients (Ziolkowski 2001, 183-186). Distribution of the information through online media (which are communication technologies that use the Internet to present or exchange information), strongly influences opinion formation (Gabore 2018, 25-30).

Primarily, communication strategies intent to provoke people to revise their attitudes, opinions, to form the new ones, to change emotional experience of situations and all this to result with the change of behavior.

## Methodology

Main survey goals are: first- to identify and to make selection of the Opinion Leaders who write columns in electronic media on Macedonian language during the period after referendum till the acceptance of the new name of the state at the Parliament, and the second - to identify the communication strategies which OL uses when writing columns to make influence on public opinion.

The main research question in this survey is: What kind of communication strategies do OL use in their columns published in online media (portals, blogs, and electronic version of printed media) concerning the change of the constitutional name of Macedonia?

The survey was conducted in two phases. The first preliminary phase concerned the identification of columnists who could be seen as OL during the critical period. In this first phase a field survey with journalists (members of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia) was conducted. Journalists were asked to point non-politicians who, according to their opinion, have influence on public opinion about the change of name. The sample of respondents was comprised of 52 journalists from different newsrooms (total: 21 newsrooms).

Second phase (main phase) had two steps. The first step was focused on selection of OL, identification of online media which published OL columns and selection of columns. Criteria for selection of OL was at least three published columns (minimum one per week) in a period of three weeks during the referendum campaign and continuous publication of columns until the day of adoption of the change of constitutional name. The total number of selected OL was 19 (13 journalists, 1 professor, 2 writers, 1 expert, 2 NGO activists). The identified online media which published OL columns were portals, blogs and electronic version of printed newspapers. Portals were: NovaTV, DW on Macedonian, PlusInfo, Prizma, CivilMedia, Netpress, Expres.Mk; one blog: SDK (Sakam da Kazam); electronic version of printed newspapers: Nova Makedonija and Neza-visen vesnik.

The second step was focused on the analysis of the selected columns. A media content analyses was applied. The pre-coded template for media monitoring was constructed, with detailed codebook. The human data coding was applied by two trained researchers. The unit of analyze was the whole column (title and the text without illustrations).

The following specific parameters have been taken into account for the purposes of this paper:

1. Argumentation, and identification of the methods for argumentation and
2. Identification of manipulative techniques.

## Sample

The sample was consisted of 57 columns written by 19 OL. The selection of columns was made purposefully by the researchers. Columns were selected that most explicitly represent OL's opinion on the relevant topic. From the total number of published columns of all OLs three columns per OL was selected (total number of selected columns is 57).

## Instrument

The template for media monitoring had many segments but of particular interest to this article is the segment that refers to the communication strategies used to influence public opinion. This segment had two main parts: the usage of arguments- what kinds of arguments the author uses and which methods are used to manipulate the arguments.

The part named as argumentation had the following indicators for 6 methods of argumentation and the part named as manipulation techniques had indicator for 10 techniques.

## Results

The first preliminary phase which is the survey with journalist (52 respondents) was conducted for an identification and selection of OL and for overall opinion about the rating of OL in public sphere. Most of the journalists believe that opinion leaders in Macedonia can be recognized in the online media at the critical period (77% of 22 responded who answered this question). The journalists can recognize those OL who are "for" or "against" the name change. Regardless of the attitude to the name change, OL are seen as those who have influence on the public opinion (92,8% of 14 journalist who answered this question).

The second (main) phase of the research was focused on the content analysis of the published texts of the selected 19 OL.

*1. Argumentation.* The usage of argumentation in the columns is not sufficient. In only in 14 (24,6%) columns the argumentation was identified. Only one OL who is "for", three OL who are "against" and three OL who are neutral were using arguments. The most used method for argumentation was "Fundamental method", then "Yes-No" method in six columns, and the last used method was the "Boomerang method".

Table 1. *The presence of methods for argumentation in columns*

**Table 1.** *The presence of methods for argumentation in columns*

Type of the argumentation method	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Fundamental method:</b> facts and data that underlie his argument were introduced; usage of numbers is relevant	14	100
<b>Method of contradiction:</b> gives opposing arguments from those given by others on the opposite side	4	28.6
<b>Comparison method:</b> carefully selected comparisons that provide suggestive and solid evidence	5	35.7
Comparison method	5	35.7
<b>Method YES-NO:</b> highlighting the deficiencies of the opponents' arguments. The arguments are not denied, but they do point out the disadvantages of the other person opinion	6	42.9
<b>Boomerang method:</b> The opponent's "weapon" is used against him himself	1	7.1

2. *Usage of the manipulation techniques.* In 49 (or 86%) columns the usage of some type of manipulation with arguments have been used. The phenomenon of argumentation manipulation has been analyzed through 10 indicators which explanation is presented in table 2.

Table 2. *Technics for argument manipulation in columns*

**Table 2.** *Technics for argument manipulation in columns*

Technics for argument manipulation	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Exaggeration technique:</b> exaggeration of facts, premature inference	36	73.5
<b>Technique of anecdotes:</b> enables shrewd or ridiculous application to be used to suppress opponents' carefully crafted argumentation	31	63.3
<b>Technique of using authority:</b> using authority quotes instead of drawing logical conclusions	12	24.5
<b>Technique of discrediting of the interlocutor:</b> when the opponent's arguments cannot be refuted then the personality of the interlocutor is put in doubt	30	61.2
<b>Isolation technique:</b> facts are taken out of context	25	51.0
<b>Direction shift technique:</b> it does not focus on the opponent's arguments, but on another topic	15	30.6
<b>Misleading technique:</b> aims to report false information	21	42.9
<b>Delay technique:</b> aims to continue the discussion; important information is needed, many explanations are given	11	22.4
<b>Appeal technique:</b> used to cause pity	2	4.1
<b>Twisting technique:</b> twisting what opponents say, over-emphasizing the words of the opponent	25	49.0

The most used technics for argument manipulation is the exaggeration. This technique can be identify in 36 columns. The least used technique is appeal technique which can be identify in 2 columns.

## Conclusions

The influence on public opinion, especially for events of historical importance to a nation, is of particular importance and is a special challenge for researchers. The name change is a relevant matter particular when it is a name of state which has experience difficult times in the history to prove its unique existence. Like the name of each individual, the name of the country is part of the identity that enters both the individual and the collectively unconscious and determines certain attitudes and behaviors.

The role of the Opinion leader is particular relevant in a challenging periods as those are people who have significant influence of the public opinion, they have relevant knowledge, connections with relevant political actors as well as with general population and who had wide interpersonal and social network. According to their position in the society they are responsible for their influence on the citizens.

The main goal of this research was to provide evidence about the communication strategies which was used by OL in their columns published in electronic media in the period from referendum till the acceptance of the name change in Parliament. Media content analyze was used as a method where the unit of analyze was column (title and text without illustrations). The data obtained from the analyze provide that each columnist stayed consistent to his/her attitude about the name change since this question was raised in political sphere (before acceptance of the Prespa agreement). Two dominant frameworks was recognized in Opinion Leaders columns:, 1) The name change is good and will enable EU and NATO integration process 2) The change of the name will not be relevant issue for this processes and is against the Macedonian national identity.

The obtained data provides conclusions that in very few columns (only in 14 of 57) OL are using arguments to influence political opinion (mostly those are OL who are neutral or “against” the name change). When they use arguments they are using facts and data which among others contains numbers. In 49 from 57 columns the manipulative techniques has been identified. In 36 columns the technique for exaggeration has been identified. That means, mostly Ol are using technique to manipulate arguments so can reinforce those who have the same opinion like them, to criticize and insult those who have different opinion and

to motivate those who do not have the clear idea what is right to think and how to behave.

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POLYPHONIC ORCHESTRATION OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA IN  
XXI EUROPE:  
THE CASE OF POLAND IN 2015-2019

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*Abstract:* Far from the classical notions of political propaganda, once understood merely as top-down persuasion to influence mass opinion, and much closer to the Jacques Ellul's thesis that modern propaganda is an orchestrated phenomenon, integrally drawing from existing social and cultural well established trends, in order to effectively shape attitudes and behaviour "from mere resentment to rebellion", this text offers an insight into the phenomenon of modern political propaganda in CEE countries. The case under scrutiny is Poland of post-2010. It rests on the idea of polyphonic orchestration of national communication, what has been feasible within the premises of post-2010 crisis of democratisation and Europeanization, and in the context of the rebirth of authoritarian and populist tendencies in Central Europe.

The polyphonically orchestrated propaganda is understood as strategically planned and tactically executed set of practices of taking over state apparatus, supported by communicative actions taken by the central power in a democratic society. From the outset it develops in a form of mass discreditation of not loyal authorities and political opponents, followed by authoritarian control of the whole state and media apparatuses. The subsequent goal of such propaganda is mastering public consciousness around a polarized agenda, with special role for silencing or masking all unfavourable facts and opinions. This text rests on the idea that metaphorical resources of music and orchestration help to revive some necessary knowledge of how modern political propaganda works.

*Keywords:* political propaganda, polyphonic orchestration, Poland, PiS (Law and Justice), Jarosław Kaczyński

This text abbreviates my attempts to analyse and explain the role of propaganda before the second consecutive major election success of Jarosław Kaczyński's Law and Justice (PiS) in September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019. My main reference point is the question about conditions of effective propaganda in a democratic state of the CEE Europe, especially in the context of the decreasing explanatory

power of existing propaganda models in times of a civilizational crisis of trust, credibility and representativeness in the post-2010 Europe.

## 1. The course of events

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019, voters in Poland entrusted Law and Justice (PiS) the right to continue their government for another 4-year turn<sup>1</sup>. In democratic election PiS received support sufficient to maintain an absolute majority in the main chamber of Parliament. After a four-year term hailed and documented by independent experts and non-PiS media as “a period of destroying democracy”, “spoiling the state”, and “grabbing all lucrative positions in state-owned companies at the expense of economic rationality”, the ruling right-wing, populist and Catholic party has maintained popular legitimization.

## 2. Major contexts

On one hand, PiS victory can be plausibly explained by objective premises, indicating the contextual conditions of transformative changes which have taken place elsewhere in Europe. It is clearly fitting the context of Western fatigue with liberal democracy (in political and economic sense) together with the burdens of late capitalism like social inequities and structural injustice of marketplace. It is also very much parallel to the region-specific “dual legacy of Central Europe moving between East and West”<sup>2</sup>, currently at the cycle of de-Westernization and retreat from democracy. In these contexts, PiS rhetoric and political communication is engraved in the dominating discourse of mass contestation and rebellion against liberals, communists and modernists, as much as against intellectual elitism and all external symbolic authorities.

But also secondly, in merely Polish cultural context, the old melody of fear against the risks of uncertain future supported with the sentiments for safe en-

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<sup>1</sup> With a record turnout of 61.74% proving effective political polarization, PiS obtained over 8 million votes, which gave the party an absolute majority in the Sejm (235 seats out of 460, exactly the same number as in the election of 2015). The whole democratic opposition (Civic Coalition with 134 seats, with the leftist and green coalition with 49 seats, and the Polish Peasant Party with 30 seats) did not manage to withstand confrontation for the second time, following their loss in the European Parliamentary elections in May 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Attila Ágh, *Declining Democracy in East-Central Europe. The Divide in the EU and Emerging Hard Populism* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019), p. 1-5; 125-151, <https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/eep/preview/book/isbn/9781788974738/> [1. 11. 2019].

claves in the traditional, well experienced forms of ethnic and national shelving, has been widely accepted as historically “normal” and justified – at least by these social groups of “sensitive traditionalists” who so far have been marginalized by other political parties, and who eventually found their reason for political mobilization. They were offered the strongest possible argument to deal – PiS’s campaign of “good change” was organized around a very materialistic practice of redistribution and reward, promised in the campaign and indeed implemented after the success of 2015, in the form of extensive social benefits targeted particularly to those groups and institutions, which played the same political tune. In particular, the “500+” subsidy for each child proved a propagandist claim that “family matters most”. Some find it as a paradox: highly anti-communist rhetoric of PiS finally led to victory by sharing a neo-Marxist, Althusserian belief<sup>3</sup> that every ideology “must have a material existence” to prove its validity.

On the other hand, continuation of massive support for PiS in 2019, after four years of controversial rule, does not come under rational explanation considering a fundamental discrepancy between the language of promises and real outcomes which everyone could have experienced on a daily base: rising costs of living, decreasing quality of governance and effectiveness of public administration, fiasco of education and health reforms, repeated violations of constitutional principles, weakening of Poland’s European position replaced by the anti-EU, identitarian logic of pride and sovereignty going hand in hand with abstract political dreams – like that one of *Intermarium* – a self-sufficient Central-European superpower (apparently conflicting with foreign policy of other Visegrad and Baltic countries). What is even more interesting, people sharing positive attitude for PiS proved to be immuned for a whole flow of corruption scandals and poorly masked cases of abuse of power and standards by PiS. Any serious and complex explanation of this phenomenon must assume effective role of propaganda – regardless its role as main or only intervening variable.

### 3. Institutionalization of the state propaganda system

One thing is sure: PiS organized the state system of propaganda as if it was a matter of highest importance. It was done within two days (sic!), two months after winning the election in September 2015. The dominated parliament amend-

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<sup>3</sup> Louis Althusser, “Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d’État. Notes pour une recherche”, *La Pensée*, no 151, in ouvrage de Louis Althusser, *Positions* (1964-1975), Paris: Les Éditions sociales, 1976), pp. 67-125.

ed the media law with no debate, just to replace the public television and radio boards and managing councils. A couple of days later PiS was ready to appoint new president of Polish Television – Jacek Kurski, well recognized radical right activist and journalist. Kurski soon made himself known as a master of one-sided, cynical, disinformative propaganda extensively spread by all public media outlets. In May 2019 sixty per cent of Poles, including PiS supporters, answered “yes” for the question: “Since PiS took power, Polish Television has become nothing but a governmental propaganda – would you agree?”<sup>4</sup>. Carefully targeted campaign of political discreditation, hand in hand with own propaganda of success, were accompanied by taking systematic control over the state apparatus.

#### **4. Selected social and political repercussions**

The fundamental, yet already widely accustomed discrepancy between words and reality in Polish politics after 2010<sup>5</sup> seems to be on a cumulative scale. Consecutive research reports only confirm well recognized symptoms: an overwhelming crisis of trust (public institutions credibility has been replaced by a fear of sanctions, and social trust seems like limited to family circles, specific public “information bubbles” and “own media of confidence”); the crisis of political representation and more broad crisis of traditional forms of legitimization (political legitimacy determined by question of loyalty and emotional relationship, rather than competence and responsibility). The domain of social and public communication has been deeply touched by popular yet empty categories like “post-truths” or “fake news” which put the idea of a truth aside. In political communication all bonds and rules got loosened, as much as connotative meanings. The political mediatized spectacle based on cynic performance has been

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<sup>4</sup> Kantar survey for “Gazeta Wyborcza”, Gazeta.pl and TOK FM, 16-19.05.2019, CATI, national sample of 1006 respondents, representative for all adults in Poland.

<sup>5</sup> The year of 2010 is meaningful for Poland. While marked as the cumulating of the EU polycrisis, it is most of all the year of Smoleńsk presidential plane crash with PiS president Lech Kaczyński. For the logic and consequences of 2010 as turning point for CEE see: Attila Ágh, *Declining Democracy...* op. cit.

accompanied by also cynic, cherry-picking electorates<sup>6</sup>, playing the same game for profits and material gain.

## 5. Good ground for propaganda

The crisis of social trust and the crisis of democracy and Europeanization make an excellent ground for effective political propaganda. Regardless of the assumed model, conceptualization, or definition, the main sense of propaganda has always remained similar: it is the “deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist”<sup>7</sup>. The natural domains of propaganda are politics and communication, its natural conditioner – ideology, natural resource – rhetoric, natural context – power and influence, natural trigger – innovative technology, and natural prey – mass audience, electorate and mass society. In his classical study of 1965 “Propaganda. The Formation of Men’s Attitudes” Jacques Ellul<sup>8</sup>, quite exceptionally points out how a mixture of social, political, cultural and technological conditions may co-author a propaganda process. His findings, once concerning the Western post II WW order, now seem highly relevant for the current situation in the Central Europe. The state of social and political uncertainty and normative decomposition as well as the on-going processes of axiological reconfigurations act as catalyst of change.

What seems particularly relevant, Ellul aptly emphasizes that propaganda becomes effective when it “expresses the fundamental currents of the society it seeks to influence”; when it links broad social identity with ideological claims; when it operates by mythical thinking, especially facilitating mass tendency channel awareness around collective myths as “work”, “happiness”, “youth”, “nation” and “hero”; and when it skilfully manages information and disinformation, truth and falsehood<sup>9</sup>. “Propaganda is necessarily false when it speaks of

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<sup>6</sup> It was empirically confirmed that contemporary electorate in Poland can feel no dissonance between their voting for PiS, and equal accepting obvious pathologies committed by the party. Everything can be „negotiated“ out of perceived material profits. The notion of unfair or not clean moves went beyond political morality. See: Przemysław Sadura, Sławomir Sierakowski, *Polityczny cynizm Polaków. Raport z badań socjologicznych* [Political Cynism of Poles. Report from sociological research] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Garth S. Jowett, Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Fifth Edition (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2012), p. 7-17.

<sup>8</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda. The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*, transl. from French by Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner (New York: Vintage Books 1973).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12-116.

values, of truth, of good, of justice, of happiness — and when it interprets and colours facts and imputes meaning to them. It is true when it serves up the plain fact, but does so only for the sake of establishing a presence and only as an example of the interpretation” – emphasizes Ellul<sup>10</sup>. And that all is the Polish case.

## 6. Propaganda orchestration

Ellul mentions “propaganda orchestration” in the context of its requirement of totality, opening this useful metaphor for subsequent connotations. He writes:

“The propagandist must combine the elements of propaganda as in a real orchestration. On the one hand he must keep in mind the stimuli that can be utilized at a given moment, and must organize them. This results in a propaganda “campaign”. On the other hand, the propagandist must use various instruments, each in relation to all the others”<sup>11</sup>.

The category of orchestration, initially simple, deserves more sophisticated operationalization when referred to contemporary conditions of political persuasion. Obviously, apart from Ellul, it has been used in manifold occasions, originally derivated from art of composition and musicology, to reach practices of management, informatics, sociology, political sciences or media and communication<sup>12</sup> – to name a few. Because of its immanent features and logic, orchestration as process and execution appears to be quite convenient as a possible metaphor to understand the current – both complex and controlled – process of state propaganda nowadays. It is a commonplace for orchestration to express the logic of central control (from one party’s perspective, over all possible actors in a process, with a conductor and instrument players – where players play according to how conductor conducts). It is only the conductor who dictates harmonic expression, and influences all differences in voices. The conductor – as the main and only orchestrator – determines the shades and proportions, and the right balance between melody, harmony, rhythm and texture. Arthur Hutchings rightly observes that:

“Like the British Constitution, and many other things which run smoothly in practice, the orchestra is a case-made affair, not an organized homogeneity launched out all hot from a master brain. The wind especially developed here

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 59.

<sup>11</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda...* op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Tomasz Goban-Klas, *The Orchestration of The Media: The Politics Of Mass Communications In Communist Poland And The Aftermath* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

a little and there a little to meet the ambitions of composers. But two centuries of inurement to the sound of a wood-wind tutti have coarsened our ears and made us accept the idea of a “family.” “Let the reader cast his mind back to his childhood, or at least to his first acquaintance with orchestral playing. Does he not remember to have wondered why nobody else thought the wood-wind out of tune? I cannot explain Mozart’s reason for omitting the clarinet from his scores so often, but I do know that he had a sensitive ear”<sup>13</sup>.

## 7. The case of PiS propaganda model

Unlike traditional approaches, the orchestral propaganda model allows one to be more detailed and specific and, at the same time, to see necessary factors within a bigger, dynamic structure. Following that line of argument, one can shed some light on Polish specificities, to find at least three interdependent factors.

First, it is the unique position and role of the conductor and composer in one, charismatic Jarosław Kaczyński. He has been responsible for ideological melody, harmony and musical texture. His private obsessive plots and personality traits – such as desire for full control over every aspect of state and public sphere – make the rhythm special. The whole PiS music has precisely defined motto – clear and bold mission of replacement of Polish state, market and social elites. If it is a symphony, it is a revolutionary piece of work, with the name “New Society”. This score was written for the first time as early as in the election manifesto of 2005, and repeated in the subsequent programmes up to the last one of 2019<sup>14</sup>. Its nuanced explication can be found in Jarosław Kaczyński’s popular biography published under the meaningful title “Agreement against the Mono-Power. From the History of PC”<sup>15</sup> of 2016.

Second factor is the orchestra. It must be acknowledged its power and coherency, with determination proportional to political power of PiS. Its structure is hierarchical, organized around: the inner circle surrounding the composer-conductor (loyal advisors, chief policy makers), the second circle of loyal

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<sup>13</sup> Arthur James Bramwell Hutchings, “Orchestration and Common Sense”, *The Musical Times* 72, no. 1066 (1931): 1082, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/915829> [08.01.2019].

<sup>14</sup> “Dobry czas dla Polski. Program wyborczy Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019”, Materiał wyborczy KW Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [“Good Times for Poland. Election Manifesto of Law and Justice 2019”], October 1, 2019, [http://pis.org.pl/files/Program\\_PIS\\_2019.pdf](http://pis.org.pl/files/Program_PIS_2019.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Jarosław Kaczyński, *Porozumienie przeciw monowładzy. Z dziejów PC* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka: 2016).

backbenchers, the third circle of “young wolves” and “public gladiators”, the fourth circle of agents of ideological support (local activists, useful intellectuals, technocrats, artists, priests and bishops) as well as some external networks of support and radical action (clubs of a weekly “Gazeta Polska” [*Polish Paper*], Radio Mary families, trolls and bloggers etc.).

Third factor concerns the environmental necessary condition – the crisis of social trust. Polish exceptional low status on a scale of social and institutional trust is explaining socio-psychological conditions for effective system of social control. This cultural deficiency is believed to be a burden of communism, and particularly of the political culture to disbelieve oppressive institutions. Since it rests on the power of negative emotions and resentment, it may be functional in any case of playing the same string. And Kurski’s propagandist melody is, indeed, constructed around stigmatization and labelling of the “meaningful others” – all those who do not belong to the orchestra.

One conclusion here is obvious yet not so much optimistic: propaganda of derogation, subversion and contempt, which feeds on lack of trust, is becoming in itself a factor triggering even more social erosion.

To add final layer, the table 1 presents selected dimensions of PiS propaganda orchestration, including the content of public claims in due time frames.

Table 1. *Stages and ideas of orchestration of political propaganda in Poland – the PiS conductorship between 2005-2019*

<b>Time / PiS political role</b>	<b>Melody</b>	<b>Harmony</b>	<b>Texture</b>
2005 <i>opening</i>	Corrupted liberal elites Tusk as a German traitor Civic Platform as cultural stranger	Anti-liberal <i>sonata</i>	Anti-Germanism Anti-Europeanism Anti-elitism Anti-communism

2005-2007 in power, coalition	New IVth Republic	<i>Allegro maestoso</i>	Improvement of the past
2007-2010 in opposition	impossibilism	<i>andante</i>	Polarization Contentious social networking
2010 PiS presidential plane crash in Smoleńsk	“We have been betrayed at dawn” Tusk and Putin’s conspiracy	<i>Lacrimosa rondo</i>	Founding myth: national hero Lech Kaczyński and his brother – natural successor
2010-2015 in opposition	Liberal corruption Mafias around Western decay Polish state in ruin Alternative history	<i>Passion, cantata, Eroica</i>	Radical polarization Anti-liberalism Anti-elitism Anti-communism Anti-Europeanism Anti-immigrant Radical populism

2015-2019 in power	“Good change” Catholic Poland Stronger centralized and uniform state Alternative history	full orchestration <i>national symphony</i> “Brave New World”	Sovereignty National Pride Historical policy Anti-gender, anti-LGBT+, Anti-immi- grant New state, new market, new society
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*Source: own – JHK*

# TEXT AND CONTEX IN MEDIA PUBLICATIONS IN ELECTION TIME (24 CHASSA AND MONITOR – MARCH 2017)

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*Abstract:* The article examines two daily newspapers with different ownership and diverse characteristics. The aim of the research is to see if media context influences media messages and in what directions. As communication theorists point out, certain information may have a different meaning for the audience depending on the context in which it is located. This problematic is getting more and more relevant in recent years because the audience is more and more inclined to analyze the context in which media messages are served, who is the source of the information/commentary and his/her position in the social and political life of the country. To what extent media ownership influences the content and in what direction the agenda is set. How the presence of “transition experts” has a bearing on the imposition of ideas and if there is observed some transitions in journalism functions depending on placing media content in certain context.

*Keywords:* media messages, text and context, daily newspapers.

Decoding media messages in a broader context can provide diverse information and offer interpretations that are not evident within the individual existence of a particular communicative unit. Messages are influenced by various circumstances of a more general nature, such as the socio-political and international background, events and the moment when they occur. Other specific factors, such as the sender’s personality, the recipient’s social and cultural accumulations, and hence his or her ability to decode the message, are also affected. The reasons for including certain information / analysis in the media agenda, as well as the goals that are set before the journalistic product, can carry additional meaning loads. As the researchers point out, certain information may have different meanings for the audience depending on the context in which the latter is located (Stoyanov, 2009: 51).

The issue has become more relevant in recent years because the audience is more and more inclined to analyze the context in which media messages are served, who is behind them, and what are the goals the communicator pursues. The extent to which media ownership affects the editorial policy and content of media texts and whether and in what directions does it outline the contours of

the event picture. How the presence of “transition experts” is relevant to the dissemination of different ideas whose media presentation can be read and understood within a more general context. Is there a change in some of journalism’s functions, as interpreted from the stance of all factors which determine sending certain media messages.

A lot of researchers note that in the modern media “palette”, there can be no permanent distinction between “quality and tabloid” media, as there is a two-way process going: diversification of “serious publications” with lifestyle news and the reverse - commentators and analysts are present on the pages of purely yellow publications.

According to the Journalist and Media Theory Researcher Maria Popova the peculiarities of the market impose a dynamic view of the division between “quality and tabloid media” and make the creators of quality newspapers face the need to diversify their content with publications devoted to “entertainment, everyday life, home, family, sports”, and even shape special additions on similar themes (Popova, M, 2012: 53-54). The reverse process is also observed and one possible explanation is the high circulation of the tabloid press.

Media analyst Orlin Spasov introduces the concept of the “hybrid popular press,” which bears the hallmarks of “the traditional tabloid” and “the serious newspaper.” It contains qualitative analyzes using “accessible style”, but the publications range from “serious to sensational”. They claim that they are turning to the news as originally defined, but entertainment can also be found on their pages and “the real line between fact and fiction is not always clear-cut (Spasov, 2000: 53).

Another observation of hybrid newspapers, noted by some researchers, is their political and ideological agility, the easy redirection to PR promotion of politicians and parties and economic groups (Indjov, 2011: 13; Blagov, 2012. Citation according to: Rus-Mol and Indjov, 2017: 55).

Scientists speak of “content-level newspaper convergence” (Rus-Mol Štefan, Ivo Indjov, 2017: 60) in which critical and serious moments, not allowed by the “traditional media”, can be found in the tabloid (Lozanov, 2009) just as high-circulation newspapers are “tabloidizing” to increase their readership (Spasov, 2009).

Media scholar Totka Monova linked the beginning of the “mass tabloidization of the press” as a consequence of how power “spoke about politics and the political during the rule of Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha’s cabinet”. (Monova, 2012:2012: 297) As a result, “registering journalism” was imposed, while in public life “profanation of the political” can be observed (Monova, 2012: 260).

This trend persists to this day, reaching at times extreme PR-ing forms. Ivo Indjov reminds us of *politainment*, where “politics in entertainment form is becoming the centerpiece of political culture” (Indjov, 2011: 65).

Studies have identified differences between the agenda of the society and the accentuated political issues in certain media (Monova, 2012: 304) and this observation can be seen as a trend in the agenda setting function of journalism almost universally. On an empirical basis, a noticeable preponderance of political issues is observed at the expense of many significant and people-related issues (Monova, 2012: 198).

My study’s subject is two daily newspapers from March 2017 - when elections are held for the 44th Bulgarian National Assembly - “24 hours” and “Monitor”. An attempt will be made to highlight keys in their thematic accents, depending on several fields of the media context in which they are served. The event context for both newspapers is the election of the 44<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and some moments around them.

### **There are several context directions in which media messages can be viewed:**

- **Media owner / publisher.** In both cases the newspapers are supportive to the governing power. (Here you can also open a bracket regarding protection of lobby interests, on hidden advertising and, on the contrary, attacks on a certain object.)

- The **PR role** of the media. This direction stems from the first one and is related to it.

- Importance of “think-tanks” /“**transition experts**”/. We do not use this concept in its original meaning of participation of a representative of a / **brain-storming center**/; /**trust for ideas**/; /**ideological centers**/ “think-tanks” for the distribution of certain ideas (right or left), but a person with a well-known profile where one can determine in advance in what direction his/her position will be slanted.

Very often the tendencies in the texts are intertwined and their separation can only be made conditionally in terms of what dominates them.

### **“Life is getting better and more cheerful” (24 Chassa)**

All publication units are positioned in the context of **media owner / publisher**. Highlighting thematic emphasis in them is in the view of a specific event or setting a trend.

Media researchers note the relationship between governance and media ownership. As a result, certain trends in editorial policy are observed, and in addition to the possibility of political censorship, the emergence of economic or corporate censorship is added (Monova, 2012: 244).

Others point to the possibility of deliberate use of the media by their owners in order to achieve a certain impact (Stoyanov, 2009: 55).

“Economic and / or financial conglomerates” ownership of media has also been seen as “a prerequisite for the development of corporate journalism to the detriment of the public interest” (Indjov, 2011: 204-205).

Regarding the hidden financing of the media by the state, where the selection criteria are unclear, there are also “prerequisites for the power to buy media favor, respectively, silence, ie for corrupting the public interest “watch dogs” (Rus-Mol and Indjov, 2017: 312).

### **Some themes rouse interest in the overall content.**

**The Mayor of Mladost district in Sofia** is “supposedly independent”, the municipal councilors “cut down” her initiative for a referendum on a construction moratorium, Sofia Municipality has invested half a billion in the neighborhood (Monitor), the Mayor’s idea of independence is “ridiculous” and the attitude towards her is parodied in the satire “Mladost, you my little Texas” (24 Chassa).

**Environmentalists** usually create problems, a trend in many newspapers for a protracted period. They are “a green octopus”, they “sting the treasury with millions”(Monitor), insist on eco-assessments (in the case of the Pirin National Park), “generally mislead the general” (the president has insisted on eco-assessment), who has “in the course of expediency”, “favored the green octopus” “Experts say there is one (eco-assessment)”, and “UNESCO does not decide on Pirin but makes recommendations” (24 Chassa).

**Russia** is persistently undemocratic, the **US** with its new president is still a ground for meandering, but there is a trend for a slightly more positive coverage compared to the first months after Trump’s election victory.

“Demonstrators want Medvedev’s resignation”; “Hundreds arrested at protest against corruption in Russia”; “In Moscow: protests and arrests, while Medvedev is off skiing”; “Detained rebels harassed in Moscow”; “Francois Holland: Russia meddles using USSR methods”; “Euroleaders worried about Russia’s meddling in the Balkans”; “Bulgarian elections are a disappointment

for Putin” (24 Chassa); “A Minister for Combating Moscow appointed” (in London); “The Kremlin calls Russia’s protests well-paid”(Monitor).

“A New White House scandal over Russia links”; “Trump mad at CNN” (Monitor); “Trump’s son-in-law had contacts with the Russian ambassador too”; “Moscow denies that Kislyak is a spy”; “The US Justice Minister concealed info about meetings with the Russian ambassador”; “Trump drops Obama’s climate measures”; “Trump’s health reform fails”; “The most shocking to date about Trump - how dull his policy is” (24 Chassa).

**As for the situation in the country** - “Life is getting better and more cheerful” - we have climbed to 105th place in the happiness index. The question for the Eurozone is not “whether” but “when” and we are against “the different speeds in the EU”. “We eat the rubbish of the West” (24 Chassa) and our imported products are “worse”. We are the “second fast-growing economy in Europe” and we often go on trips (to our neighboring countries - 3.6 million times) (Monitor). “New industrial zones are being developed” in a number of places, foreign business is coming to invest.

This is the standpoint from where one could consider some texts which are **critical of certain business and political figures**. Both newspapers negatively mention Grisha Ganchev and Tsvetan Vasilev who fell out of favor. “Monitor” is more controversial and with more prominent objects of criticism. Tatyana Doncheva is a “mafia attorney”, Tsvetan Vasilev is a “banker – fugitive” and Ivo Prokopiev is an “energy oligarch”, they are” bankrupt oligarchs “and Kostov’s protégés”. “Lozan Panov serves oligarchic circles.” Hristo Ivanov “was a lazy minister”, a “failed justice minister” and a “grant baron”; Sasho Donchev was a “gas boss” and “gas baron”; “Yes, Bulgaria” was an “oligarchic party” and a “blue fuel party”. “Monitor”’s attacks are understandable, and the publisher-ownership context of the messages is the most visible here, while the colloquial / street language of the pointed newspaper demonstrates not only the attitudes of the writers/speakers but also their understanding of what is a tolerable level of polemics.

### **“5 sure to get into Parliament, oligarchy’s out” (Monitor)**

The **PR role of the media**, their orientation towards high-ranking people, political and economic circles, is a trend that has grown over the years. During the period under review, it is particularly strong, which is somewhat understandable, as in the pre-election time the media provides a forum for election promises. The problem is in the direction that is present throughout the months and years that follow, and the noticed preponderance of the strong of the day.

Prof. Snezhana Popova writes about the aspirations for “positive publicity” of “more and more private persons” and the promising trend in her presentation: “Media texts with a negative sign would hurt their interests - in this sense the media are only desired as” beauty salons “and not at all like hospitals” (Popova, S, 2006).

Scientists are trying to determine the extent to which PR activities are displacing purely journalistic ones, and if this leads to a change in the purpose of publications - to inform and objectively reflect, or to show in a positive aspect, the subject of what is being presented (Monova, 2012: 243).

Researchers are wondering when the “limits” for the joint operation of the two activities have been lifted.

In a survey involving journalists and PR practitioners, almost half of the first group claim that there are obviously paid-for PR texts in all media where political PR has the strongest share, but also in the presence of a large amount of similar materials involving representatives of the business community (Citation according to: Rus-Mol and Indjov, 2017: 320).

Experts have identified the predominance of political content in the news. The explanation lies not only in the overriding importance that the media attach to this sphere, but also with “government communication professionals”. These “PR agents” offer the formal point of view with the argument for information reliability. Awareness turns out to be “controlled” in the process of seeking news by the media and publicity by the people in different [power] positions (Stoyanov, 2017: 110-111).

In research on certain conflict-related topics, the role of the media has often been identified as the “registrars” of institutional news and a stage where political controversy plays out (Indjov, 2011: 177).

Theorists have noted the role of the media in conveying, interpreting, discussing and criticizing political messages, rather than as their creators, in order to avoid a discrepancy between making politics on two levels (Monova, 2012: 298).

And some experts say that “in countries like ours,” “media have become an appendage of the political environment and play the role of indirect propaganda political institutions (Prof. Dr. Marinov, 2019: 117).

In the messages of both big parties - GERB and BSP, future tense is amply present; both of them show negativism towards the opponent.

## Messages, connected with GERB:

**GERB develops business and build:** (“Varna makes a high-tech zone under the Asparukh Bridge”, “Our export to the EU jumped by more than 2 billion BGN per year”, “Borisov: Bulgaria is at the fastest speed in the EU”, “Chinese buy us trains for 170 million euros”, “Bucharest gave a green light for a gas pipeline through Bulgaria”, “Investors looked westwards from Sofia”, “Asphalt for 15 mln leva poured on Bulgaria Blvd”; “Winter potholes on the roads patched with 50 million leva” (Monitor). “Tsvetanov: If GERB rules, Bansko will have a second cabin lift”, “Bulgaria is more competitive than Greek and French regions”, “Sofia Water has pledged nearly BGN 210 m in investment over 5 years”, “Lilyana Pavlova: Our 11 solutions are a guarantee for the economic upturn in Varna”, “Bulgaria can become a leader in the production of electric cars”, “2 billion BGN for rehabilitation are the biggest project of the state”; “The Black Sea Economic Zone revives the Northeast”, “Italian business chooses Plovdiv as a place for investment”, “The results of the rehabilitation in Varna: bills halved and beautiful buildings”, “EUR 12 billion invested in Sofia for 15 years”; “Borisov: During our last mandate Bulgaria is second-fastest growing economy in Europe”; “Borisov: Where highways pass jobs abound”; “Borisov: Only GERB will finish “Hemus” [highway] and the tunnel under the Shipka pass”; “The repair of the overpass to the Chengene Skele fishing village begins” (24 Chassa).

**GERB take care of people and improve their living standards; education for them is the top priority:** “Our IT specialists prefer Sofia to London”; “Our wages are jumping faster compared to France and Belgium” (Monitor); every long weekend on highways there are “festive traffic jams”; “The real estate market in Bulgaria is among the fastest growing”; “We will double the money for In-Vitro”; “Valentin Nikolov: GERB will eliminate energy poverty”; “GERB works for every village, reminds Tsvetanov”; “No more unemployment in Sofia - only 2.3% in January”; “Borisov: As Prime Minister, I gathered [funds] both for the teachers and for the pensioners”; “We beat Romanians by quality of life” (24 Chassa).

**Europe and the (democratic) world are with GERB** - well-known politicians support the leader in the campaign and praise his victory (both newspapers); EU funds are guaranteed even after 2020 (24 Chassa).

**The BSP does not fulfill its promises, leads to degradation of quality of life and enters coalitions with the Movement for Rights and Freedoms;** with BSP Bulgaria “will go to reverse gear”; “Their program is unfeasible”; will still work with the MRF, which will be a “new catastrophe”; the party is “aggressive”

and “brought back the political hatred of the 90s” (Menda Stoyanova); contains unpleasant surprises - “Bulgarians voted for Radev and got Gerdzhikov” (B. Borisov) (24 Chassa).

**Only GERB never made a coalition with the MRF**, it will never do so with another similar party. “GERB guarantees stability:” Borisov: Europe needs a stable state on the border with Turkey” (24 Chassa).

**In this context, we learn comparatively less about BSP.** They would “protect BG production and goods”; “There will be clear rules for business”; will solve the problems of “overbuilding, poor transport and pollution”; “honest and decent people” are on its ballot, “new and young politicians” enter stage; “will govern until they return the debt accumulated by GERB”; will “destroy the parallel state and there will be money for everything” and they prefer “Bulgaria’s integrity” to “Arctic coal mining” (24 Chassa).

### “Think-Tanks”

Scientists point out among the fundamental theoretical tenets of communication the need to consider how and by whom information originates (Citation according to: Stoyanov, 2009: 51).

Some theorists call some people “format authors” as they are invited because of their well-known position and their involvement is precisely because of the clarity of the opinions they will hold, thus deliberately selecting authors (Monova, 2012: 246).

A number of authors point out that the roles of experts in media are occupied by people (specialists) in a given field, who are affiliated with certain intellectual centers (think tanks – of the right and left) and that they have displaced the voice of the intelligentsia)<sup>1</sup>. Many explanations have been given about the nature of the intelligentsia over the years, and it is not difficult to find the reasons for its media absence today (with very few exceptions).

Regarding the authorship of the texts, the openly “transition experts” are not much. This meaning is understood here in a broader sense. It includes those speakers whose opinion the audience is aware of in advance and can guess the main topics that will be discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> For ex. see: Prodanov, Vasil. Theory of the Bulgarian Transition. Sofia, Zahariy Stoyanov, 2012, pp.354-392, 531-536; Lavern, Dostena. The experts of the transition. Bulgarian think-tanks and the global influence networks. Sofia, East-West, 2010; de Montbrial, Thierry. Think-tanks: how-to-use (in Bulgarian). Sofia, East-West, 2017.

Georgi Harizanov, (Institute for Right Policy): “Everybody gets sick when they hear of “triple coalition” and a “cabinet of experts”.

Georgi Angelov, (Open Society Institute): “The Eurozone - the icing on the cake”; “When will we make the first 100 billion GDP?”

Ivan Krastev, (Centre for Liberal Strategies). The New York Times: “Rise of the Paranoid Citizen. Conspiracy theories replaced ideologies.”

Ognian Minchev, (Institute for Regional and International Studies). (position in Facebook): “The expulsion of Paolo Cortesi is a disgrace to Bulgaria”.

Sergey Stanishev, former Prime Minister and a president of PES: “Democracy is our greatest achievement after 1990”

Mira Dobрева, sociologist: “Do we become happier? It must be due to the new generations who do not have the shock of the past”.

Mouravey Radev, former Minister of Finance: “Undoing the [currency] board without being in the Eurozone will depreciate the lev and melt the savings.”

Nikolay Pavlov, caretaker Minister of Energy: “We lose 1 billion cubic meters of gas if we do not build the gas connection with Greece by 2020”

Vladislav Goranov, former finance minister: “The Eurozone - Misconceptions and Risks”.

Petko Simeonov, sociologist: “The Urban Right” will be presented in “Borisov 3”.

Emil Koshlukov: “The bullshit of pre-fermented sourdoughs. GERB is a factor, and Borisov – still going strong. There is no right without them” (24 Chassa).

It is normal for sociologists, political scientists, members of the CEC to be present in media in election time, but they do not always comment only on issues surrounding their core business (with other examples).

Prof. Mihail Konstantinov, (mathematician and politician), is present in “Monitor” with 5 texts in the period under review. Three of these are devoted to voting issues, while the rest contain political comments.

And a famous name, which, if it can be called a “transition expert “, speaks with sincere concern: Academician Petar Ivanov, director of the Demographic Institute at the Bulgarian Academy for Science and Arts: “Our country is in a demographic trap with no escape. The number of Bulgarians with light-shade eyes has fallen in half since 1940. Every day, 82 people escape abroad” (Monitor).

The two newspapers selected are of different ownership and offer divergent approaches to reflecting the burning issues of the day. However, the viewpoint used to bring out the tendencies when reading messages in a particular context

one can shape out some particular issues. Expressive moments are observed in a number of headlines and at times inside the texts. This line is most evident in Monitor's take on certain business or political opponents. Although diverging specifics in the editorial policies and the nature of the media messages were observed in both publications, their consideration was only matched in terms of the possibility of delineating accents from placing both different in kind publication on a more general background.

There are topics with definite suggestive leads. Often the color or emotion in a statement is a translation of someone's statement, which continues the media tendency for the presence of reflected reality and orientation to different institutions. Unlike the initial transition years, when non-partisan newspapers often "play" with the messages and offer a polemic approach to reading them with ambivalence and detachment of presenting the information, now the messages are direct and revealing - there is no pre-emptive tilting of the verb compared to that time which makes it look as if the journalist is using the message as a base - we are no longer "starting to get rich" but "our life has become better and more cheerful." On the one hand, this trend responds to the established style of politics - to one of clear and simple messages, without any veiled concealment. On the other hand, it may also be in line with the moods in the society - no one feels they need to "play" with the message.

The reader / viewer / listener must follow the overall processes in society in order to orient themselves in the context of what is being communicated. It is a good idea for the recipient to take into account the various factors that frame the information in order to decode it adequately to the specifics of the suggestions that it contains at different levels, and thus to read the general message.

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# MEDIA MESSAGES IN THE 2019 PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR EP IN BULGARIA (TRUD DAILY NEWSPAPER)

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*Abstract:* The European Parliamentary elections in 2019 have a significance that it has never had before. The European Parliament as the only directly elected EU institution is at the center of the current debate on the future of Europe. It is supposed that the results of the 2019 elections will contribute to shaping this future. The media as a political mediator have an important role in informing citizens and reflecting public opinion. The main purpose of the proposed paper is to answer the following research question: to what extent media messages during the pre-election campaign in Bulgaria of a non-party national daily “Trud” (Labour) are focused on understanding the changes to be made to the EP in 2019 instead of tackling of interior political issues?

Using the method of content analysis, the study monitor the interpretative texts of “Trud” daily on the topic during the three weeks of the campaign (10-31 May, 2019). The study is limited to two research tasks: to distinguish the political messages transmitted via the selected media; to outline the relevance/irrelevance of media reflection to the objectives of the campaign.

In the course of the study, a series of questions are put forward also, specifying the research objectives: What is the predominant argument in publications? What is the general expressed attitude and leading intonation? What are the main and additional topics? What are the keywords and phrases? Are there any propaganda and manipulative techniques used to influence certain public attitudes?

*Keywords:* European Parliament, pre-election campaign, content analysis, media reflection, media message.

With the crossroads that the EU is facing after Brexit and the danger of a sharp turn to the far right if European populists and nationalists succeed in creating a common fraction in the European Parliament in mind, the European Parliamentary elections in 2019 were considered crucial. The European Parliament, as the EU’s only directly elected institution, is at the heart of the debate on the future of Europe making the results of the vote the strokes that will contribute to drawing Europe’s future. And in the current, so called, fourth phase of mediatisation of politics, the media determine how political reality will be perceived

by the audience (Strömbäck 2008, 237). The coverage of European Parliament's 2019 election campaign in Bulgaria was researched by monitoring the non-party national daily newspaper: *Trud* (Labour) which is the most well-traded newspaper suggesting that its media content reaches the largest number of readers. The media as a political mediator in the pre-election race should be convincing people of the importance of these elections and the need to take citizenship responsibility seriously.

The **subject of this study** is the coverage of the election 2019 campaign for the EP on the pages of the newspaper *Trud*. The **aim** is to answer both of these questions: what is the media reflection of the election campaign and specifically, the extent to which media messages are aimed helping people understand the changes that would result from the election results.

This main goal is reduced to the following **research tasks**:

- To distinguish the media's political messages translated from the pages of the selected media in this period (in this case, the newspaper *Trud*);
- To show the relevance/irrelevance of *Trud's* reflections to the objectives of the campaign.

In the course of the research, answers are also given to a series of questions specifying the research tasks:

1. What is the prevailing argument in the publications?
2. What is the general tone in the publications?
3. What are the main topics and the subtopics?
4. What are identifiable keywords and key phrases?
5. Are propaganda and manipulation techniques used to impose the formation of certain public attitudes?

The study was **carried out by the method of content analysis** (quantitative and qualitative) using a prepared **registration card**, designed specially on the purpose. The registration card consists of **12 indicators**: the print edition code; position of the communication item; quantitative characteristic of the communication item; title; author; genre; building arguments; attitude of the author; basic and additional topics; keywords and phrases; general expression in the communicative item and iconic information.

The national newspaper *Trud*, is observed during the most intensive part of the campaign: the three-week period between May 10 and 31 2019. This is the so called campaign's "hot phase"- two weeks before the election day and one week after it.

The **communication item of the analysis** is the entire publication text including the title, headings, subheadings and internal titles. A total of 102 commu-

nication items/publication texts were studied. The quantitative analysis covers both informational and interpretative pre-election political texts. The qualitative analysis covers only the interpretative texts – editorial, comments, analysis, and opinions.

As for the **empirical base which is the object of the study** it is made up of nineteen consecutive editions of *Trud* newspaper. According to a study of the Association of European Journalists in Bulgaria published on November 1, 2018, the selected print medium has the largest number of prints. In a survey of the same period, the agency “Market Links“ ranks the newspaper *Trud* as one of the most influential paper editions still sold on the newspaper market.

There are two working hypotheses that the study confirms or rejects:

1. The newspaper’s reflection is aimed to help people understand the changes and the work of the European Parliament, which makes it possible for the audience to make informed choices about candidates for MEPs;

2. The surveyed print medium does not reflect/represent the Euro-elections 2019 adequately and its representation is not relevant to the campaign’s objectives.

*Trud* newspaper exists since March 1, 1936. The newspaper has a daily circulation of about 9,743 editions on a workday and an average of 37,372 for each day on a weekend. According to data of Google Analytics for the second half of 2018 the electronic edition of the *Trud* newspaper which is almost the same excluding the crossword puzzles, etc. has average monthly 2 million sessions and 715 thousand users. The owner, publisher, and editor-in-chief of *Trud Media Ltd.* is Petyo Blaskov.

In Bulgaria 13 parties, 8 coalitions and 6 initiative committees are taking part in the election campaign. They are fighting for 17 seats in the European Parliament. The barrier is an elected result of 5.8%.

The total number of publications pertaining to the European elections in the period under review is 102. It is interesting to note that during the pre-election period the articles are on average 4-5 per day, right after the election day (May 26, 2019) their number rapidly increased – in the edition of 27 May they were 12, on the 28th of May – 13 and on May 29 – 15. These numbers suggest that the editorial and publishing policy of the newspaper finds more importance in the vote itself, Election Day events and the election winners rather than in the interpretations and interpretative logic of the election campaign.

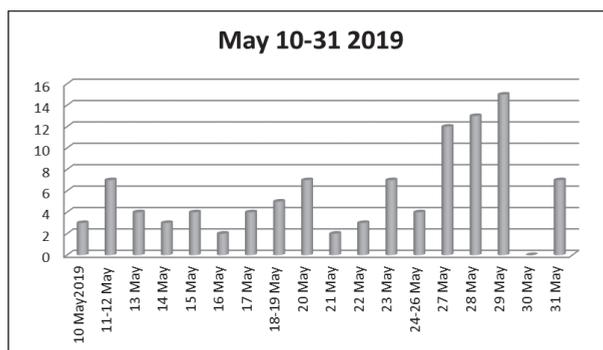


Fig.1. Number of publication items for the period 10-31 May 2019 in the printed edition of *Trud* daily

Regarding the position of communication units, the articles, it is important to note that out of all 102, only 2 are entirely on the first page of the newspaper, 31 are placed on the first page with a continuation of the story on the following pages and the other 69 are on another page.

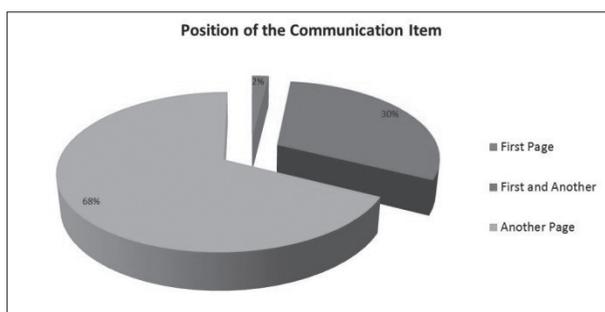


Fig.2. Number of publication items by page

Such placement on one hand may mean that the topic is not ranked as a priority on the paper’s agenda. On the other hand, there are 32 paid materials, graphically marked with the inscription “Euro elections 2019“ and the slogan “Buying and selling votes is a crime“ which is obligatory for paid political advertising and can’t be placed on the front page. The highest number of such agitating article concerned the ruling party GERB-16 and the center-right DPS-8, for which those were the only type of publications. The Nationalist VMRO also has 2 as well as the left-wing “Coalition for Bulgaria“– 1. There are no paid political advertisements for the left party BSP, as well as for VOLIA, both of them represented in the national parliament.

These publications are convincing voters predominantly by focusing on topics related to domestic politics that are not relevant to the European elections.

In their political advertisements, the party GERB focuses on the results already achieved in the country and convinces its voters that no one has and will not do more for Bulgaria than them. GERB also uses the PR technique known as “transfer authority“ in this case to celebrities in support of GERB’s political campaign with the paid interview of Manfred Weber, in which he urges to vote for “Number 12“ because “Bulgaria is playing in First League through the management of GERB“.

The campaign of DPS, represented by the paid publications, relies on negative PR. The first on the election list and leader of the party, Mustafa Karadayi, has been quoted repeatedly with speeches depicting the party as a victim of national politics prior to 1989, and that “whenever there are difficult times it is DPS’s turn to come“.

The messages of the nationalist VMRO, presented by Angel Djambazki, are distinguished by their positions against the negotiations between Turkey and the EU and the opposition of the Bulgarian interest to the interests of the Union – on that subject he says “Bulgaria is not a colonial country so we shouldn’t pay those bills“. Other highly covered topics are benefits that the Roma minority is receiving, Turkish language in Bulgarian textbooks, family values (which are obviously non-European issues), double standards and the widely discussed Mobility package. Europe is qualified as an “economic giant and geopolitical dwarf“.

“Coalition for Bulgaria“, which includes 7 left parties, is represented in *Trud* daily through an interview with the leader of ABC party Rumens Petkov. In the interview the following topics were touched; the sanctions against Russia, energy and double standards. Mainly, the PR technique of “negative identity“ is used with the accusations of other political figures about important national decisions and policies such as the concession of the airport, the construction of the Belene nuclear power plant, etc.

Although there are no paid publications to agitate for the party BSP, the party is subject to commentary texts, with an emphasis on its internal division.

Another example of a party for which no paid advertisements were published, but was reflected on the pages of *Trud* daily, is the right-wing Democratic Bulgaria party. The articles comment negatively on the origins of the funds for the party’s campaign and the fact that the party has put forth MEP thanks to protest vote. Here again, the focus has been shifted away from the actual European themes.

The other political candidates for MEPs are hardly reflected in the newspaper's publications.

According to the quantitative analysis, some European issues, such as the Mobility package, the proposal for an EU minimum wages, the euro-bureaucracy, the double standards, are subject to comment, but in proportion to all editorial they are less than one fifth - 17.8%.

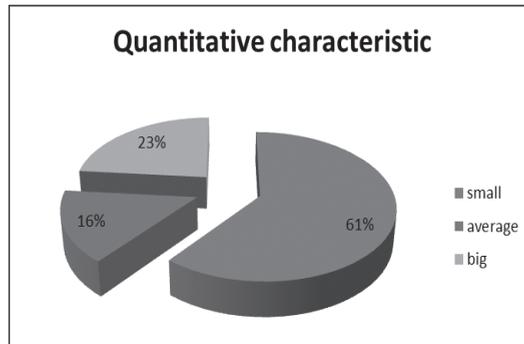


Fig.3. *Quantitative characteristic of the communication item: small-volume texts (up to 30 lines); average text volume (between 30 and 100 line items); big ones (over one hundred lines)*

The ratio in the quantitative characteristics of all communicative units is in favour of small-volume texts (up to 30 lines), which are 62. Such a ratio is typical for daily print media. The average text volume (between 30 and 100 line items) is 16 and the big ones (over one hundred lines) are 24.

In terms of genre division, information publications predominate with the number of 74, at the expense of the interpretative articles – only 28. The information: interpretation ratio is approximately 3: 1, which is just the opposite of the characteristic of a quality media. The general tone in interpretative publications is predominantly negative. A positive attitude is expressed only in 4 communication units.

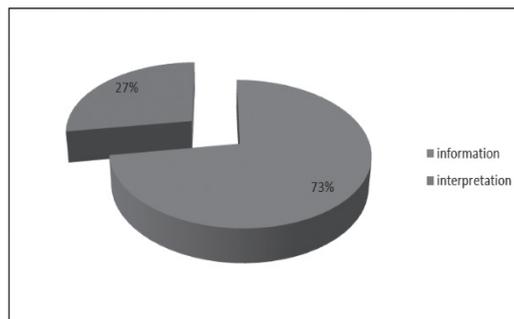


Fig.4. *Number of publication items by genre*

The construction of argumentation in the interpretative publications is relatively balanced between ambiguous, emotional and rational (10: 8: 10). Of these, the attitude of the author in 8 publications is one of stating facts, in 8 – it is one of posing a problem, in 6 – provoking, denying – in 2, ironizing – in 2 and only in two publications – validating. Interpretative publications according to the author’s position are predominantly negative – condemning, offensive or ironizing. The authors of the *Trud* newspaper discuss problems of contemporary Bulgarian politics, such as clientelism and corruption, the raising scandals in the ruling party, the economic illiteracy of the political class, the personal gain of the government. The insane speeches of MEPs candidates are also one of the frequently discussed topics in analyzes and interviews in the daily newspaper. In all interpretive publications signed by the editorial staff of the *Trud* newspaper the attitude is also predominantly negative. It seems like the media is criticizing the entire political class involved in the euphoria of the European elections. The assertive position is only visible in 5 paid interviews, where the questions look either glorifying or validating, but prepared in advance so that the interviewee can present in his/ her best light in his/ her answer.

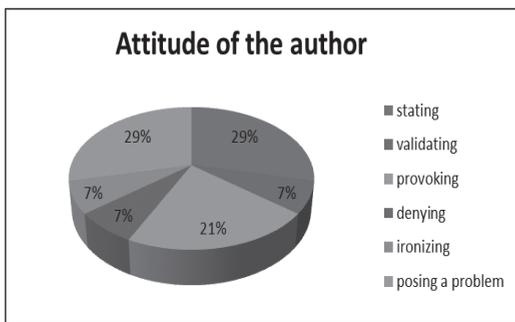


Fig.5. Number of articles by author's attitude

Almost half of the titles are quotes from party leaders, candidates for MEPs or other politicians. Most titles include GERB - 22 publications, followed by DPS - 8, VMRO - 3, BSP - 2, Democratic Bulgaria - 3, ATAKA - 1, Coalition for Bulgaria - 1 publication. Other titles include predominantly technical information about voting sections, machine vote, software, machine rentals, newsletters, complaints, preferences, inaccurate sociological forecasts.

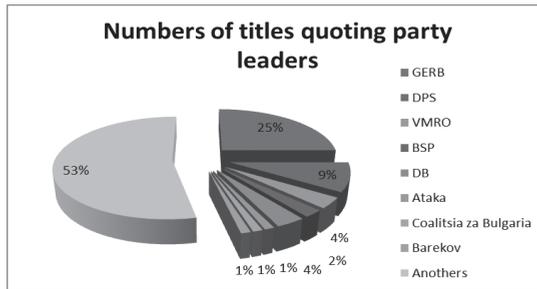


Fig.6. Titles according to mentioning some party

There is no publication about the functioning, the work and the possible changes in the European Parliament. There is also no real ideological clash in the pre-election race and it is rather represented as a “plot“, in which “everyone is lying“ using “insignificant pre-election talk“, such as “lashing“ and “rumbling“. There is a slight presence of Eurosceptic talk, according to which “European foundations throw millions to form a European identity of the Bulgarians“, and “political correctness is the new censorship“. Among the only relevant European issues touched by authors are the proposal for EU-wide minimum wage and the absorbed EU funds - both reflected in a negative attitude. The first one defined as “neither correct nor feasible“, and the second one like “huge mess“, “constraints“, “racketeering“, and “supercharging.“ The theme for Russia also appears sporadically as part of the “European architectural security“ according to the ABV party’s assessment in it’s paid interview. Domestic policy issues that should be in the focus of media attention during national elections - wage increases, GDP, pensions and child allowances – dominate.

In a nutshell, the topics having the greatest audibility in society are exploited. The campaign looks like a manipulation to attract the audience with desirable but vain populist promises.

The debate is not about the future of Europe, but about the future and the achievements of GERB, the internal party struggles in BSP and the opposition between the two parties. Interestingly, astrology and numerology are included in the prediction of the results of the European elections. In just one post, on the front and inside, it clarifies what the members of the Euro-Parliament DO NOT: raise salaries, recalculate pensions and give up child allowances, and that a radical new political situation in the country will not emerge from their election.

The keywords and phrases used are heavily negatively charged: “bustle“, “catastrophic suggestions“, “intra-party fights“, “bullshit“, “far from reality“, “election bullies“, “banal propaganda“, “scandals“, “cries“, “political and moral

grief in electoral lists”, “party propaganda”, “arrogance”, “unworthy games”, and “compromise”.

There is almost no publication without iconic information - photographs, inscriptions and cartoons that enhance the suggestions and messages transmitted by the media.

In a summary about the coverage of the election campaign for the European Parliament 2019 on the pages of Trud newspaper the following can be said:

- From the published 102 publications prevail the information texts, with proportion 3: 1, many of which are paid. In the interpretative publications - analyzes, comments, interviews and opinions, journalists interpret the vote so as to create a negative attitude towards the election;

- The newspaper should be a platform for political messages from across the political spectrum, but the number of publications for the ruling GERB is greater than others;

- The participants in the political communication, political actors, are portrayed in a burlesque way as “liars” “people who guarantee insecurity and instability”, and people who “speak irreverently”. Potential MEPs are “settling their own happiness in Brussels”, “people who want big salaries”. Bulgarian voters, on the other hand, are portrayed as disinterested in the work of the European Parliament and, therefore, uninterested in voting in the European elections, but also as discouraged and scorned by political corruption.

- The media agenda is able to enter the public agenda because the politicians include in their campaign the topics that are often discussed by the society and are socially significant – incomes, mobility, education, Bulgarian language as the only official language in Bulgaria. However, these are not topics which concern the candidate MEPs. The messages of politicians are propaganda and manipulative ones aimed at the voters’ voices, not at concrete solutions for the future of Europe;

- In addition to the lack of debate on core European topics and prospects in the paid publications analyzed, the newspaper’s overall media message is not aimed at understanding the changes that would result from the election results. The suggestion is that politicians only create new intrigue; they do not say anything meaningful in the debates. In the interpretative logic of the media, low voter turnout is due to the lack of faith in the political elite by citizens. The general conclusion is that Bulgarians are less interested in European issues, and elections are a battle for power in the country and a pompous vote for the personal happiness of seventeen people. The results of these, so called “boutique”, elections are

considered catastrophic for all parties where Bulgarians are distinguished from their own political class.

The representation found within the *Trud* newspaper highlights a few dominating events – the scandals about the properties bought by politicians on falsely lowered prices, the frauds with the guest houses and euro funds, the corruption on all levels of the political elite, resignations and compromises, the untrue forecasts for the elections, but there is no discussion about the future of Europe.

In that sense, this research denies the first of the working hypotheses and confirms the second one, according to which the printed medium did not reflect the European elections in 2019 adequately and media reflection is not relevant for the purposes of the campaign. Too many are Bulgarian, domestic issues, and European issues are almost entirely absent. Instead of pro-European or anti-European, the great debate is which of the two parties - the ruling GERB or the opposition BSP to lead.

GERB's victory in the European elections is presented not as a result of a good campaign nor as valuable politicians, but rather as a lack of motivation among Bulgarian citizens and a vote of hard cores. The European and Bulgarian public agendas are not related. The media's reflection of the newspaper does not clarify the positions of individual political subjects on key themes of EU development - climate, security, migration, equalizing living conditions between the richer North and the poorer South, strengthening the role of the EU in the world, etc. The focus of the media attention is on internal party fights, scandals and close party issues. The reflected campaigns of the political players point not to a European election, but to a general rehearsal for future local and parliamentary elections.

We can speculate that predominantly negative talk in the public pre-election discourse discourages and disgusts the electorate and is among the reasons for the low voting turnout afterwards. With a turnout of nearly 33%, Bulgaria ranks sixth in Slovakia, Croatia, Slovenia Portugal and the Czech Republic, although there is an increase over the 2014 elections in those countries. In Bulgaria, the decrease of the participation's elections activity is of 4% compared to the previous European elections, the largest in all European Union countries.

In reflecting election campaign for the 2019 European Parliament the *Trud* newspaper tells us not to think about the modern challenges that the EU will face from now on, but about the “quarrels of the political class“. So media might facilitate but also confuse public responsiveness and this can affect political processes for years, or at least until the next election.

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# MEDIA POLITICIZATION: THE CONSTRUCTION OF MANIPULATIVE SPEECH IN THE CONTENT OF ROMÂNIA TV, BEFORE EP ELECTIONS

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*Abstract:* Media politicization has become a growing problem in recent years. The political interests of media institutions translate into content that more and more distorts the truth, especially with regard to the political sphere. Romania is not an exception to this situation, as television seems to be a propaganda tool in this respect.

This paper analyzed one of the five news televisions in the country, RomâniaTV, known as the supporter of the ruling Social Democrat Party. The paper focuses on how the manipulative speech is built, and to what extent does it happen. The analysis was conducted during the last week of campaign for the European Parliament elections, and the days after it, in order to gain an accurate perspective on the television's editorial policy.

*Keywords:* propaganda, manipulation, television, Romania, European Parliament, elections.

## Introduction

The Romanian political landscape has changed during the last few years. New parties were founded, which succeeded to gain the electorate's sympathy. The European parliamentary elections, which took place on May 26, 2019, brought an historic defeat for one of the biggest party in Romania, the Social Democratic Party (PSD), which decreased in the voters' preferences, due to repeated attempts to change the penal laws, in favor of some party members. The popularity of the PSD president, Liviu Dragnea, has dropped drastically, along with that of the party. Meanwhile, the new parties, as the Save Romania Union and the Party of Freedom, Unity and Solidarity (2020 USR-PLUS Alliance) gained more and more trust. After a record breaking turn-out (49,02%), the Na-

tional Liberal Party (PNL) won the elections (27%), followed by PSD (22,51%) and USR-PLUS (22,36%).

This paper aims to analyze the way RomâniaTV, a news TV station, reflected the political events before the elections, considering that it is a well-known fact that it usually supports PSD. The analysis focuses on how the speech is built and which are the ways in which the support towards this party is provided. At the same time, the editorial policy after elections was analyzed, considering that in 27th May, Liviu Dragnea was sentenced to 3 years and 6 months of prison, for corruption.

## 1. Literature review

### 1.1. Political talk show

Mass media provide a platform for parties and candidates, to express their ideas and to gain the trust of their voters<sup>1</sup>. Talk shows, one of “the most attractive genres for politicians”, represent “hybrid media phenomena”, characterized by dynamism, which leads to reinventing themselves, by transgressing their own rules<sup>2</sup>. Specifically, the political talk shows offer a space for debate and interpretation of the main political ideas, so that the public achieve better understanding of the political landscape and can choose<sup>3</sup>.

When analyzing talk shows, the moderators must be taken into considerations. Varga et. al identified three main categories. The correspondent is conventional, dispassionate and mediates between guests. On the other hand, the comic uses a more humorous approach, even for serious problems. The combatant is the aggressive host, challenging the guests<sup>4</sup>.

Regarding the typology of talk shows, Cornelia Ilie identified five categories of formats, regarding the (1) discussions – political and social matters; (2)

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<sup>1</sup> N. Hayat, A. W. Juliana, and Umber, “Role of Political Talk Shows in Creating Political Awareness among Pakistani Youth: A Case Study of General Elections 2013,” *Social Sciences and Humanities*, 23 (1) (2015): 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cornelia Ilie, “Talk Shows,” in *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, second edition, volume 12, ed. Keith Brown (Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), 489.

<sup>3</sup> Emily Harmer, “Talk Shows, Political”, *The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, ed. Gianpietro Mazzoleni (Hoboken: JohnWiley & Sons, 2015), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Emily K. Varga et al., “The Correspondent, the Comic, and the Combatant: The Consequences of Host Style in Political Talk Shows,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 89(1) (2012): 6.

categories of participants; (3) broadcasting time; (4) organizational conventions; (5) ethical and moral concerns<sup>5</sup>.

### 1.2. Media consumption in Romania

Television remains one of the most popular sources of information in Romania, in 2019. According to *Digital News Report*<sup>6</sup>, 80 % of Romanians declared that they use TV for information, right after online sources, used by 87 %. RomâniaTV is situated on the 7<sup>th</sup> place in public's preferences, with 25 % weekly usage. Regarding the brand trust, the TV station scored 6.87 out of 10, when evaluated by their viewers. In the same time, those who heard about it, but do not use it, evaluated this media outlet as 5.34 trust worthy.

Regarding the audience's profile, *Media Fact Book* shows that the TV station capitalized best on 65+ years old viewers, who live in small cities or in the rural area<sup>7</sup>.

### 1.3. EP elections

As Hix and Marsh concluded, the EP elections are “secondary electoral contests”, fought in the shadow of the national elections, and used by the electorate to punish or to reward the governing parties<sup>8</sup>. Moreover the campaigns mostly focused on national issues, rather than European ones, as study on 1979-2014 time frame shows like<sup>9</sup>. Last but not least, EP elections provide electorate the opportunity to vote for small parties and alliances, for which they would not vote in national elections, due to their low chance to win. Therefore, in 2019, groups like the greens, the Eurosceptics and the nationalists increased their number of seats<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Cornelia Ilie, “Talk Shows.”, in *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, second edition, volume 12, ed. Keith Brown (Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), 490.

<sup>6</sup> *Digital News Report 2019*, [https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/DNR\\_2019\\_FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/DNR_2019_FINAL_0.pdf), Reuters Institute for Study of Journalism, accessed October 10, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> *Media Fact Book* (Bucharest: Initiative Media, 2019), 39.

<sup>8</sup> Simon Hix and Michael Marsh, “Punishment or Protest? Understanding European Parliament Elections,” *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 69, no. 2 (2007): 496.

<sup>9</sup> De Sio, L., Franklin, M. and Russo L. (eds.), *The European Parliament Elections of 2019* (Rome: Luiss University Press, 2019), 9.

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Henning, “European Parliament Elections 2019,” *Political Insight*, September (2019): 19-20.

## 2. Research design

### 2.1. Research questions

This paper aims to answer the following four questions:

(RQ1) Who were the favored politicians and parties and by whom?

(RQ2) Which were the main topics on the political agenda for the European Elections, exploited by RomâniaTV?

(RQ3) Was there an apparent objectivity preserved? How was it built?

(RQ4) To what extent did the editorial policy change after EP elections?

### 2.2. Methodology

The research method applied for this paper is the qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The time frame in which the research was conducted is 19<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May 2019, on the content broadcasted by RomâniaTV in prime-time (7 PM-10 PM). The election day was monitored from 10 AM to 5 PM, resulting in a total of 36 hours.

The sample includes the four talk shows broadcasted in prime time: News line, România la raport, Punctul culminant and Ediție specială.

Since the EP elections took place on 26 of May, this paper focused, at the beginning, on the last week of campaign and on the election day. Finally, the analysis was extended two more days, because on 27<sup>th</sup> May, Liviu Dragnea was arrested, in addition to losing the elections. Therefore, a potential change of the editorial policy was taken into consideration.

In the sample were included the most popular parties in Romania: PSD, ALDE, UDMR (the ruling parties), PNL, USR-PLUS Alliance, Popular Movement Party (PMP), and PRO România (opposition parties). Regarding the politicians, the comments about the party leaders were quantified, but also about the first three candidates on the EP elections list. The prime-minister, Viorica Dăncilă, was also included, considering her key position in ruling the country.

While counting the positive, negative or neutral comments, the ones made by the invitees and by the moderator were taken into consideration.

### 2.3. Data collection

The data was collected manually, using the analyzing grid as a research instrument. The grid consisted of items referring to each element taken into consideration: reflection of the political parties and politicians, the main topics of discussion and the attitude of the moderator. Each positive, negative or neutral comment was counted, and each reference to a certain topic as well. Furthermore, the moderator was closely analyzed, considering indicators of objectivity or the lack of it: interventions, strong opinion involvement, and the tone of their voice, in relation to the interlocutor: a member of a ruling or opposition party.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. Before elections

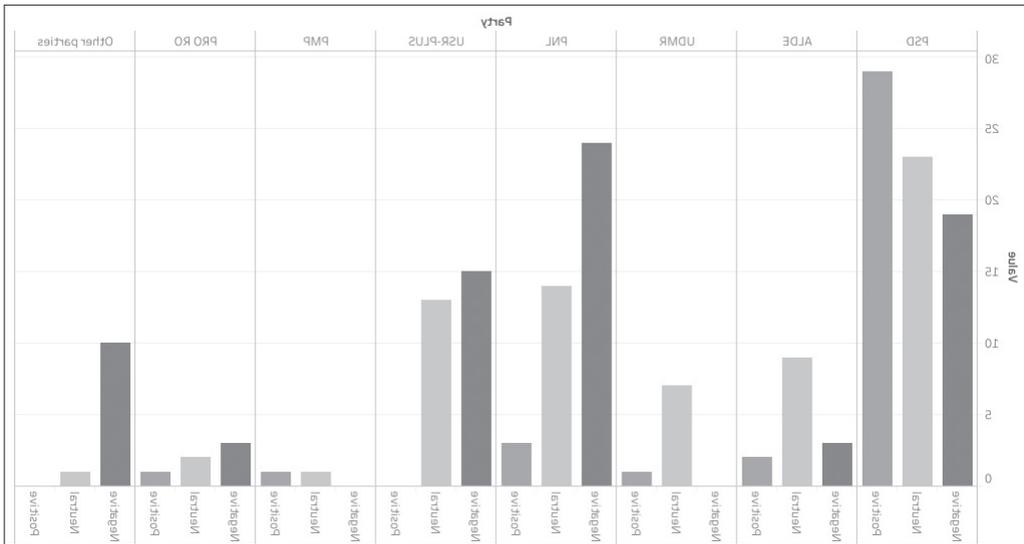


Figure 1. Representation of the main political parties, before elections

As expected, the Social Democrat Party was the one with the most positive references. There were 28 positive remarks, made by the invitees or even by the moderator. It is common for PSD to receive such appreciation, being, in fact, the only party that has this kind of treatment. PNL is on the second place, but all the positive comments were made by the party members, who were invited to the talk shows. The other two ruling parties were not treated positively to a significant extent. No positive comments were made about USR-PLUS, one of the main opposition parties.

It must be noted that the most negative comments were made towards PNL and USR-PLUS. PSD also had this kind of remarks, although all of them were made by the opposition members, not by the experts and specialists, nor by the moderators.

Counting all the references to a party, PSD is the most discussed about, with 70 comments, followed by PNL, with 41 comments. USR-PLUS had a less important place in the discussions, being mentioned only 28 times.

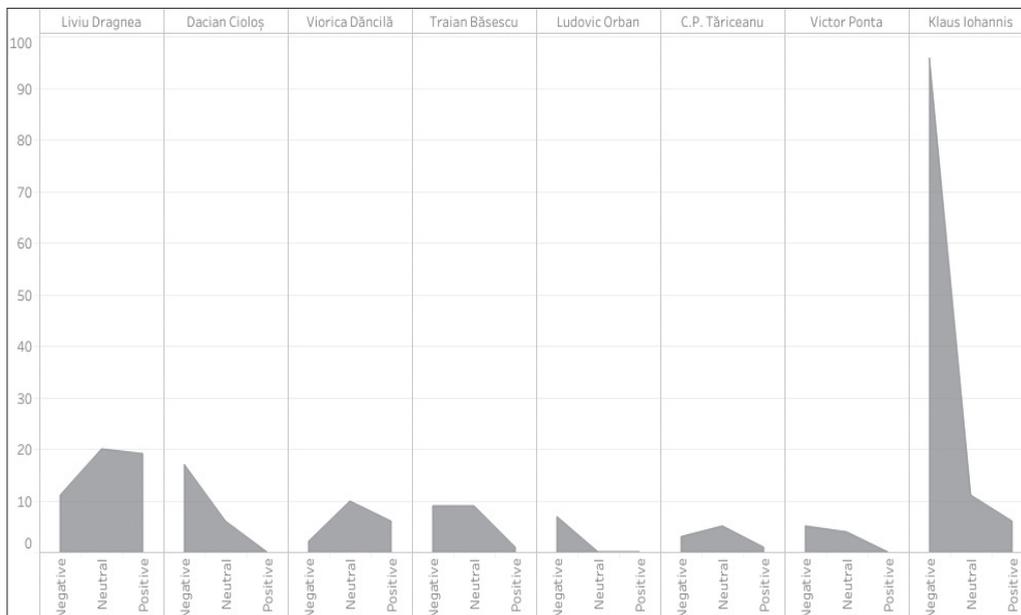


Figure 2. Representation of the main politicians, before elections

As for the main politicians, the president Klaus Iohannis was by far the most talked about politician. The six positive comments were made by the PNL members, but the negative remarks predominate, 96 in total, made by all the guests and moderators. The whole opposition was concentrated under Klaus Iohannis's image, who was portrayed as the main enemy of PSD. Therefore, all the problems in the society, which were discussed through the talk-shows, were attributed to the president, who was regarded as an obstacle in the governing parties' way.

Liviu Dragnea was mentioned 51 times, 20 of them representing a positive manner, much more than any other candidate, which indicates the television's sympathy for this politician.

The other politicians taken into consideration, as mentioned in the methodology, were not included in the figure above, because there were no comments about them. The absence of the candidates from the debates shows the lack of interest for the European elections.

Correlating the representation of the politicians with the one of the parties, a main conclusion can be drawn: the most discussions were about the parties, not about candidates, the only predominant nominal situation being Klaus Iohannis.

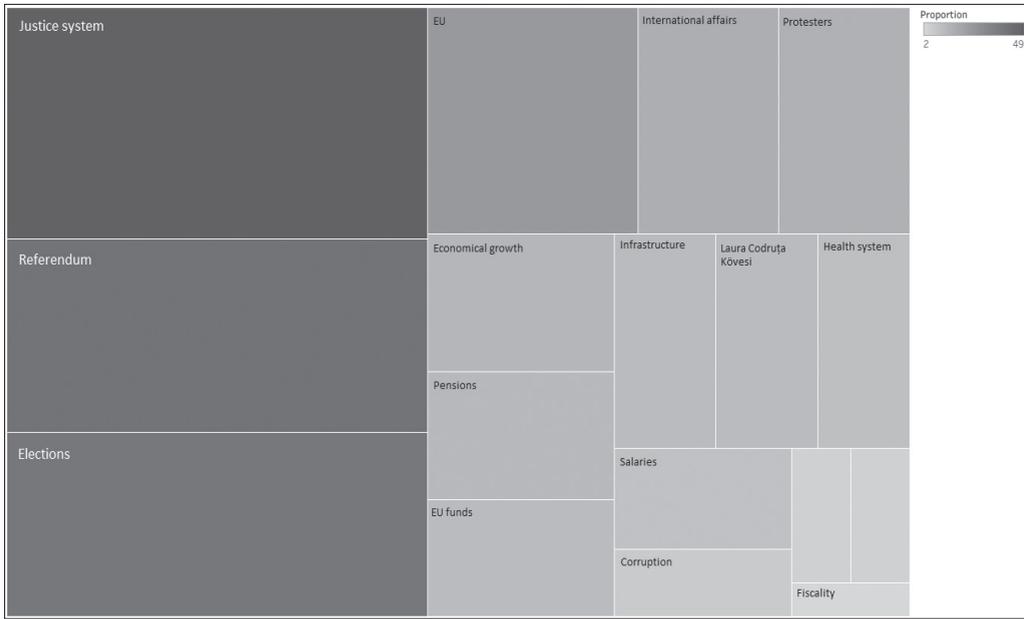


Figure 3. *The political agenda during the last week of campaign*

Since an arrest warrant was issued (December 2016) on behalf of Sebastian Ghiță, the owner of RomâniaTV, the television focused on damaging the image of the magistrates and the justice system itself. Furthermore, Liviu Dragnea and several members of PSD were being prosecuted in the last years, thus this anti-justice system campaign was intensified. As a result, 42 comments about justice system were negative and only 5 of them were positive. In the same time, the anti-corruption fight, which was one of the main topics on the public agenda in Romania in the last 3 years, was not discussed in these talk-shows.

The term “elections” refers strictly to the electoral process, and it does not include any other topics, related to EU affairs, the place of Romania in the EU, and the candidates for the European Parliament.

An overview on this topics shows that the theory expressed by De Sio, Franklin and Russo applies: the national problems, like the justice system, the referendum, the economic growth, pensions, salaries or the infrastructure, are more debated than the European ones.

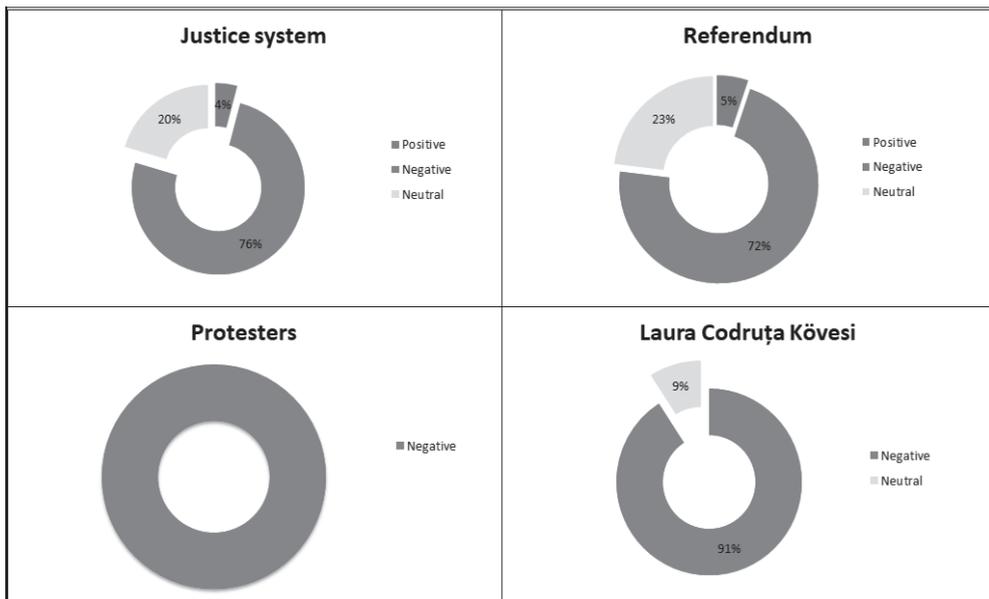


Figure 4. *The reflection of the main topics on justice*

Since the justice system is the most frequent topic, a closer look to the main subjects related to it shows that all of them were negatively approached. The referendum, which was the president's idea, was mainly discussed in unfavorable contexts. Also, Laura Codruța Kövesi, the former chief prosecutor of the National Anti-Corruption Directorate, was treated in a negative manner. Some of the guests, along with the moderators, speculated her intention to candidate for presidential elections, and seriously debated her chances to win. The irony and the speculation dominated such discussions.

Regarding the anti-corruption and anti-PSD protests, which took place in the last three years in Romania, exclusively negative remarks were made. The discussions included speculations about the protesters being paid by George Soros, conspiracies, or excessive violence, which did not take place. The ideas expressed openly by PSD, since the beginning of the protests, are similar to these, which is another indicator of the support of this television towards the ruling party.

### 3.2. Elections day

On the elections day, RomâniaTV respected the law. From 10 AM to 5 PM, the analyzed time frame, no references to politicians or parties were made. The media outlet relied on sensationalism, and constant negative comments about

the referendum were made. For instance, the attendance for the referendum was always expressed like “Over 300.000 Romanians refused to vote for the referendum”, without mentioning that one million did vote. After 11 AM, RomâniaTV was announcing the president’s “major preoccupation”: “The limit-percentage which creeps president Iohannis. What did the head of the stat just found out?” The answer to the question has never been given.

Starting with 1PM, RomâniaTV was announcing that they have the results of the elections, but cannot reveal them until 9PM, when the polling stations close. During the day, in the studio was set up a computers area and the sociologist Mirel Palada pretended that he can see the results in real-time. Huge turn of events, from one minute to another, was announced, without specific details. Furthermore, starting with 3PM, the TV station announced that the results will be revealed exclusively by RomâniaTV, at 9PM, although all the press institutions have this information at the time the vote is closed.

While the press institutions constantly published images with diaspora voters, who stayed for hours at endless queues for voting, and the social media abounded of texts and images on this topic, RomâniaTV avoided this subject. PSD was harshly criticized for the way it organized the elections, being suspected of bad intent (because this party has few supporters in the diaspora), but RomâniaTV did not broadcast such information and images. When the subject was brought up, however, there were conspiracy discussions, and the guests addressed ironies: “They complain that they had been waiting for 20 minutes. Even when you buy cigarettes you have to wait 20 minutes.”

### 3.3. Post-elections days

Starting from 9 PM sharp, the moment the preliminary results were announced, and PSD’s loss was clear, RomâniaTV completely changed the angle of approach. Expressions like “a hard slap from the electorate”, “PSD kneeled” or “will they be in government until morning?” took place of positive comments regarding the party or Liviu Dragnea, the negative remarks towards Klaus Iohannis stopped, and Dacian Cioloş was invited to a live interview.

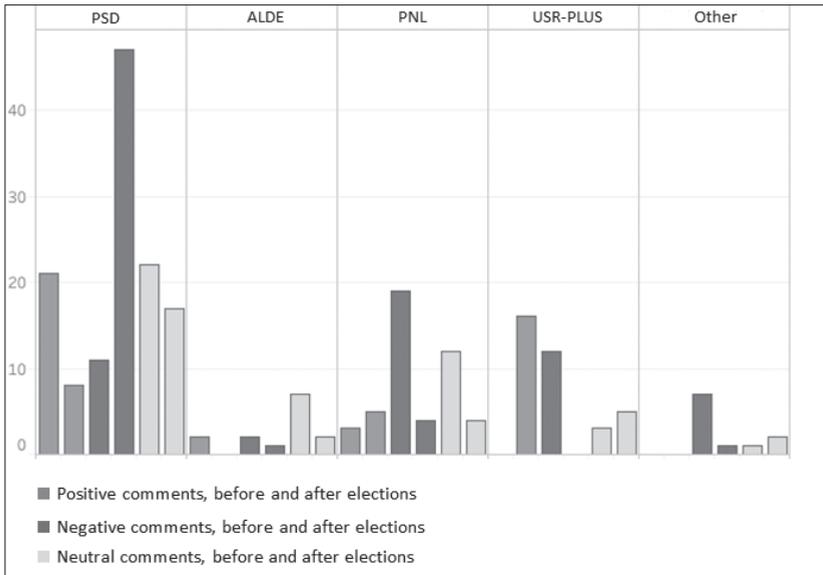


Figure 5. Parties' representation, before and after elections

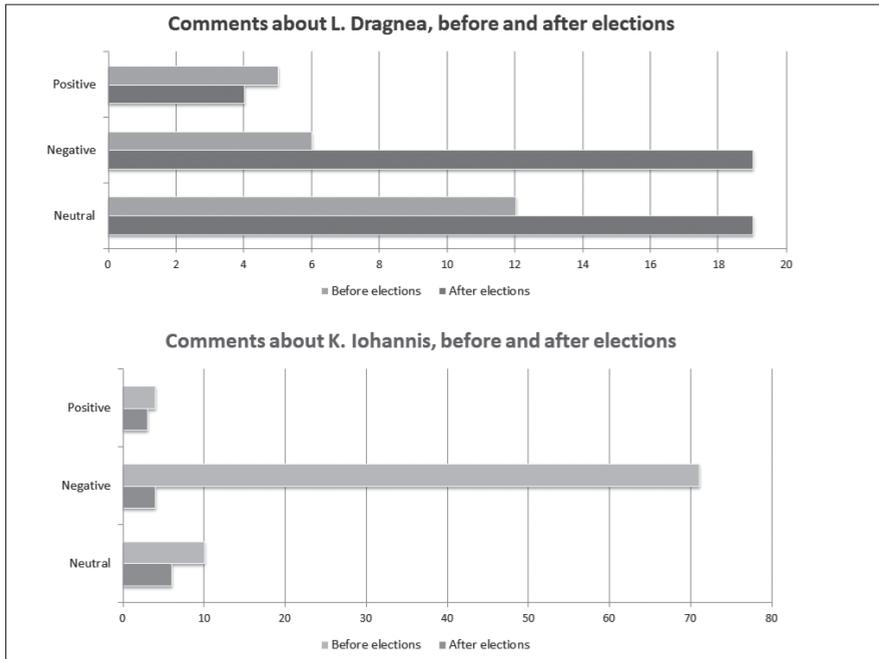


Figure 6. Comments about L. Dragnea and K. Iohannis, before and after elections

For comparison, the last two days of campaign and the first two post-election days were taken into consideration. As Figure 5 shows, the nearly 50 negative comments about PSD reveal a change of the editorial policy, completed by the 16 positive remarks about USR-PLUS, which did not happen before.

A total change of approach has occurred regarding the most discussed politicians, Liviu Dragnea and Klaus Iohannis. As shown in Figure 6, negative comments about the PSD president tripled, the significant difference being made by the fact that, at this point, they were made even by the moderators. In the same time, negative remarks about Iohannis suddenly stopped. The high number of comments about the social-democrats indicated that they were the main subject of the evening.

### 3.4. The moderators' role in manipulation

One of the main conclusions regarding this television is that the moderators have one of the most important contributions in manipulating and promoting certain politicians. It is a rare situation in which the moderator takes care that all the representatives of the parties, present in the studio, have the same amount of time to talk, not to be permanently interrupted, not to be offended, and not to be spoken to badly.

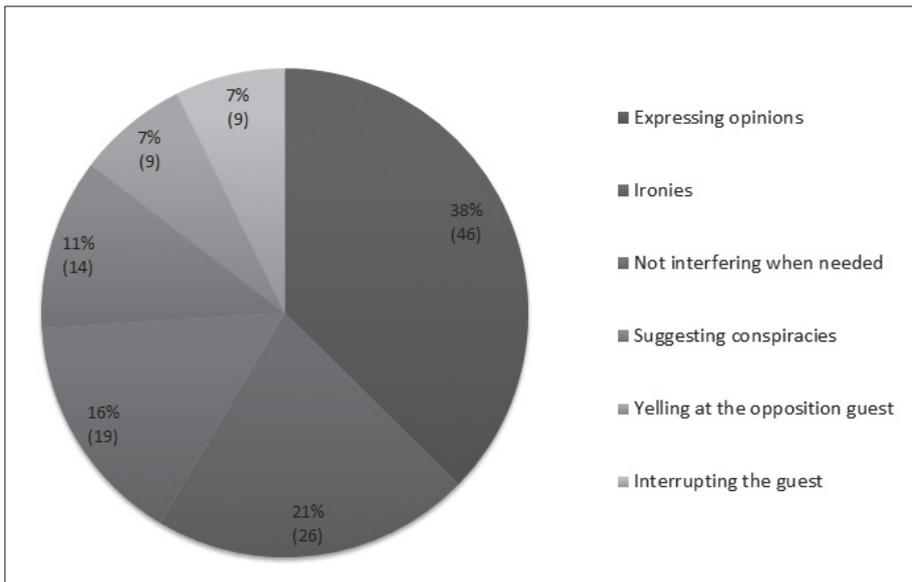


Figure 7. *The moderators' role in manipulation*

The manipulation is produced mainly by the consistent help of the moderators. This research shows that they are strongly involved in the discussions, by expressing their opinions, which are usually supportive towards PSD. Also, the opposition representatives are ironized as soon as they start talking, especially by Victor Ciutacu (host of *Punctul culminant*). Moderators do not intervene when a non-PSD candidate is not allowed to speak by the other guests. Moreover, in 18 of the cases, the moderator himself yelled or interrupted the invitation repeatedly.

#### 4. Conclusions

By far, the favored party was PSD, and its leader was the most appreciated politician. Positive comments were made by the guests, along with the moderators. Moderators had a key role in this process because they decided which invitees talked and for how long. The opposition parties' members had the opportunity to express only a few ideas, and they were interrupted, by the moderator or by other guests, any time they made negative remarks regarding PSD.

The main topics on the political agenda for the European Elections, exploited by RomâniaTV, were concentrated around the justice system, reflected negatively. There were also national subjects, like pensions, salaries, infrastructure or economic growth. The issues concerning the EU were related to European funds and the EU itself, without any specific details.

One of the main conclusions is that Romania TV is characterized by a partisan attitude, hidden under an apparent objectivity. This is given by the guests from different political parties, who provide the perspective of equidistance. However, after a closer look, these guests are not assured of their right to reply and the possibility of expressing themselves without being criticized, interrupted or ironized. At the same time, the apparent objectivity is given by the specialists and experts invited, who are not a part of any party, but who practice partisanship and constantly express their sympathy towards PSD. In the end, one or two representatives of the opposition have to deal with others at least four combatants: the moderator, the PSD guests, and the experts and specialists. As a result, promoting PSD interests is not explicitly made, but by: (1) constantly criticizing PSD opponents; (2) not allowing the opposition parties members to speak; (3) anti-PSD guests are significantly less than pro-PSD.

Right after the EP elections, when results were revealed, RomâniaTV's approach changed significantly. Furthermore, after Liviu Dragnea was arrested, the

television started criticizing the party and the leader; the USR-PLUS Alliance started to have a voice in the shows; the moderators themselves started criticizing PSD and making positive comments about USR-PLUS.

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# POLITICAL MEMES AND WHERE TO FIND THEM: THE NEWS VALUE OF ROMANIAN MEMES

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*Abstract:* The political events of recent years have been reflected, to some extent, by grassroots political memes, a trend popular especially on social media. Even more so, in the case of Romania, memes have been seen to permeate their native platforms and seep into the news cycle, as variety pieces.

The aim of this research is to identify and question the relationship between political meme nexuses and mainstream media, in the context of political criticism and entertainment value. Identifying the memes and correlating them with political episodes and actors lies at the center of this research.

The study looks at a year in political memes in Romania, as reflected by the top 20 most accessed news websites, the stories referencing memes and the sources of said memes. The crux of this research can be found in the uses and abuses of political memes, with both intrinsic entertainment and information value, prompting inquiries about consolidated information retrieval from the meme cycle.

*Keywords:* political memes, political humor, Romania, news cycle, Facebook

## **Introduction**

The literature suggests that political satire, as a form of counter-hegemonic discourse, is an apt measuring tool for political satisfaction from the perspective of the voters. Political humor and satire come in an array of formats and are seen to permeate all aspect of the political life, from politicians and their relation to the opposition, to citizens, media outlets and commentators. Having established this, political memes become instruments of dissemination for political ideas and ideals, contextualized by all players in the social media economy.

Our social and cultural practices are changing in order to keep up with the technology used by the people. Technology is, probably, the most important vector for this shift in communication paradigms, while the Internet is mediating

this to-and-fro motion of visual content that helps us communicate better than with words.

At the intersection of needing to voice political satisfaction or dissatisfaction and this shift in communication tools, the study of political memes and their inculcation with the mainstream media arises, culminating in the commodification of culture by news media platforms.

## 1. Literature review

Memes encompass a particular type of political humor, not so dissimilar to visual political satire and political cartoons, as rhetorical forms of critical counter-discourse. In his article on *The social power of political humor* (1990), Nilsen identifies the seminal functions of political humor, extrapolated by Moody-Ramirez and Church to better cater for internet memes: “memes serve politicians in defining political concepts, disarming critics, and relieving tension” and “they let political critics express their criticism” (2019, 1). So following this logic, political memes serve both ends of the political debate.

Tsakona and Popa put the creation of political humor and satire in the hands of opposing entities. They identify as production hubs both politicians (in relation to the opposition) and “journalists, political commentators, artists, cartoonists, ordinary people” (Tsakona and Popa 2011, 5).

Limor Shifman aptly pointed out some of the uses of memes in web-based political participation, as forms of persuasion or political advocacy, as grassroots actions and public discussion (2014, 122-123) scrutinizing the 2012 Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement and the political climate in China. RM Milner went further with the OWS subject and focused his research towards dissecting pop polyvocality in the form of political memes, from a multimodal perspective.

More recent work from Moody-Ramirez and Church (2019) analyses the usage of internet memes in shaping the outcomes of elections via Facebook groups. The authors analyze a corpus of Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump memes, diving into the uses of grassroots participation, borrowing from Milner’s multimodal analysis (2013), on one hand, and classic visual representation of political candidates, on the other hand.

Literature on political memes and political humor reviews their roles, oscillating between information and entertainment. Plevriti (2014) argues that satirical user-generated memes, as a source of political criticism and civil engagement, fall short of actually informing people on political news and current affairs, identifying the main motivations of the viewers in “finding a diversion

from the hardships of daily struggles, and mood management” (Plevriti 2014, 22).

Within the field of medium theory, circumscribing political humor to political discourse can be rendered inefficient, due to the lack of contextual knowledge. Memes spread on social media can only offer so much in terms of context, due to the dynamics of the meme dissemination process. If the memes are picked up by the mass-media, gathered in omnibuses and contextualized, as is the Romanian case, this might reshape the way memes are created and circulated.

Another point to be addressed when inferring on memes as visual-verbal jokes is the crediting of the source. Dynel (2016) proposes in her study of image macros that “jokes are isolated humorous units that are not typically credited to any author and are circulated by members of society in oral or written form” (688). She extrapolates this characteristic to memes, bringing to the foreground a side-discussion: does recognizing authorship play a vital role in decoding the visual implicatures of internet memes?

Political humor and, by extension, political memes, are a though provoking subject. But researching isolated memes can only tell us so much about this practice and about the implications they can have on audiences. Shifman’s definition of memes as groups of objects should be established as a baseline for analyzing political memes.

But within all that has been written in conjecture to memes and mainstream exposure, Stryker’s meme life-cycle (2011) is crucial in understanding the volatile nature of meme phenomena. He theorizes that most memes go through a cyclic motion, starting with the birth of the source material, followed by the discovery of said source material and the appreciation of its intrinsic cultural values. The next step is the jump to a content aggregator, where the value of the material is being negotiated, before being disseminated by word of mouth. The popularity is being noticed by Internet culture blogs, ready to dissect the phenomenon, then picked up by the mainstream media. Commercialization in the last step before the meme becomes obsolete and dies, or goes in a state of latency. For the purpose of this study, the mainstream media exposure will be under scrutiny.

## **2. Research design**

Political memes, as a subdivision of political humor, operate with concepts like political criticism, civic engagement and entertainment value. In the context of Romania, recent year have provided evidence that political memes permeate

the news agenda and are picked up by mainstream media and aggregated in news stories. This presents a shift from how Striker presented his meme like cycle, which might be in need for an update.

The aim of this research is to challenge the aforementioned concepts – criticism, engagement, entertainment – as part of the meme creation process, in the context mainstream media aggregation. The following questions lie at the center of this research endeavor:

(RQ1) Do Romanian political memes cover the whole political spectrum?

(RQ2) Can political memes serve as information tools for the public?

(RQ3) What are the sources of political humor in Romania?

## 2.1 Methodology and tools

The present study reviews the year 2018 in political memes in Romania, following events and people leaving their mark on popular culture, while being deemed newsworthy. The study looks into popular news websites and Facebook meme hubs as nexuses for political memes.

This study favors a quantitative approach to studying Internet memes, building on stable prerequisites regarding content and meme status, based on Shifman's definition. Where automated data collection fell short due to platform architecture, manual collection was employed. A process that could not be automated was identifying the events and characters referenced in the memes. This process was done manually, on the basis of a thorough understanding of Romanian politics and current affairs.

## 2.2 Sampling and data collection

Based on the Romanian Audience and Internet Traffic Study Measure (SATI), the top 20 news websites by unique users were selected and interrogated using the keywords *meme* and *joke*. The news stories with more than one meme referencing Romanian politics and politicians were added to the sample, amassing 15 websites, 62 new stories and 416 images. From these, 14.4% referenced the Utopia Group Facebook page as a source, making it a meme nexus worth examining. Utopia Group is a satire and humor page with more than 160k followers and over 3600 uploaded photos. During 2018, 496 photos were added to the page, 180 referencing Romanian politics.

The research was based on datasets gathered from news media (NM) and from the Utopia Group Facebook page (UG). NM1 = 388 memes collected from news websites were manually analyzed to identify the main character, the event referenced and attribution. NM2 = 61 news stories contains their publishing

date, title and category. UG = 180 memes referencing political content were collected from the Utopia Group Facebook page. The dataset also includes the main character of the meme, the publishing date, and number of comments, shares, likes and reactions.

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1 Memes and the political spectrum

Both news media and Facebook memes were manually sorted into categories according to the event they reference or the character they portrayed. Figure 1 showcases the top 20 categories, by number of memes, color coded according to source. 11 subjects are connected to the power (PSD, Liviu Dragnea, Viorica Dăncilă, the suitcase with incriminating documents, the referendum for prohibiting same-sex marriages), 4 with the opposition (most notably, president Klaus Iohannis and George Soros, as the omnipresent interfeerer), 5 subjects are ambivalent (like the riot police officer in the August 2018 diaspora protests, the Rise Project investigation).

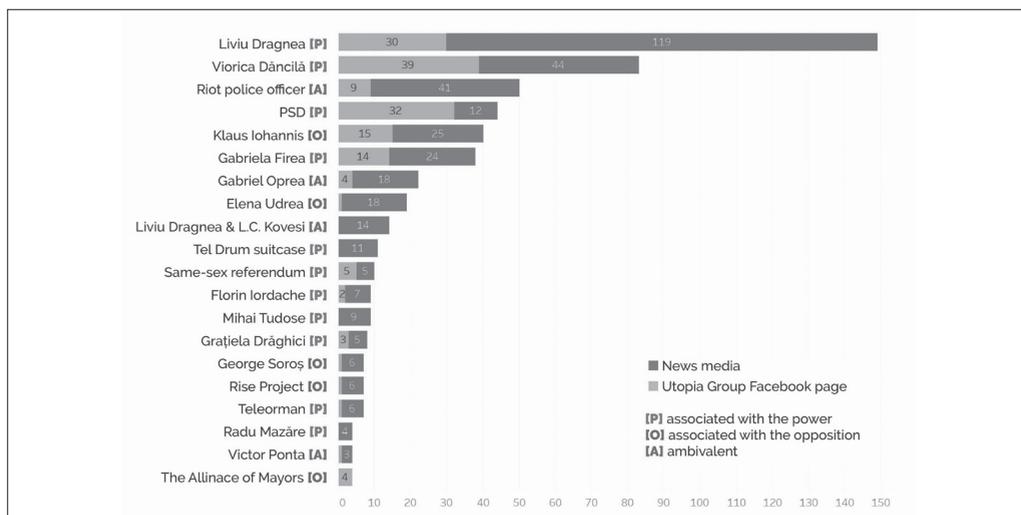


Figure 1: Top 20 subjects by number of memes (UG1=180 meme, NMI=388 memes)

The subjects referenced in the memes are mostly from the Governing party, sourcing prominent events and politicians revolving around PSD. However, there is an anomaly that requires addressing: Klaus Iohannis and his 40 memes.

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, the investigation publication Rise Project announced it came into possession of a suitcase with sensitive documents related to a local company, Tel Drum, which is at the center of a big EU fund fraud and corruption case. Tel Drum was closely tied to the PSD leader Liviu Dragnea. On several external hard drives, Rise Project found memes with the president, which they chose to share with the news media. The Iohannis memes are sourced differently than the rest, rendering them an abnormality.

### 3.2 Memes and information value

For memes to be perceived as a valid information source, they need to cover a wide range of events and actors. For this analysis, the NM1 = 388 memes from 61 news story dataset was examined. The 61 news stories covered 21 subjects, from which 12 were based on political events (highlighted in Figure 2, like protests, convictions, PM changes), 9 on images turned into meme image macro sources (like a selfie taken by Dragnea or magazine covers) and involuntary humor triggered by politicians (like conspiracy threats and speech mistakes).

Figure 2 illustrates the timeline of the 21 stories. The size of the bar chart shows the number of memes on the subject, while the intensity of the color is indicative of the number of news stories covering the subject.

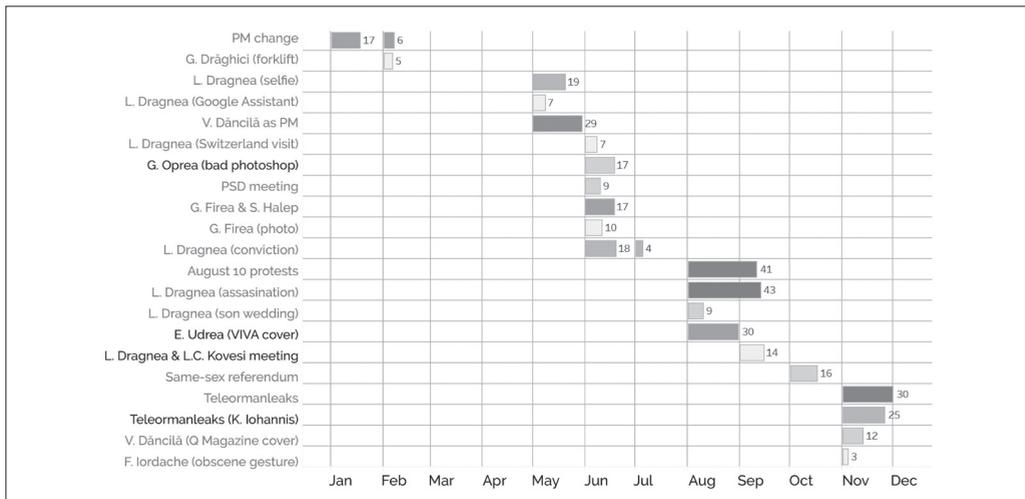


Figure 2: Timeline of subjects covered by the news media with meme articles (NMI=388 memes)

It becomes apparent that the 21 subjects covered through memes by the news media have very little to do with the greater news agenda. The subjects are

cherry-picked on the basis of what Internet users found most engaging, visually and thematically. The bias towards memes and news stories referencing the power uncovered earlier is reinforced by these findings.

Further analysis in the way news media frame stories constructed around memes can be understood through the news co-occurrence network based on the titles of the 61 news stories. The titles sound enticing, promising fun and jokes at the expense of politicians and events, constructed around photos that went viral. The Internet takes central stage in the fulfillment of these promises. This shifts editorial accountability from the news media outlet to the Internet in an unprecedented way.

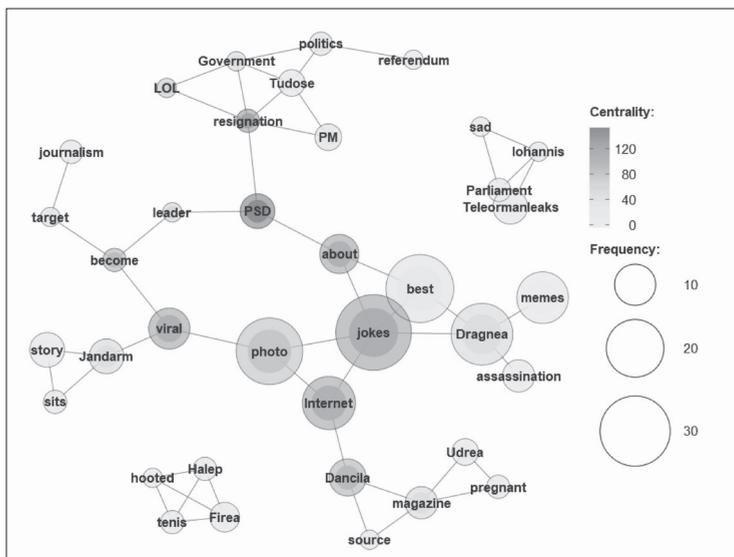


Figure 3: Co-occurrence network constructed on NM2=61 news article titles, manually coded

The majority of news websites use a category system to file their stories. Figure 4 is an alluvial diagram linking news stories and categories, as collected from the news websites. The names of the categories were standardized for the purpose of this analysis. Given that categorizing is a human-mandated task, reading too much into these findings can render flawed interpretations. However, for a media consumer, to see these stories in the *news* or *political* categories can create a flawed interpretation of newsworthiness.

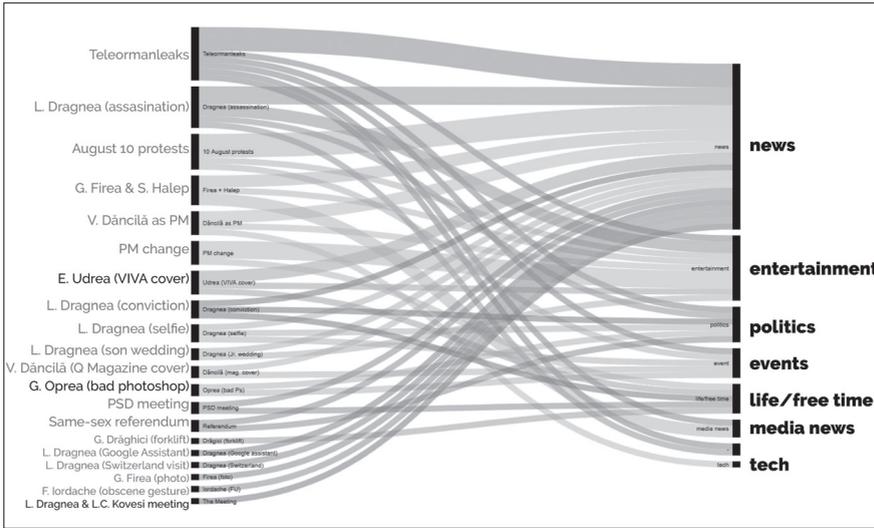


Figure 4: Correlation between article subject and website category (NMI=388 memes)

### 3.3 Political humor in Romania

Political humor is seen to loosely follow the political agenda. Events and images referencing political actors are seen to spark interest by the news media in an inconsistent fashion. Figure 5 illustrates the timeline of the two meme sources, Utopia and the news media.

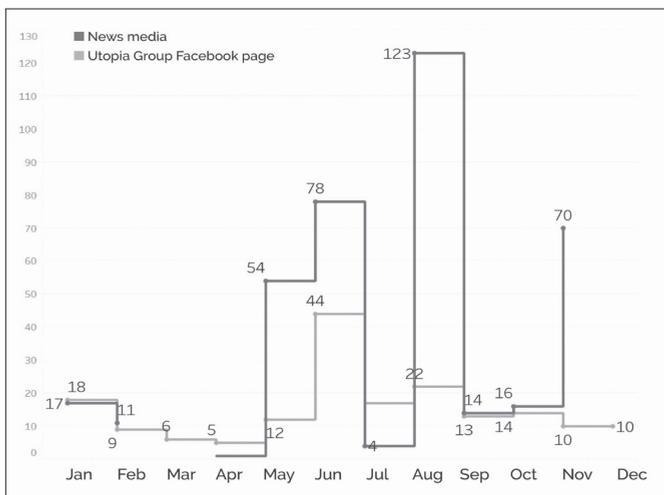


Figure 5: Timeline of number of memes per month, for UG=180 and NMI=388 memes

Utopia's posting of political memes is a fairly coherent practice, with a period of exacerbated posting in June, due to a large number of events and images deemed meme-worthy. However, in August, the month marked by political unrest, Utopia is shown to post memes at an average level. The news media, on the other hand, is discordant in its use of meme-powered news stories, going into overdrive with news stories covering the August protest, the alleged assassination scare and the Teleormanleaks investigation, but also periods of zero activity.

Both events and images are seen to be equally used as source material for memes, in the context of creating identifiable meme-families.

The actual sources of political humor can be traced by following how the attribution of the meme creators is being handled by the authors of the articles. From the 388 memes featured by the news media in their stories, 206 (53%) do not mention the source of the memes. From those that do have sources, 101 memes are credited with the name of the account and 79 by embedding the Facebook post in the article. For our dataset, the identifiable sources for political humor are mostly personal Facebook accounts (46), with pages only covering a third of the sources (21).

#### 4. Findings

This exploratory study in the news value of political memes serves a narrow research interest, being geographically and culturally bound. However, the methodology proposed is shown to provide results, acknowledging the growing interest for political memes and their news value.

The idea that one could follow politics by following political memes lied at the center of this study. Politics in Romania tends to be dichotomous, with the power and the opposition in a constant tug of war, something that was interrogated at meme level. However, the sampled data revealed mostly memes referencing the governing powers and politicians associated with the Social Democratic Party (PSD), with opposition memes being an anomaly. There is no meme war going on between power and opposition, rendering a clear answer for the first research questions: no, political memes in Romania do not cover the whole political spectrum, but are in their vast majority anti-PSD.

As political memes permeate the news cycle, their information value must be challenged. Building on the previous findings and subsequent analysis on triggering events and actors, the study uncovered that even if political memes articles are more often categorized as *news*, they have a more pronounced entertainment value than an information value. So the events and actors featured in

the memes are selected on the basis of their prospective funny-factor, building an uncoherent and uneven news agenda. So even though meme news stories are categorized as news, it might be a result of a faulty taxonomical approach by reporters. When looking at the titles, the meme news stories are constructed mirroring puff-pieces and tabloid titles, focusing on the novel, viral and funny.

The third direction of this study took into consideration sourcing and attribution. Even though meme logic dictates that memes are free for use, the moment they are uprooted from their original platform and integrated on a news website, with ads and revenue, they become commercial goods from which the website benefits. The analysis showed that more than half the memes featured in news stories were lacking attribution.

When analyzing which political events made the cut for mainstream pick-up, the data showed that news media aggregate memes regardless of subject, but look at meme spread and numbers. While the Utopia Group page posted a constant stream of memes throughout the year, not all subjects are also seen in the news media dataset. Furthermore, both images and events provide source material for memes, but they do not affect the likeliness of news article pickup.

## **5. Conclusions**

Social media as a paragon for the democratization of communication in the context of political humor created a segue for citizens to actively participate in this practice. Internet memes are used as tools for building social and cultural capital. However, news media have been shown to feed of the content created in social media without properly acknowledging the content creators. Political content is transformed in puff-pieces criticizing the power, the party and the politicians, in a manner borrowing both from information media and entertainment. The blurring of these lines, accidental or intentional, creates an undefined space where memes are being aggregated and monetized, in an information context, but serving as entertainment.

Memes are free-flowing pieces of cultural currency, but it becomes apparent that news media are piggybacking on private content creators. Writing about viral phenomena has, in itself, information value, but the way these articles are constructed serves a different agenda.

Meme creation is a voluntary and unpaid practice, which gets uprooted and monetized by the news media, generally without referencing the creator of the meme.

In the case of Romania, political memes are one sided, with no prospective meme wars in sight. News outlets known to be friendly towards the power are not represented in the study because they rendered zero articles in the sample search. So the creation of memes in Romania can be perceived as a practice associated with the anti-Social Democratic Party sentiment. This can have different explanation, which are outside the scope of this study, but might be related to the types of electorates the power and opposition appeal to.

Meme creation is a prolific practice in Romania, with many Facebook pages, groups and profiles providing political content to be shared. The dynamic of the meme life cycle is being challenged by the way Romania media handles political memes. The aggregation step is being taken over by the mainstream media, not culture blogs, and commodified. However, the memes do not seem to die, but coexist, both on the original platforms, and on the news websites. A news cyclic motion is being unraveled in the case of political content: the source material is created by the media, remixed, and picked up again, shuffling Stryker's theory.

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# POPULISTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA, QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN RIGHT-WING POPULIST PARTIES, MOVEMENTS AND NEWS SITES

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*Abstract:* New media have shaped and changed the dynamics and places of debate. On-line media and social networking sites have combined a multitude of functions, contents and formats in an interactive environment, providing access to large audiences with the possibility to bypass traditional media and communication channels. For political actors, this creates a possible environment for diverse agendas, frames and biases. With recent elections, held all over Europe, this work examines the way social media are used by right-wing populist actors from Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and the UK. Within a data set of 56.929 posts created by API interrogation, right-wing narrative is analysed, by using semi-automated quantitative analysis, analysing semantic and co-occurrence networks to identify discursive patterns in conjunction with qualitative discourse analysis of messages that generated the highest engagement rates.

*Keywords:* Social media, alternative media, populism, right-wing

## Introduction

In the light of new media, political communication and political marketing have changed. When it comes to communicating ideology and policy online, right-wing populist actors have shown a clear understanding of how the new media can be used for this purpose. Parties, civil movements as well as right-wing media are especially active, when it comes to platforms and networks such as YouTube, Twitter or Facebook. In this regard, Ruth Wodak states that “[o]ne of the salient elements of right-wing politicians’ success is their well-crafted strategic performance on frontstage, in traditional and new media, including social media” (Wodak 2015). Furthermore, the creation of biased information networks can be observed in the light of Web 2.0 (Druxes and Simpson 2015). We further see that “[c]ontent creators have employed the tactics used by brand influencers, along with social networking, to establish an alternative to mainstream news, convey their ideas to audiences, and monetize their content” (Lew-

is 2018). In her *Alternative Influence Network*, Lewis highlights these networks of right-wing ideology. Such alternative media can be seen as an opposition voice, to supposed elitist, traditional mainstream media, “replacing an ideology of ‘objectivity’ with overt advocacy and oppositional practices” (Atton, What is ‘alternative’ journalism? 2003).

This further leads to a discussion about characteristics of contemporary right-wing populism. The “appeal to emotions, fears and prejudices” (Priester 2008), as well as the image about a collective struggling of an oppressed group (Panizza 2005), which “pits a virtuous and homogenous people against a set of elites and dangerous ‘others’ who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice” (Albertazzi, Daniele; McDonnell, Duncan 2007). Also Puhle approaches the term by mentioning a topical flexibility, with a focus on techniques and ways of promotion of ideas or values. Furthermore, he sees a shift towards “*catch-all parties* and the more fragmented, personalized and medially staged politics” (Puhle 2003). The focus on “the challenges of globalization, immigration, corruption” (Mazzoleni 2017) mark a core point of current discussions in politics but definitely a focus of right-wing populist actors in Europe and the United States. Mazzoleni further sets these topics in a more detailed context, when explaining that “controversial issues are devolution, defence of national sovereignty, anti-Islam sentiments, no-euro, and others” (ibid., 2017).

Furthermore, “the formation of a multimodal, multichannel system of digital communication that integrates all forms of media” (Castells 2011) can be observed in the discussion for Web 2.0 and 3.0, which shows how content and format evolve and are shareable on different platforms and networks. Cross platform sharing, user identity, user-created content and increased levels of interactivity (Castells 2011; Lindgren 2017; Lipschulz 2018) have contributed and still do so, to a new environment and new distribution of all kinds of interactive and fluid information. Also, it can be argued that especially social media “break the dominance of ‘mass communication’ mode and its institutionalized forms, as they provide other modes, arenas and contexts, which make different communication contents accessible, for a (potentially) larger number of persons” (Taddicken and Schmidt 2017). In regards to online audiences, especially when it comes to the distribution of opinion, ideology or political content, the discussion for filter bubbles, fragmented audiences and cyberbalkanization has to be addressed. In this regard, Ludwig (2018) talks about a “confirmation bias”, reinforcing one’s own opinion and not necessarily broadening it. On the basis of preferences, similarities and behaviour, algorithms contribute to these filter

bubbles (Pariser 2011), which could ultimately lead to cyberbalkanization and fragmented audiences (Chan and Fu 2017; Farrell, Lawrence and Sides 2010). This would result in affirmation, rather than discussion and change opinion formation, dialogue to a stagnation of reoccurring ideas and topics. Regarding the analysis at hand, it is important to note that “[c]omputer-mediated communication systems are believed to have powerful effects on social relationships” (Kollock and Smith 1996) the concepts of “structure, meaning, interaction management, and social phenomena” (Herring 2013) should be recognized as a basis for this research as well.

In this convergence of new media, alternative and partisan media, as well as right-wing populist actors, this case study focuses on parties, civil movements and news sites from ten different European countries. The basis of the case study presents itself in a data set, consisting of 56.929 Facebook posts, fetched from 30 different Facebook pages over a time period, reaching from 2015 until 2018, including major elections and political events in Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

## **Methodology**

As this research focuses on right-wing populist parties, civil movements and news sites on Facebook, the main criteria for selection were election results, page likes, as well as the level of coverage and the size of the news outlets and movements.

The countries included in the analysis were chosen by political events, such as general elections and referendums, which happened between 2015 and 2018. The parties included represent the most important right-wing populist party for each country, according to election results and page likes. The movements were selected based on suggestions by other literature, page likes and size of protests or gatherings. The news sites were also chosen based on the consulted literature, as well as the individual page likes.

In order to create the data set for the mentioned time frame between 2015 and the end of 2018, the Facebook page ID of each page was introduced in Facebook. Through API interrogation, public data was fetched from the chosen Facebook pages (Jünger 2018). This data includes the initial message of the post and the date, number of comments, shares, likes and reactions. The fetched data was then stored as an Excel and further introduced in two other applications to process and visualize the information. Furthermore, KH Coder was used for another

part of the qualitative analysis. The application is used for computer assisted and quantitative data analysis and text mining (Higuchi 2016) and allows the user to generate tables and infographics, based on word and sentence similarities. It can be further noted that semantic networks, created in KH Coder for example, “identify word groups, or clusters, and quantify the structure of the network at different levels” (Danowski 1993), which allow for a semantic mapping.

This work is guided by several research questions, in order to conduct the analysis:

- What are the forms and contents of right-wing populist discourse on social media?
- What are the frames and biases inside this discourse?
- Can a common agenda of right-wing populist actors from different European countries be established?
- Do narratives and discourses, biases and frames, combined with a common agenda result in a network of international right-wing populist actors?

## Key findings

This case study focused on both, quantitative and qualitative data, so that several key findings can be highlighted, which show similarities between several analyzed countries. The first set of graphics show the publishing activity in all countries, with national and international key events highlighted.

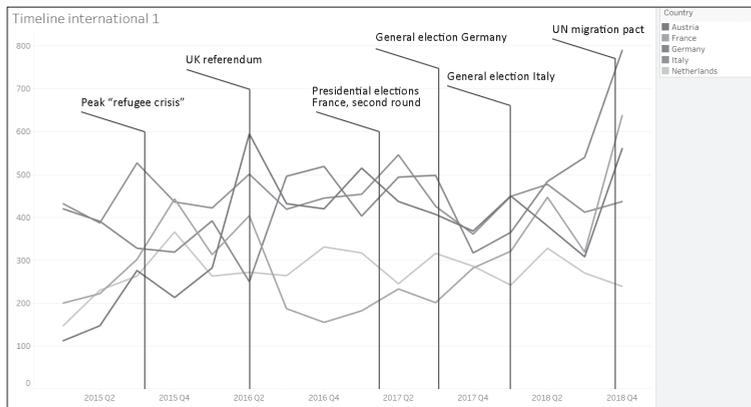


Figure 1 – Publishing activity in Austria, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands between 2015 and 2018.

Comparing publishing activities, several peaks can be highlighted and set into the context of national and international events. High numbers of issued posts occur during the peak of the “refugee crisis” in 2015, the UK referendum in 2016, as well as the UN Global Compact for Migration, the so called migration pact, in 2018. But also national elections can be seen as triggers for posting activities, not only on a national level.

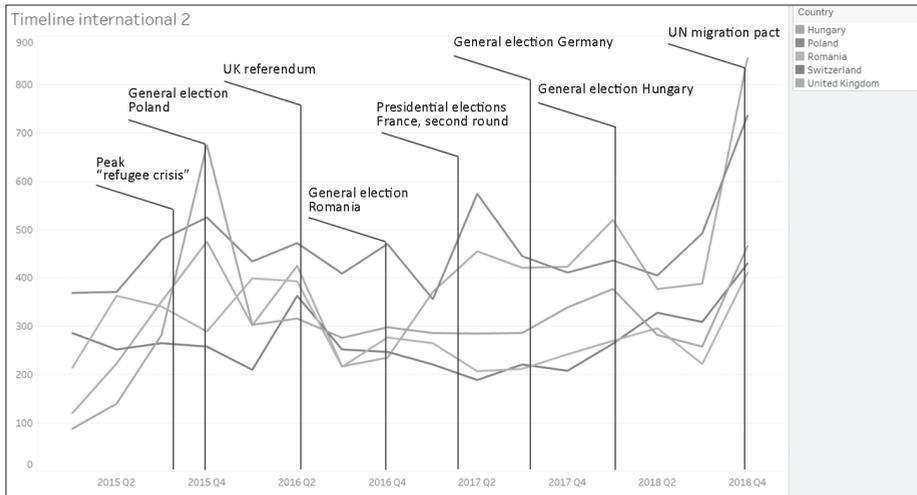


Figure 2 – Publishing activity in Hungary, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and the UK between 2015 and 2018.

For example, during the second round of the French presidential elections several publishing peaks in other countries can be noticed, such as in Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland or the United Kingdom. Another increase can be seen in the period of general elections in Hungary and Italy in early 2018, where Austrian, French, German, Swiss and British pages increasingly publish content. All in all, national and international events can be seen as possible triggers for the publishing activity in several of the analysed countries.

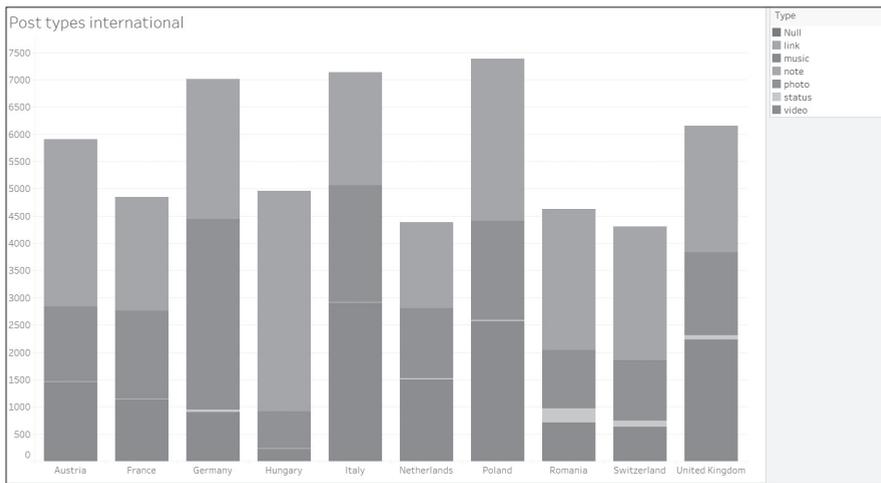


Figure 3 – International comparison of posts by types.

Comparing the formats of posts, three main categories can be highlighted in the international comparison. Most posts that were issued were either links and cross platform sharing or audio-visual material, such as images or videos, directly uploaded to Facebook. The high number of links can also be explained by the fact that news sites were included in this research, who usually share links to their articles. Most links were shared in Hungary, whereas in most other countries, the proportions between links, photos and videos are comparatively balanced.

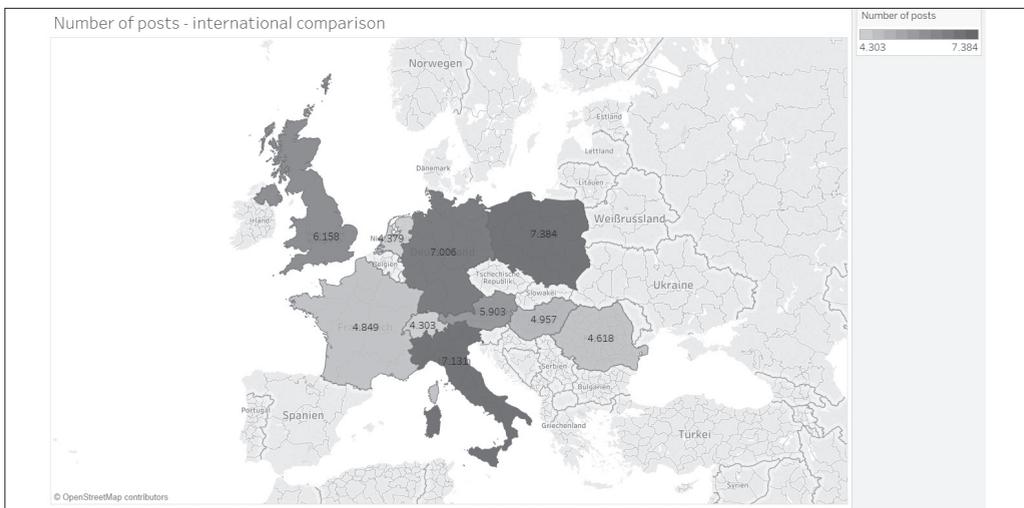


Figure 4 – International comparison of number of posts.

In an overall international comparison of post numbers among all included countries, it can be observed that the countries with the highest output are Poland (7.384 posts), Italy (7.131 posts), Germany (7.006 posts) and the United Kingdom (6.158 posts). The fewest posts were issued by the Facebook pages from Switzerland (4.303 posts).

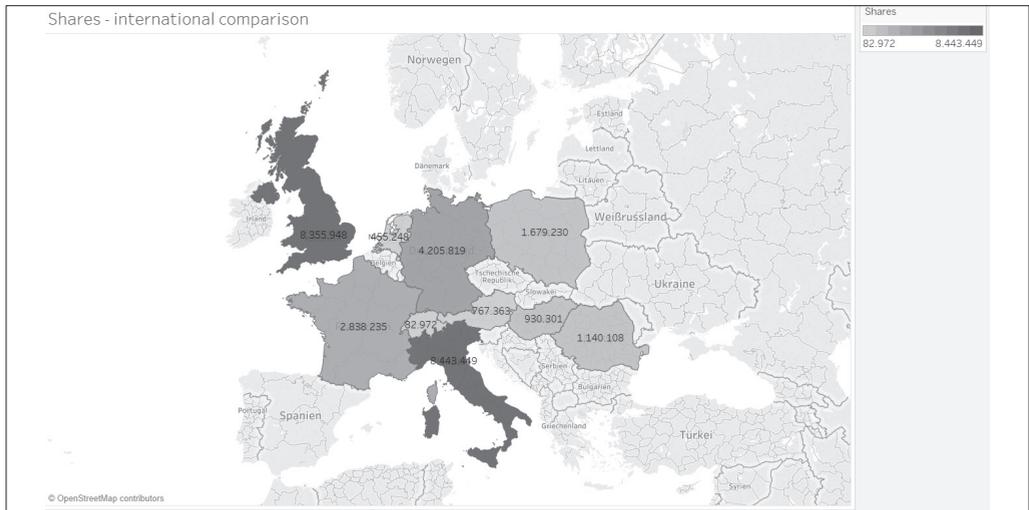


Figure 5 – International comparison of number of shares.

When comparing the numbers of shares for all countries, a slightly different picture can be observed. Italy is the top ranking country in all of Europe, with around 8,4 million shares, followed by the United Kingdom, where posts were shared around 8,3 million times. The lowest number of shares was obtained also in Switzerland, with around 83.000 shares only. This also highlights the multiplication of issued content, as the numbers of posts per country vastly differ from the obtained numbers of shares.

Top 10 shares Switzerland					From.Name
SVP Schweiz Schauen Sie O-Ton Adrian Amstutz in der Debatte zum Zuwanderungsartikel: «Hier wird die direkte Demokratie beerdigt, und diejenigen, die dabei mithelfen, sind Totengräber.» 856	SVP Schweiz SVP wählen: Für den Erhalt von Wohlstand und Arbeitsplätzen, für Sicherheit und Freiheit in der Schweiz. 688	SVP Schweiz SVP ergreift Referendum gegen das revidierte Asylgesetz: Das Gesetz macht die Schweiz noch attraktiver für illegale Einwanderer, Sozial- und Wirtschaftsmigranten, indem unter anderem	SVP Schweiz Adrian Amstutz zum Verfassungsbruch des Parlaments bei der Umsetzung des	AUNS: Aktion für eine unabhängige und neutrale Schweiz Das "institutionelle	■ AUNS - Aktion für eine un... ■ DIE WELTWOCH ■ SVP Schweiz
SVP Schweiz Verfassungsbruch! Das Parlament beschliesst mit 122 gegen 64 Stimmen die Ausdehnung der Personenfreizügigkeit auf Kroatten trotz neuem Verfassungsartikel Art. 121 a (Steuerung der Zuwanderung), der ausdrücklich festhält: «Es dürfen keine völkerrechtlichen Verträge abgeschlossen werden, die gegen diesen Artikel	SVP Schweiz Geschätzte Kolleginnen und Kollegen, nicht geschätzte Verfassungsbrecher, die SVP-Fraktion lehnt diesen Volkswillen verachtenden Verfassungsbruch ab, weil damit die Massenzuwanderung unkontrolliert	SVP Schweiz SVP-Nationalratskandidatin Aline Indergand (TG): "Ich will keine 10-Millionen-Schweiz. Ich will kein zubetoniertes Mittelland, das von einer Bevölkerung bewohnt wird, die ihre Wurzeln zu			
DIE WELTWOCH Heilsame Erschütterung. Weltwoche-Chefredaktor Roger Köppel kommentiert die #Bundestagswahl2017 in Deutschland. 2.342		DIE WELTWOCH Das Resultat der Umfrage Ausgabe 35/17 Die Wahl in Deutschland naht. Wenn Sie Deutscher wären, welcher #Partei würden Sie Ihre Stimme geben? 1.622			

Figure 6 – Top 10 ranking of posts by shares, Switzerland.

In the top ten ranking of posts by shares, all three pages can be found among the best ranking posts. The majority of posts here were issued by the party. SVP here mostly deals with migration, calling it a cause of death, and further refers to unconstitutional changes to the asylum policies and migration policies. It also talks about mass immigration to Switzerland, illegal immigration, social and economic immigration. One of the posts cites an SVP politician, who does not want a Switzerland of 10 million people, who don't even have Swiss roots. The news site's highest ranking posts both refer to the German federal election, held in late 2017. One post mentions Weltwoche's chief editor, who is also member of SVP, even holding a seat in Switzerland's National Council for them. The post of AUNS refers to a neutral and independent Switzerland, as opposed to too much involvement with the European Union.

Top 10 shares Austria			From:Name	
			<input type="checkbox"/> FPÖ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wochenblick	
Wochenblick +++ EILT Unfassbarer Horror in Deutschland! Mindestens acht Männer vergewaltigen in Freiburg ein Mädchen und lassen es in Blut und Exkrementen im Gebüsch liegen. Die Tat wird von der Polizei und den Medien zwei Wochen lang vertuscht. EILT +++ 8.054	Wochenblick Er wollte nur helfen. Doch die eklatanten Missstände bestärkten den ehemaligen Flüchtlings-Helfer jetzt, die unbequeme Wahrheit über die Asyl-Industrie zu enthüllen! 6.021	FPÖ Asyl auf das zurückführen, was es wirklich ist: Schutz auf Zeit vor Verfolgung! Derzeit findet eine Wohlstandswanderung von Süden nach Norden statt. 6.704		
Wochenblick Hochbrisant: Der erneute Asyl-Familiennachzug wurde laut der Süddeutschen Zeitung "vor der bayerischen Landtagswahl offenbar bewusst nicht bekannt gegeben!" 7.506	Wochenblick "Am Anfang haben wir noch allen Flüchtlingen etwas gegeben. Die schmissen es aber weg, weil sie es nicht kannten", betont Gaby Walther, Leiterin einer Frankfurter Ausgabestelle. 4.271	Wochenblick Seit dem 13. Juli ist am Pleschinger See das Grillen strengstens verboten. Diese Migranten meinen aber offenbar: Das Grillverbot gilt nur für Österreicher! 4.234	FPÖ EINFACH TOLL! HC Strache konnte als Vizekanzler sicherstellen, dass der UN-Migrationspakt - welchen wir Freiheitlichen in wesentlichen Passagen und aus inhaltlichen Gründen - konsequent ablehnen - nicht unterfertigt wird. An	FPÖ Alexander Van der Bellen: Dieser Mann spricht große Worte gelassen aus :) 3.389
Wochenblick Wenige Tage nach dem Tod von Susanna schlug nun ein Syrer in Freiburg zu. Dort hatte bereits ein afghanischer Asylwerber 2016 ein Mädchen geschändet und aus dem Leben genommen... 6.069			FPÖ Alexander Van der Bellen präsentierte sich im gesamten Wahlkampf als „unabhängiger“ Kandidat. Bei der Kurier-Diskussion am 11. Mai wurde er von einem Publikumsgast „entlarvt“.	

Figure 7 – Top 10 ranking posts by shares, Austria.

In the ranking of the top ten posts by number of shares, it can be seen that Wochenblick obtained most shares, followed by FPÖ. Five out of six posts by Wochenblick talk about migration and refugees, alleged sexual harassment in connection with asylum seekers and concealed information by police and media. The four posts by FPÖ deal with different topics. Two of them are about Austrian president Alexander Van der Bellen, who won the election against FPÖ candidate Hofer. One post talks about him, being exposed and another features a sarcastic description. Furthermore, the post with the highest number of shares by FPÖ is on the subject of asylum, saying that asylum would be a movement for prosperity, not for shelter. The post with the second highest number of shares talks about FPÖ chairman and vice-chancellor Strache, who prevented the UN migration pact, which is rejected among FPÖ politicians and supporters.

A further examination of co-occurrences or words and subjects inside the data set also shows that a variety of similar fields exists, which can be found on several pages from different countries. The majority of networks showed a focus on the European Union and European politics. In a closer analysis of posts, this could be identified as a political or international opponent to national interests and domestic politics. Other opponents that were found in networks and post analysis were international and domestic politicians and figures, such as Angela Merkel, David Cameron, Emmanuel Macron, Alexander Van der Bellen,

George Soros, Jeremy Corbyn or Klaus Iohannis. Furthermore, parties opposing right-wing politics could also be found in the qualitative analysis, such as labour parties and social democrats, conservatives, liberals and green parties. These clusters also stand in the context of government criticism, creating a frame of resistance to national and international governments and institutions. On the other hand, a personality cult about right-wing populist politicians can be documented as well. In almost all countries key figures of right-wing politics were mentioned, such as Alexander Gauland, Marine Le Pen, Matteo Salvini, Viktor Orban, Heinz-Christian Strache, Roger Köppel, Nigel Farage, Bogdan Diaconu or Geert Wilders. A second field to be found in the qualitative analysis deals with immigration, refugees, which could also be found in several countries. Mostly the terms of immigration and migrants were connected to other terms such as illegal. In this context stands the narrative of open borders and migration or refugee movements, which would pose a threat to national security and the nation or country itself. Another field to be found in several countries is the connection terror and terrorist attacks to the terms of radical and Islam. This also reaches the narrative of nation states and national identity, which is in danger due to a radical Islam and the afore mentioned immigration, crossing borders into sovereign states.

## Conclusions

The key findings clearly suggest, that the analysed right-wing populist actors from parties, civil movements and news sites have a clear understanding of how new media and especially social media can be used in order to promote ideology and policy. This can be observed in Figure 1, as the preferred formats for posts were hyperlinks and audio-visual content. It furthermore supports the aforementioned observations on cross-platform sharing, user generated content and also the increased level of interactivity in the wake of new media (Castells 2011; Lindgren 2017; Lipschulz 2018). Especially the multiplication of post numbers into comparatively large numbers of shares suggest a successful implementation of what was also suggested by Taddicken and Schmidt (2017), who connect possible large audiences to formats and contents used on social media. Furthermore, it can be observed, that in an overall comparison, the party pages were the most successful. In six out of nine top ten rankings, parties could be found as the publishers of the posts with the highest numbers of shares. But also movements and news sites can both be found five times in these top ten rankings.

The findings suggest, that not only national and domestic frames exist among right-wing populist politicians, movements and news sites but also international ones, which could be found in all countries. On the basis of these findings, a possible conclusion would be the one of right-wing echo chambers in the online media, being created by a network of different actors (cf. Sunstein 2008; Williams et al., 2015). Furthermore, this also plays into the discussion for cyberbalkanization and the creation of fragmented audiences (cf. Chan and Fu 2017; Lawrence, Farrel and Sides 2010). Also, the findings suggest an international cooperation of right-wing actors from all over Europe, which would signify a follow up of offline activities, as right-wing actors already have met on several occasions, such as an FPÖ congress in Vienna in 2015, or a conference of European right-wing party officials in 2017 in Germany.

Having established different frames in right-wing narrative for a total of 30 Facebook pages from ten different European countries it can also be concluded, that a common agenda exists among these actors, supporting each other by referencing and mentioning key figures and subjects. The frequent reference to topics such as globalization, immigration or corruption (cf. Mazzoleni, 2017), the creation of a homogenous people (cf. Albertazzi and McDonnell 2007) as connected to the idea of nationality and religious values (cf. Heinisch, 2004; Hentges, Kökgiran and Nottbohm 2014) and opposed to certain elites or groups from civil society (cf. Lewis 2018; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2007), institutions or issues such as immigration (cf. Abts, Swyngedouw and Van Craen 2016), marks the narrative and agenda of contemporary European right-wing narrative and discourse.

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# ONLINE ROMANIAN AUTHORITY CRISIS AND RISK COMMUNICATION DURING THE 2018 SWINE FEVER OUTBREAK

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*Abstract:* In August 2018, the Romanian food safety authority (NSVFSA) confirmed an outbreak of deadly African swine fever at the largest breeding farm in Romania and all pigs were culled. The following months hundreds of outbreaks of the disease among pigs kept in backyards and smallholdings were reported in Romanian villages. Within this context of ambiguity and uncertainty, local authorities were accused of not having taken proper actions to prevent this outbreak since there had been warnings about the spread of the virus in various Romanian regions for over a year.

This study seeks to apply a message-centered approach (Sellnow et al., 2009) to the on-line content generated by the Romanian Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority. Using the IDEA model and the PARC principles, we will provide an insight into the distribution of the messages on traditional and social media, into the clustering of the elements of the IDEA model and into the polyphony of voices on social media throughout the swine fever outbreak in Romania.

*Keywords:* swine fever, crisis and risk communication, IDEA model, PARC principles.

## 1. Introduction

Although in May 2017 Romania was declared free of swine fever, the following months hundreds of outbreaks of the disease among pigs kept in backyards and smallholdings were reported in Romanian villages. According to the World Organization for Animal Health, in Europe the disease occurred for the

first time in Moldova in September 2016, then in June 2017 in Czech Republic, followed by Romania in July 2017 and more recently in Hungary, and Bulgaria, in April and August 2018 respectively.<sup>1</sup> In July 2017 there was an outbreak of deadly African swine fever at the largest breeding farm in Romania and all pigs were slaughtered.<sup>2</sup> The newspapers published articles including images of killed pigs and maps of the affected areas.

An emerging infectious disease for animals such as swine fever demands immediate actions because it brings a serious threat to the health of the persons purchasing pork meat. Thus swine flu outbreaks should be tackled upon in the context of ambiguity and uncertainty (Ulmer et al. 2007). A study on U.S. organizational framing of the 2009 H1N1 pandemic (Liu, Kim 2011, 239) showed that confusion was more salient in corporations' crisis responses whereas alert and sympathy prevailed in government organizations' responses. Another study on Finish citizens' opinions about authorities during the 2009-2010 swine flu epidemic revealed that the trust on Finish authorities is not extended to the on-line environment because of the late answers in correcting false information and shaping opinions (Tirkkonen, Luoma-aho 2011, 172).

In this study we will determine how the Romanian Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (NSVFSA), a governmental institution, addressed the swine fever outbreak through examining its crisis and risk messages. Using a message-centered approach, our aim is to identify (1) the distribution of the messages on traditional and social media, (2) the clustering of elements of internalization, explanation, action and credibility in the NSVFSA messages, and (3) the polyphony of voices on social media.

## 2. Theoretical frameworks

Starting from the definition of risk provided by the National Research Council, Sellnow et al. (2009, 4) acknowledge that risk communication is “an interactive process of exchange of information and opinion among individuals, groups, and institutions” and that it “involves multiple and competing messages”. Thus, Sellnow et al. (2009) encompass a message-centered approach, pro-

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<sup>1</sup> “Global Situation of ASF. Report no.1: 2016-2018”, accessed July 20, 2019. [http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Animal\\_Health\\_in\\_the\\_World/docs/pdf/Disease\\_cards/Report\\_1\\_Global\\_situation\\_of ASF\\_Updated\\_191018.pdf](http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Animal_Health_in_the_World/docs/pdf/Disease_cards/Report_1_Global_situation_of ASF_Updated_191018.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Cotidianul.ro. “Dezastrul de amploare vizand pesta porcina.”, accessed July 21, 2019. <https://www.cotidianul.ro/dezastru-de-amploare-vizand-pesta-porcina/>

viding a perspective of interacting arguments to risk communication. Within this approach, the IDEA model for effective risk and crisis message design was developed (Sellnow et al. 2017; Sellnow-Richmond et al. 2018).

The model consists of four elements:

- *Internalization* is obtained through: personal relevance, potential impact, proximity, timeliness.

- *Distribution* focuses on the channel or channels the message is sent through.

- *Explanation* implies to provide accurate information about what is happening and being done about the event. It could be linked to one best practice in risk and crisis communication (Sellnow et al. 2009, 24-28; 57), namely to account for *uncertainty* inherent in risk (reinforcement of the (un)known as an argument when framing messages to the public).

- *Action* focuses on the usage of clear messages which should include specific preparation action steps and specific response steps. It could be linked to acknowledge levels of *risk tolerance* (instructions provided to the public about the levels of risk to be experienced).

Since the IDEA model includes the element of *distribution*, the PARC model (Barker et al. 2013) should be taken into account because it focuses on four elements important for distribution: participation, authenticity, resourcefulness and credibility. The presentation below of the PARC model also includes other references on authenticity and credibility (Allagui & Breslow 2016; Smith 2017; Cmeciu 2018).

- *Participation* refers to the degree of interaction among users through comments.

- *Authenticity* refers to conversations between users and organizations without forced attitude or false commercial demeanor. It also includes *offline engagement* (game playing, storytelling, engagement rewards, protests, debates etc.).

- *Resourcesfulness* refers to the helpful information tailored to the target audience and the variety of social media platforms used to transmit the message.

- *Credibility* refers to the source of the tailored message. The message source refers to the expertise, status, competence, and honesty of the persons or organizations sending the message (Smith 2017).

Starting from these two models (IDEA and PARC) and using a message-centered approach, this study addresses the following research questions:

For the element of *distribution*:

RQ1: What channels are employed by the Romanian authority?

RQ2: To what degree is offline engagement activated in the communication of the Romanian authority?

RQ3: To what extent does online/offline engagement involve the sharing of content on the swine flu outbreak?

For the elements of *internalization, explanation, action & credibility*

RQ4: How do the elements of internalization, explanation, action & credibility cluster within the messages of the Romanian authority?

For the element of *authenticity*:

RQ5: Is there a polyphony of voices beyond the conversations between online users and Romanian authority?

### 3. Method, corpus, coding scheme

For the qualitative content analysis, we used the QDA miner 5 – Wordstat software, we text-mined all the communicative texts issued by the Romanian National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (NSVFSA) between March 2017 – December 2018. The texts were collected using the following variables: postdate, media and textual genre. The analysis included 80 communicative texts issued by NSVFSA.

Figure 1 shows the coding scheme and it embeds four main elements (internalization, explanation, action and credibility), each of them including various codes.

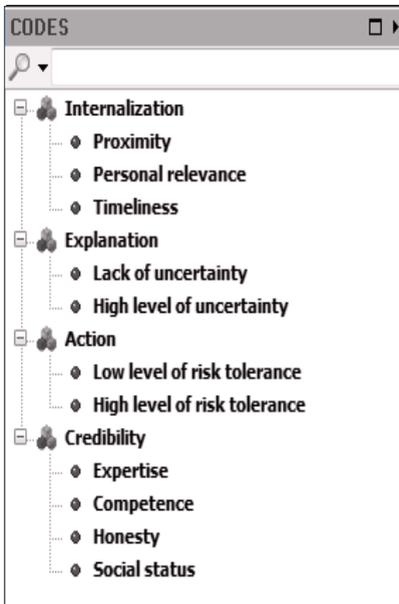


Figure 1 - Coding scheme (QDA miner 5, source: authors)

*Internalization* includes proximity (the specific locations of the swine flu), personal relevance (the degree of severity of swine flu) and timeliness (the time for preparation in case of infection with swine flu).

*Explanation* refers to all the information NSVFSA knows about swine flu. ‘High level of risk tolerance’ refers to the fact that NSVFSA does not show what products are contaminated, does not show people what to look out for, whereas ‘lack of uncertainty’ refers to all the information provided about the potentially

contaminated products, about the possible effects of swine flu, the efforts made to rectify the situation.

*Action* refers to specific actions steps to be taken by the public. ‘Low level of risk tolerance’ means that NSVFSA provides no explanation related to swine flu and no message about possible tasks, whereas ‘high level of risk tolerance’ refers to the messages which include information about the instructions about the levels of risk experienced if the pork products had not been recalled, or about the tasks provided to people).

*Credibility* refers to four types of message sources: expertise (experts on the issue of swine flu), competence (persons/ organizations competent in this issue), honesty (persons whose pigs were affected by swine flu), and social status (known sources in the community who could persuade others to take various actions to stop swine flu).

The QDA miner 5, under the form of the four elements (internalization, explanation, action, credibility) facilitated a cluster analysis of coding co-occurrences. The authors of this study coded the data to establish intercoder reliability. The first coder coded all texts, while the second coder coded 10% of the posts for the study codes. After pre-testing and subsequent changes to the coding scheme, the intercoder reliability test with the ReCal statistical program showed Scott’s Pi was on average .81 (Scott 1955).

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Message distribution

We examined the frequency of NSVFSA responses via media channels and textual genre. The crosstabulation between media channels and textual genre (Table 1) showed that NSVFSA posted 70 press releases and 7 campaign materials on the organizational website and 3 posts on Facebook and press releases were the most used textual genre.

Table 1. *NSVFSA responses via media channels and textual genre*

Media channel	Textual genre			
	press release	verbal post	visual post	campaign advertisement
organizational website	70	0	0	7

social media - FB	0	1	2	0
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The strategy of information is mainly used. There is no offline engagement since there are no mentions about offline activities with farmers who may be affected by the swine flu. Out of the three Facebook posts of the NSVFSA only one post was widely shared (1 thousand views for the video about African Swine Fever – How to stay one step ahead).

#### 4.2. Message tailoring

The graphical representation in Figure 2 shows the resulting dendrogram<sup>3</sup> for the clustering of the most frequently used elements of internalization, explanation, action and credibility employed in the texts of the NSVFSA. The length of the horizontal bars on the leftside of figure 2 shows the hierarchy of code usage: high level of risk tolerance was followed by lack of uncertainty, expertise and proximity.

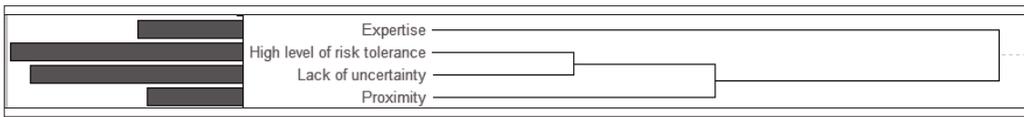


Figure 2 Cluster analysis – NSVFSA messages (generated – QDA miner 5, source: authors)

The NSVFSA tailored its messages around the story of credibility. It was constructed by emphasizing the lack of uncertainty with high level of risk tolerance, combined with proximity and expertise.

The element of *explanation* was obtained through a high usage of ‘lack of uncertainty’. Three main aspects were highlighted related to ‘lack of uncertainty’:

- *epidemiology* through proximity. The NSVFSA press releases focused on the evolution of the swine fever (number of cases and deaths in Romania and in Europe). Most of the press releases mentioned the counties and the number of swine fever cases. For example: “Satu Mare county – 8 cases in farms and 35 cases of wild boar; Bihor county - 49 cases in farms and 2 cases of wild boar (...)” (28 Dec. 2018).

<sup>3</sup> The conditions for the dendrograms were the following: for *clustering* – occurrence (Windows of n paragraphs – nb of paragraphs - 5), index (Jaccard’s coefficient); for *multidimensional scaling options* – tolerance – 0,000001, maximum iterations – 100.

- *nature of disease*. The Romanian authority ended their press releases with information about the type of swine fever (a viral disease), about the symptoms which can take two to ten days to appear, and about the impact upon population.

- *effective measures* associated with *expertise* to control the spread of the swine fever. One important element of best practices in crisis and risk communication is to reduce uncertainty (Sellnow et al., 2009) and it refers to the efforts made to rectify the situation. The NSVFSA together with the Regional Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authorities mentioned the following measures in the press releases uploaded on the organizational website and in the video on Facebook: quarantine measures and movement restrictions, restrictions on accepting live pigs and pork products from extra-EU countries, establishment of some check points on affected farms, infected animal culling, granting of compensation to those who voluntarily notify and hand over to the authorities the sick animals in the area where the alert status has been established.

The element of *action* was obtained through a high usage of ‘high level of risk tolerance’. The action steps mentioned by the NSVFSA included two types of messages:

- *micro-instructional messages* targeted to farmers. The verbal messages were clear highlighting specific tasks: “contact your veterinary if you suspect SF affected your pigs; do not move animals from the farm; always change your clothing and footwear when leaving the farm; check the necessary measure when you purchase animals; do not allow your pigs to have contact with wild boar or pigs from other farms; never feed kitchen waste to pigs; avoid outdoor farming in areas affected by SF”. The campaign materials focused on products forbidden to enter Romania: “In order to prevent the disease from entering Romania it is forbidden to bring into the country: live pigs, fresh pork, refrigerated or frozen pork, pork products (sausages, ham, salt-cured meat)”.

- *macro-instructional messages* targeted to national veterinary services. In the event of an outbreak of African swine fever, these veterinary services had two main tasks: to kill all pigs and to compensate the owners’ losses.

#### 4.3. A polyphony of voices

The last research question focused on the element of ‘authenticity’ (PARC model) which refers to the conversation between online users and Romanian authorities. This communication was very scarce since NSVFSA posted only three Facebook posts. The qualitative analysis of the 66 comments for the three posts showed that it was a unidirectional conversation, NSVFSA not replying to any of the comments. The lack of NSVFSA’s early social media input on concrete

action steps for the affected farmers (the first Facebook post was on July 23, 2018) gave free space for negative hostile comments.

Three main themes related to the swine flu outbreak were identified in the comments under analysis:

- *conspiracy and incompetence*: swine flu was considered a hoax, politicians and local and national authorities being accused of destroying the villagers' farms by inventing this outbreak in order to raise the price of pork meat and to promote some politicians' private businesses.

- *improper swine flu control*: some online users provided arguments for the futility of slaughtering all pigs, arguing that their burial would contaminate the soil.

- *lack of communication*: the online users accused NSVFSA for having provided the instructional messages in the video in a foreign language which most farmers do not know.

## 5. Conclusion

This study examined the intervention of the Romanian government organization (NSVFSA) throughout the swine fever outbreak. The analysis was carried out on three main levels: (a) distribution; (b) internalization, explanation, action & credibility; (c) authenticity. The study showed that there was a dominance of the usage of the NSVFSA organizational website, thus the Romanian food safety authority did not lay a greater emphasis on bidirectional communication. Although the three Facebook posts triggered some comments, there was no real-time dialogue between NSVFSA and the Romanian citizens, thus the level of authenticity being scarcely highlighted. The Romanian citizens' negative perceptions on the NSVFSA intervention could be linked with the lack of the public organization's early input and online involvement in a dialogue.

The messages sent by NSVFSA centered on lack of uncertainty and a high level of risk tolerance. The analysis showed that NSVFSA laid an emphasis on the specific tasks to be carried out by the affected public, thus being in line with the findings of Liu and Kim's study (2011): US government organizations focused their responses on alert during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. Despite this care for the affected public, NSVFSA clearly showed a lack of time management. The Romanian authority did not provide an early input and did not focus on prevention.

The results of this study show that Romanian authority communication during swine fever outbreak should be more proactive, thus trying to build trust and to establish a dialogue with Romanian citizens before a crisis occurs.

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# THE ROLE OF THE GOOD NEWS IN BULGARIA: A POSITIVE MODEL FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PROSPERITY

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*Abstract:* Media content is personalised, connected with the massive flow of information, produced by different kinds of media channels (traditional and online), as well as a variety of producers (professional journalists or consumers). Many researchers work on the mediatisation of emotions, such as digital mourning practices (Giaxoglou and Dovelung, 2018), mediated anger in political covering (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019), affective news in journalism (Beckett and Deuze, 2016), digital affect cultures (Döveling et al., 2018), affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015), etc. More and more TV channels include good news in their newscasts. The incorporation of positive news values indicates the society’s need of a positive model for personal development and social prosperity. This is typical for social media, as well as for traditional media, where dramatic, tragic, funny, and emotional news dominates, too. My research covers the weekly program “We believe in the good”, which is part of the evening newscasts of Bulgarian private TV channel bTV. The case study is based on an observation of the program for a period of 55 months (November 2014 – May 2019) and covers 163 news pieces that are analysed by different criteria, such as dominant topics, forms of positive news, civil participation, opinion sources of information, types of personal reaction, and collective solidarity). The good news reports as part of Bulgarian newscasts express the traditional features of the Bulgarian society – kindness, mutuality, collaboration. The good news is an example of the new social values that arise from the democratisation of the country – a liberal model of cultural, social, and economic development.

*Keywords:* good news, emotion, Bulgarian TV channel, media, journalism

Today media content is increasingly personalised, connected with the massive flow of information and produced by different kinds of media channels (traditional and online), as well as a variety of producers (professional journalists or consumers). Media consumption is personalised as well, because users receive information mainly through personal devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops. According to Charlie Beckett and Mark Deuze, “our media become

more intimate, we get more devoted to our devices and deeply attached to our mediated activities” (Beckett and Deuze, 2016).

The news features more and more personal behaviour and distributes it publicly everywhere. Mainstream media are fighting for the attention of the audience, competing with social media, where everybody can create content. They emphasise the reliability of the information they provide, diversity, personally or socially oriented stories, heroism, and personal example. All of this changes not only journalism, but also the dissemination of information, which no longer relies only on well-known news values as objectivity, familiarity, personalisation, reference to elite nations/persons, and relevance, but also on emotions. There are different reasons for that: economic (like media competition, online news dominance, quick access to different kinds of information or disinformation, emotional engagement of the audience – especially with negativity being a typical news value); technological (for example, online information tends to be emotionally charged and can easily go viral, and users are more likely to upload and share dramatic content); and cultural (it is now easier to predict peoples’ behaviour, people tend to be more attracted to emotional messages than facts and ideas, algorithms filter out users’ data, which are analysed and constructed through microtargeting).

Many researchers work on the mediatisation of emotions, such as digital mourning practices (Giaxoglou and Döveling, 2018), mediated anger in political covering (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019), affective news in journalism (Beckett and Deuze, 2016), digital affect cultures (Döveling et al., 2018), affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015), etc. The study of emotion and affect started in the 1980s and is connected to feminist theories. It continued in the 1990s with the validation of the “affective turn”, which is understood not as specific to cultural studies, but as an extension of concepts from the field of neurology and the interconnection of emotion and rationality as part of critical theory.

Another important issue concerns the degree of difference between emotion and affect. For some scientists these two terms are similar and may be used as synonyms, but for most of them “emotion refers to a sociological expression of feelings” (Gorton, 2009), whereby emotions are seen as “fundamentally relational, evolving put of the interactions of individuals with culture and underlying social structure” (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019, p.8), or “to cultural and social expression” (Elsbeth Probyn, In: Gorton, 2009). By contrast, affect is more “firmly rooted in biology, physical response to feelings” (Sianne Ngai, In: Gorton, 2009) or is a “motivational system and considers shame, interest, surprise, joy, anger,

fear, distress and disgust as the basic set of affects” (Silvan Tomkins, In: Gorton, 2009).

More and more TV channels include good news in their newscasts. Annette Hill explains that “for audiences, news is the first, and still the most familiar, factual television genre, and in many ways all other factual genres are evaluated alongside viewers’ understanding and experience of news” (Hill, In: Gorton, 2009). The incorporation of positive news values indicates the society’s need of a positive model for personal development and social prosperity. This is typical for social media, especially Facebook with its buttons for emotional reaction such as “Like”, “Love”, “Haha”, “Wow”, “Sad”, and “Angry”. However, this is also visible in traditional media content, where dramatic, tragic, funny, and emotional news dominates, too.

The emotional turn is also defining for contemporary journalism typology. One example is constructive journalism, which is explained as “an emerging form of journalism that applies techniques from the field of positive psychology to news work in an effort to create more productive, engaging news stories while remaining committed to journalism’s core functions” (McIntyre, 2015). Cathrine Gyldensted, leader of the constructive journalism movement, says that “constructive news builds something up; constructive stories are meant to energise or lift people up. These news stories should leave people feeling more engaged, inspired, and positive than before” (Gyldensted, In: McIntyre, 2015).

Constructive journalism has been used as an umbrella term for similar forms of journalism such as positive journalism or solution journalism (also called impact journalism or contextual journalism). However, it also has roots in older forms like community journalism (also called hyperlocal news), civic journalism, which aimed to contribute to a “healthier public climate”, according to Jay Rosen (Rosen, 2006), citizen journalism, participatory journalism (Singer et al., 2011, Paulussen et al, 2007, Paulussen and Ugille, 2008), and networked journalism, which “takes into account the collaborative nature of journalism now: professionals and amateurs working together to get the real story, linking to each other across brands and old boundaries to share facts, questions, answers, ideas, perspectives” (Jarvis, 2006, Deuze et al, 2007).

As expected, Bulgarian media follow the standard professional model defined by bad news. At the same time, they understand the need to find ways to influence the audience more effectively with the goal of creating a more positive image of the reality. Walter Gieber first defined positive news as “those items reflecting social cohesion and cooperation” (Gieber, In: McIntyre, 2016). Harcup and O’Neill describe good news as “stories with particularly positive overtones

such as rescues and cures”. They include “acts of heroism, resourceful children, miracle recoveries, lucky escapes, happy anniversaries, prize winning, stories of innovation, initiative, peace building, progress, solutions, achievements and positive aspects of society”. (Harcup and O’Neill, In: McIntyre, 2016)

The research on positive news is relatively scarce and is often linked to other concepts like positive affect (Gyldensted, In: Jackson, 2016), positive action (Peterson, In: Jackson, 2016), charitable behaviour (Berkovitz and Connor, In: Jackson, 2016), hope in moments of despair (Leung and Lee, In: Jackson, 2016), and positive affectivity, which describes the extent to which individuals experience positive emotions like joy, interest, and happiness (Frederickson, In: Jackson, 2016). Very often, positive news is seen as part of the contradiction between the traditional concept of news objectivity and the professional behaviour of present-day journalists, who “often ask sources how they feel, as a way of generating drama and compassion“, trying to engage the emotions of audiences (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019, p.9). As Beckett and Deuze explain: “Emphasising emotion as the key redefines the classic idea of journalistic objectivity—indeed, it is reshaping the idea of news itself. That matters because journalism has an increasingly significant role in our lives as information, data, and social media become more ubiquitous and more influential. (Beckett and Deuze, 2016)

## **Methodology**

My research covers the weekly program “We believe in the good”, which is part of the evenings newscasts of the Bulgarian private TV channel bTV. bTV is an informational leader in Bulgaria and its programs, shows, and newscasts are among the leaders in the country in terms of ratings. The current program is a sequel of a similar former program called “The good news”, so the TV channel has a history of presenting positive emotions.

This small-scale case study on audience and emotions is based on an observation of the program for a period of 55 months – from November 2014 to May 2019. It covers 163 news pieces watched as video files, analysed and coded manually in accordance with various criteria, including dominant topics, types of positive news, civil participation, sources of information, types of personal reaction, and collective solidarity.

## Results

My research suggests that the most popular topic in the good news program is charity (Fig. 1).

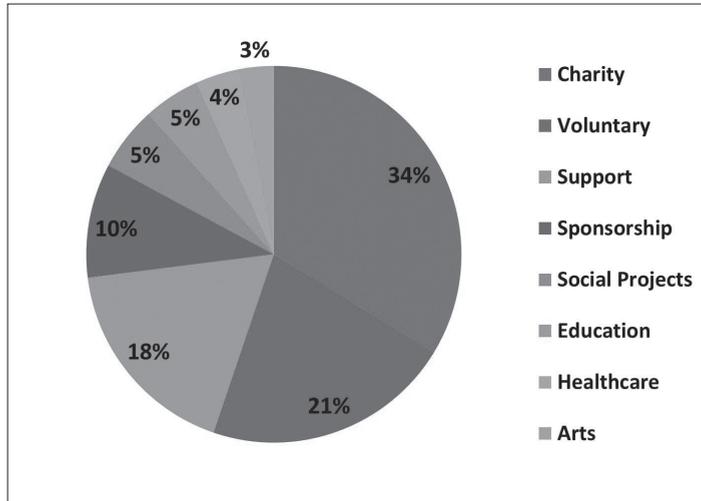


Fig. 1

For example, the bTV program “We believe in the good” covers the stories of physicians who treat adults and children for free, therapists of swimming or horse riding who treat and train children with special needs, as well as charity campaigns.

The main reason for this is the poorer state of the social and healthcare systems in Bulgaria, which cannot support all Bulgarian citizens who need special treatment. Many adults, but also children, cannot afford proper rehabilitation, expensive operations (especially abroad), improvement of their social environment (home repairs or wheelchairs, elevators and platforms for people with special needs), and even necessities like food and clothes. When the media cover such stories, they influence people’s thinking and generate empathy that can help solve the problems, provide money or goods, or stimulate the social institutions to function effectively. The strive for personal and social growth and collective happiness motivates the audience to be active in showing such topics in the public space and looking for a collective solution. Despite the increasing poverty, misery, tragedies, and lack of economic development, Bulgarian TV viewers are looking for news stories about goodness, support, and happiness. This could explain why the other popular topics in my study are volunteering (21%), support

(18%), and sponsorship (10%). For example, these are the stories of benefactors who open their homes free of charge for poor families with small children or for migrants, actors who perform in front of children undergoing hospital treatment in an attempt to chill up the little patients, and families who plant trees, clean public spaces, provide family-based care for abandoned and orphaned children, or take care of abandoned or abused animals.

This research includes a model of 26 positive emotions and suggests that the most influential emotions are elevation (13%), hope and enthusiasm (10%), gratitude and optimism (7%), affection (6%), joy and contentment (5%) (Fig. 2).

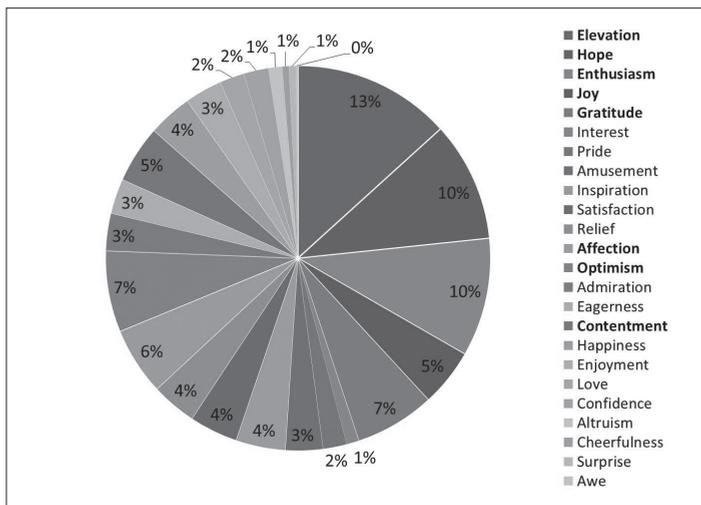


Fig. 2

The dominance of these emotions is connected with the topics covered by the program. They reflect the traditional attitude model of the Bulgarian society, according to which social interaction, finding common solutions outside of the governance system, community development, and shared expectations offer alternatives of the dominant zombie institutions, ineffective government, corruption at the national and local levels, and nepotism. Values such as good health, personal happiness, successful family, education, and wealth are not only personal goals for most Bulgarians, but they are also a part of the national identity. In addition, they are an instrument the Bulgarian media can use to respond to their audience’s interests, as well as an alternative model to the domination of negative news in the programs and newscasts.

The research of bTV's program 'We believe in the good' shows that opinion leaders are usually the initiators of the stories (40%) – Fig. 3.

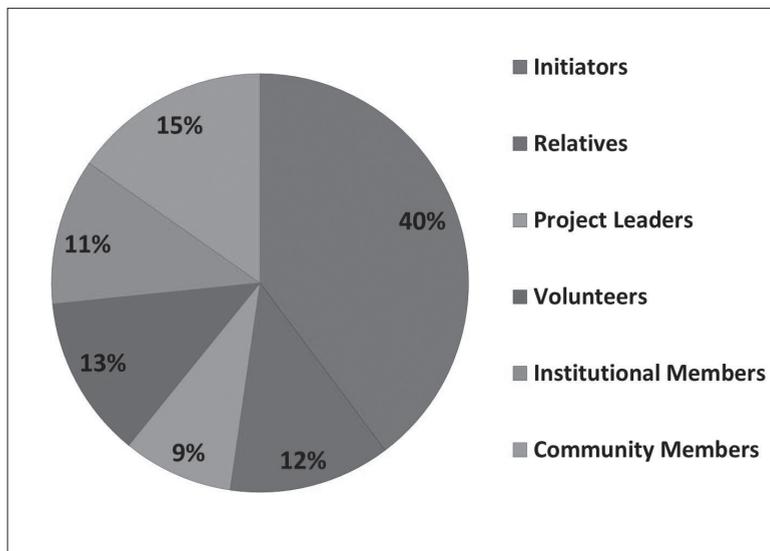


Fig. 3

The program is user-oriented. The topics are inspired by information sent by viewers, the journalists meet their sources of information in person or participate in the presented initiatives, and they actively ask emotionally engaging questions. Furthermore, the topics reflect information inspired by the good depends of the initiators or of the people responsible for their popularisation.

The TV channel prioritises the opinion of its main sources of information. However, it also pays attention to community members (15%), relatives (12%), and volunteers (13%). The news reports show the positive stories of people who support their relatives or community. Examples include the stories of a young woman who sells her pictures in an effort to raise money and help her twin sister; families who donate equipment to hospitals, young people who volunteer in local public libraries, clean the public park in their village, or help the elderly in their community to repair their houses.

Civil participation also reflects the actions of opinion leaders. Most of the initiatives covered by the program are personal (58%), planned and realised by one person. Then come initiatives arising from a group activity (34%), where followers, friends, and family play an important role. Very rarely the good news

is a result of an institutional activity (8%), where some state or municipal institution is engaged – Fig. 4.

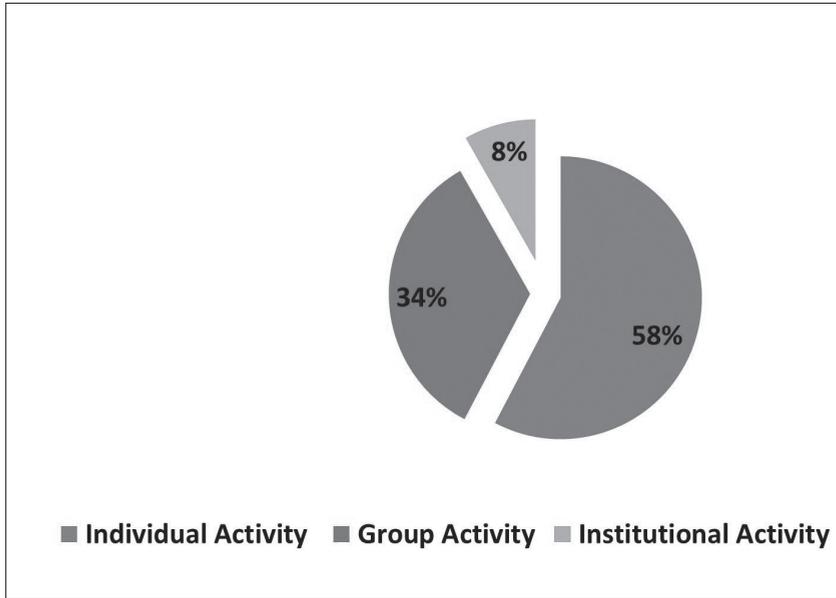


Fig. 4

This means that the willingness for social change and for performing acts of kindness is still personal. The program “We believe in the good” presents the stories of a cook, who has donates food to poor and old people; one of another cook who teaches young adult raised in orphanages; of a mayor who has overhauled the building of the local community club; or of a volunteer who has renovated the local church. Although Bulgaria boasts a well-organised network of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), group projects still attract mainstream media coverage only rarely and information about them is mainly spread through the websites of participating organisations or social media. bTV’s program presents the work of a local bookshop which hires young adults with intellectual disabilities; of students who have organised a celebration to mark the anniversary of the local community club; or of a foundation that pays for the education of poor young people from from the Roma minority. Institutional activity is mainly connected with events in different hospitals. For example, these are stories about physicians who have come together to help a seriously ill patient; about teachers who teach in a modern or unusual manner; and about firefighters who

risk their lives in the tough winter conditions to deliver bread to the residents of high-mountain villages.

When it comes to the social initiative model, the results are similar – the number of cases in which support is offered to one person or to a group of people (35%) is close to the number of cases in which the lifestyle of entire community has been transformed (30%) – Fig. 5.

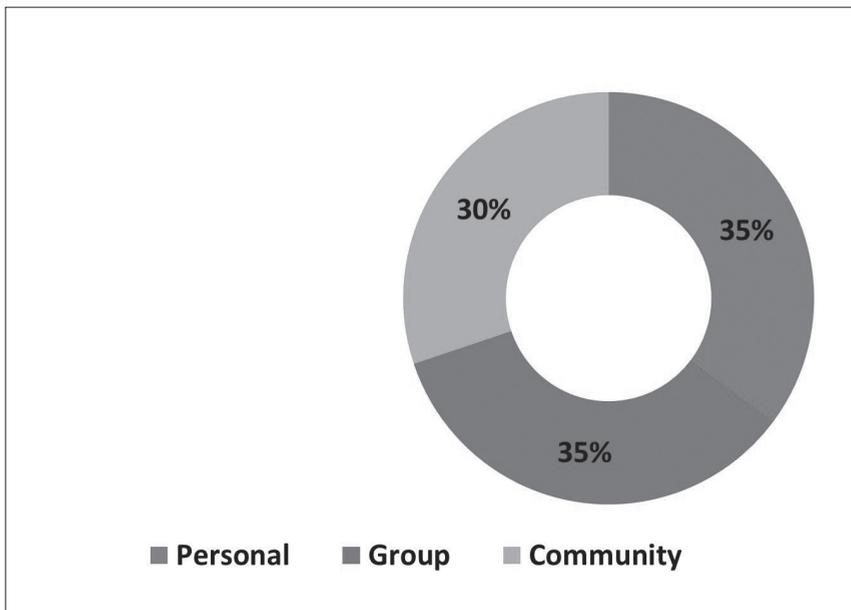


Fig. 5

## Conclusion

The good news in Bulgarian newscasts reflect the values characteristic of the Bulgarian society – kindness, mutuality, and collaboration. The presence of good news in TV programs is an example of the new social values that follow the democratisation of the country – a liberal model of cultural, social, and economic development. It further shows a new trend in media content creation – the dominance of emotionally driven news media. As Charlie Beckett and Mark Deuze point out, “The challenge for the networked journalist is clear: how best to sustain the ethical, social, and economic value of journalism in this new emotionally networked environment.” (Beckett and Deuze, 2016)

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# ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF ONLINE MEDIA IN SERBIA

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*Abstract:* The paper is based on the fact that in Serbia a new media sphere is created - a digital media sphere in which there are new online media and online editions of traditional media. This is evidenced by indicators defined by Pablo Boczkowski (2004: 52-55) and adapted to the situation in Serbia, such as: the growth of the number of news portals, the growth of online advertising, the increase in the number of visitors to news sites, the establishment of online journalism awards, the establishment of the Association of online media and the adoption of the *Guidelines for the Use of the Serbian Journalists' Code in the Online Environment*. The questions that arise are whether journalists are familiar with the new ethical challenges that arise in the media sphere on the Internet, and whether they know the solutions offered in the *Guidelines for the Use of the Serbian Journalists' Code in the Online Environment*. The hypothesis that will be tested is that journalists of online media are familiar with the principles of journalistic ethics and adhere to them. Depending on the results of the research, the specifics of the online media sphere in Serbia can be considered when the ethical norms are in question, which relate to a whole spectrum of new relationships, such as the relation of digital media to user comments and the relation of these media to the use of information published on social media.

*Keywords:* media ethics, online journalism, Serbia, internet, online media

## Introduction

Along with the development and progress of the online media sphere in Serbia, problems and concerns arose regarding the ethical issues tied to this new type of journalism, that is, online journalism. Some of these concerns also existed in the pre-digital age, while some were new (for example: whether to post user comments, what is allowed when re-publishing online media content, and whether to use social media as a news sources). This paper will address the new issues that journalistic ethics is facing brought about by the digital age.

The aim of the paper is to find out whether the media and journalists in Serbia are aware of the new ethical challenges arising in the media sphere on the Internet, and whether they are aware of the solutions reflected in the self-regulation

mechanism, which have been translated into a document called *the Guidelines for the Use of Serbian Journalists' Code of Ethics in the Online Environment*. This document was adopted in 2016 since it was noticed that there was a need for a unique guide for journalists and media to work in the online media sphere. Self-regulation in Serbia has developed poorly in the previous period, with the exception of the *Serbian Journalists' Code of Ethics* adopted in 2006 and the self-regulatory body called the *Press Council* established in 2009 (Divac, 2017: 79-80). The divided journalistic community, whose division dates back to the 1990s when Slobodan Milošević's regime was in power, has been slow in finding a common language, and this has also been reflected in media self-regulation (Milutinović, 2015: 221-222).

### Theoretical approach

This paper builds on the views of authors who have mapped and explained the major changes within the media sector brought about by digital technologies (Boczkowski, 2004; Deuze, 2007; Domingo, 2008; Hermida, 2014; Jakubowicz, 2009; Jenkins, 2006). The changes are radical<sup>1</sup> and have led to new issues in the field of journalistic ethics (Singer, 2010). While there are two approaches among theorists - one that ethical rules are the same regardless of technological change and the other that ethical rules are necessarily changing in the new digital environment (Diaz-Campo & Segado-Boj, 2015: 736), both do not challenge the importance and impact of regulation.

Another important aspect that is taken into account in this paper are the peculiarities of the media system in Serbia, which previously joined what Slavko Splichal called the "Italianization" of post-communist media systems, and which Karol Jakubowicz later identified as "Mediterraneanization", or a variant of the Southern European, polarized-pluralist model (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2012: 26). It is a typology of media systems theoretically shaped by authors Hallin and Mancini, grouping them into three groups: democratic-corporatist model, polarized-pluralist and liberal model. The criteria for evaluating media systems are: the development of the media market, political parallelism, the development of journalistic professionalism, and the degree and nature of state intervention

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<sup>1</sup> More about changes in Serbia's media sphere influenced by the digital environment in: Mihajlov Prokopović, A. & Jevtović, Z. (2017). Transformation of traditional media in Serbia to the networked society. In: Pralica, D. i Šinković, N. (Eds.). *Digitalne medijske tehnologije i društveno-obrazovne promene 7* (136-148). Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet.

in the media system (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 21). Characteristics of the polarized-pluralist model (made up of Mediterranean countries in southern Europe) are: low-circulation press and centralized electronic media, late development of press freedom and the media industry, high levels of political parallelism, and the tradition of advocate journalism lasts longer than in other models (Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 73). We find this confirmation in the findings of Verica Rupar and Sonja Seizova in their research: “Journalistic culture in Serbia is seeking to find its articulation between the two major influences of the last decades: the normative call to be watchdogs in the democratization process, and clientelist attitude fostered by local political culture and economic circumstances “ (Rupar & Seizova, 2017: 32). To this should be added the previously known fact that clientelism is part of the Serbian media system<sup>2</sup>, and that the “weak tradition of journalistic professionalism” (Milivojević, 2012: 287) is one of the characteristics of the Serbian media system.

## Method

This paper analysed the editorial policy of online media with regard to user comments, republishing content from other media and using social media as new news sources. The main research method used was the analysis of the documents and results of the secondary research as well as the results of the author’s research. The document analysed is actually the crucial self-regulatory documents in the field of online journalism: *The Guidelines for the Use of Serbian Journalists’ Code of Ethics in the Online Environment*. Documents created as a result of self-regulation are considered to be a good source of information because they convey professional journalistic rules regulated by journalists themselves<sup>3</sup> (Rupar & Seizova, 2017: 6). This aspect is complemented by the crucial national studies and analysis such as: “The analysis of the implementation of the *Guidelines for the use of Serbian journalists’ code of ethics in the online environment in 70 media*” (2018); “Online media in Serbia: between the business models and ethical challenges” (2017), and “Media Sustainability Index” published by IREX (2019). Also, a very valuable part of this paper is the views and opinions of jour-

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<sup>2</sup> More about clientelist challenges in the Serbian media system: Mihajlov Prokopović, A. & Vulić, T. (2015). Clientelistic relations and the media in transitional Serbia, *Teme: časopis za društvene nauke*, XXXIX, 4, pp. 1563-1583.

<sup>3</sup> In Serbia, in addition to the *Guidelines, the Ethical Recommendations for Professional Journalists in the Online Sphere* (adopted in 2014) and the *Code of the Online Media Association* (adopted in 2017) have been adopted.

nalists and editors of online media in Serbia presented at the Conference ‘Media Responsible to Citizens’, held on January 28, 2019 in Niš. The online media that participated in this conference are: *Krik*<sup>4</sup>, *Južne vesti*<sup>5</sup>, *Bujanovačke*<sup>6</sup> and *Danas*<sup>7</sup>. The following journalists and editors presented their experience and views regarding this topic: Stevan Dojčinović (*Krik*), Gordana Bjeletić (*Južne vesti*), Nikola Lazić (*Bujanovačke*) and Bojan Cvejić (*Danas*). For the purposes of this paper, the author has recorded the speeches of the aforementioned journalists and editors and transcribed them.

### Online media sphere in Serbia and ethical practice

There are 736 online media<sup>8</sup> in Serbia (IREX, 2019: 104), and 35 accepted the Press Council to be their regulatory body (data taken from the official online presentation by the Press Council<sup>9</sup>). It is difficult to establish how many online media are actually active and how many of them publish content regularly. There are other issues as well - data from the Media Register is not enough to accurately determine the number of media. The websites from the Register are often inactive or non-existent, according to a survey conducted by the Serbian Journalists’ Union in early 2019. The questionnaire was sent to the 593 Web sites and 64 online media replied (SINOS, 2019). The Online Media Association has 19 members.

*The Guidelines for the Use of Serbian Journalists’ Code of Ethics in the Online Environment* were adopted in 2016. They largely follow the structure of the *Serbian Journalists’ Code of Ethics*. This document applies to the media and communication channels which the Press Council of the Republic of Serbia is in charge of, as well as to those entities engaged in journalism “in the broadest sense” that are ready to accept the jurisdiction of the Press Council. The aspects covered by the Guidelines are: truth in reporting, avoiding pressure, prevention of corruption and conflicts of interest, journalists’ responsibility, journalistic at-

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<sup>4</sup> Investigative online media, <https://www.krik.rs/>

<sup>5</sup> Online news media, regional (south of Serbia), <https://www.juznevesti.com/>

<sup>6</sup> Online news media, local (Bujanovac), <https://bujanovacke.co.rs/>

<sup>7</sup> Online edition of the daily newspaper *Danas*, <https://www.danas.rs/>

<sup>8</sup> According to IREX in the latest survey, the total number of media in Serbia is 2248, the value of the media market ranges from 180 million euros to 200 million euros, and the most visited online news media are *Blic*, *Kurir* and *Espresso* (IREX, 2019: 104). All three media are tabloid type. The number of households with Internet access is 80.1% (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2019: 12).

<sup>9</sup> Press Council <http://www.savetzastampu.rs/clanovi.html>, visited on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2019.

tention, attitude towards news sources, respect for privacy, doing the journalistic job honourably, respect to authorship and protection of journalists.

The *Guidelines for the Use of Serbian Journalists' Code of Ethics in the Online Environment* address user comments in a section called "Journalists' Responsibilities". "It is recommended that online media and online publications, regardless of the type of moderation they use, create guidelines for publishing user-generated content, which would clearly state what types of content (behaviour) are not allowed on their communication channels and explain how their moderation system works" (*Guidelines*<sup>10</sup>, 2016:7). There are two types of moderation: pre-moderation and ex-post moderation. If the media use pre-moderation, the comments they publish are under the editorial responsibility of the media. However, if the media use ex-post moderation, they are required to remove the user content they have posted, if it is not allowed.

The rules on the respect to authorship are a separate section of this code. There are ten of these rules, and the first relates to the prior consent of the copyright holder. This rule reads as follows: "When publishing someone else's media material - including but not limited to journalistic texts, photos and videos - the media and journalist seeking to release such information is required to obtain the prior consent of the copyright holder or the author himself or herself" (*Guidelines*, 2016:13). It is important to mention that the *Guidelines* recommend that online media and online editions of traditional media "create their own guidelines where they would specify how their media content should be used" (*Guidelines*, 2016:14).

Two years after the adoption of the *Guidelines*, the Press Council conducted a research which was published in the report called "The analysis of the implementation of the *Guidelines for the use of Serbian journalists' code of ethics in the online environment in 70 media*" (2018), and which analysed the most current ethical issues concerning the online media sphere. These ethical issues are: user comments and republishing content from other media (The Press Council, 2018: 4). The survey covered 70 online media - more than 70 percent are news media, with the remainder of the sample being research media, entertainment media, specialized media and local media. Online editions of influential traditional media (*Blic*, *Danas*, *NI*, *NIN*, *Politika*, *RTS* and *Vreme*) were also part of the sample. This poll by the Press Council states that out of 70 online media outlets surveyed in 18 media outlets do not provide an opportunity to comment.

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<sup>10</sup> Hereinafter referred to as the *Guidelines*.

The research concludes that this is a growing trend. Why don't the media allow comments on texts? There are two main reasons:

Firstly, Serbian laws consider the comments containing hate speech illegal, thus it is easier for some online media simply not to post comments.

Secondly, the media have to hire people to moderate comments. For example, in 2015, the *Blic* daily had 15 comment moderators. It increases the cost, so this is probably the reason why more and more media disable comment sections, thus transferring such comments to social media (most often *Facebook* and *Twitter*).

In addition, some journalists oppose the participation of users who are anonymous on a media site in a public space (Martinoli et al., 2019: 81). All of the traditional online media outlets covered by the survey provide commenting and commenting rules. The only exception is the weekly *Vreme*. In an earlier study, Jovana Gligorijević, then assistant editor-in-chief of *Vreme*, explained that their readers have the ability to respond via social networks, especially through *Twitter* (Mihajlov Prokopović, 2016: 207).

The results of the research conducted by the Press Council also show that 32 online media have commenting guidelines, while 20 do not. Most media use pre-moderation, that is, prior review and approval of comments by administrators. This is when the problems occur as the media then become responsible for the comments. For example, administrators might not be trained enough and do not always recognize hate speech or miss a problematic comment due to a large number of comments. "Out of all the websites analysed, only three had different approaches to moderation: *Istinomer* and *Noizz* provide the opportunity to comment via Facebook, while *Južne vesti* allow some users to post comments without prior moderation, but they need to be known to the moderators beforehand by following the comment guidelines" (Press Council, 2018: 8).

According to the *Guidelines*, it is very important that newsrooms have comment rules and guidelines, while the editorial staff of serious and professional media are expected to follow such rules as well. "In practice, this means that if an editorial board have determined that they will not publish user comments containing insults and false accusations, they should always adhere to such principles as well. On the other hand, if the comment guidelines are not clear and visible on the web portal, readers may think that they are allowed to spread hatred and discrimination or other problematic content in the comment section" (Press Council, 2018: 9).

Do the newsrooms adhere to such principles? We will now cite the views and opinions of journalists and editors presented at the Conference 'Media Re-

sponsible to Citizens', held on January 28, 2019 in Niš, Serbia. Most participants in this Conference agree that journalistic texts should emphasize if anyone that took part in the event being reported used insults. "Our newsroom has often had cases where public figures and government officials in Serbia used inappropriate language. There are a number of different opinions about it. I think the public should see and condemn such a vocabulary. If no one publishes it, the audience may think that these people are wonderful, perfect" (Bojan Cvejić, *Danas*). Nikola Lazić (*Bujanovačke*) has a similar opinion: "I was the editor of *Vranjske* in 2017. During this period, there were no such words used in public speaking as it is the case now, so there were no such dilemmas. If I were in such a situation now, I would not put it on the front page, but I would mention it in the text without thinking, because, after all, that allows us to make a judgment about someone. In Bujanovac, where I work now (in online news media *Bujanovačke*), public speech is very important since both Serbs and Albanians live here, and this is the reason why there is no hate speech". Insult in public space used to be a scandal, said Gordana Bjeletić, the editor-in-chief of *Južne vesti*: "Insults are no longer an exception, it has become common in tabloids. However, when they quote the statements of top government officials, such statements also reach other media that are expected to criticize them". As is the case with the majority of sensitive issues, editorial decision and attitude is crucial under these circumstances as well. This was pointed out by Stevan Dojčinović (*Krik*): "There is no guideline or a manual that would help us to know when we should and when we should not publish the insults. In the end, it is the editorial board's decision. One should always consider who the victim is, who is being threatened. In some cases, insult is news in itself, and then we have to publish it, but we criticise it and condemn it".

The development of online journalism, which shortened the time between the outbreak of an event and the news about it, led to frequent republishing of texts between the media. Respect to authorship is a subject to frequent violations. For example, the authorship of the media that first published some news is often not reported. In order to prevent unauthorized republishing of online media content, it is recommended in *Guidelines* that online media create their own rules for this purpose. A survey by the Press Council showed that the majority of the online media surveyed (37 out of 70 media outlets) do not have clear rules for the use of their media content. Among the media that have rules, most prohibit the use of any content from the portal without permission. The second group contains those online media that allow the download of content without permission, subject to certain conditions. These conditions may be: the restric-

tion on the length of the text being downloaded, when resubmitting the photo, it must be in lower resolution and clearly stating the source and the link leading to the downloaded text. The most open-ended group of online media are those who allow their content to be used by citing sources and/or links. There are also two investigative media in this group. The authors of the research justify their decision by the fact that their economic model is different from other media and that their goal is to reach their investigative stories to the largest possible audience. Ten online media have an advanced rule in their policies for removing content from their site if it is proven that the site has infringed copyright (Press Council, 2018: 10-12). The research points out that: "Most importantly, it is possible to republish certain content without the prior permission of the author/media, but of course, the author of the text should be mentioned. However, this was not stated by most of the analysed media in their guidelines for republishing content. This makes it seem like no content, under any circumstances, can be republished without the prior permission of the author, even though the law provides for exceptions" (Press Council, 2018: 12).

Although research in Serbia rarely addresses the relationship between online media and social media, some data is still to be found. Online editions of the mainstream traditional media in Serbia use social networks to promote content and as a new news source with mandatory data verification (Mihajlov Prokopo-  
vić, 2018: 1101). Results of research "Online Media in Serbia: Between Business Models and Ethical Challenges" show that online media presence on social media is manifested in different ways: from the simplest linking to the home media to more complicated and interactive approaches such as content sharing and greater participation users (Share foundation, 2017, without numeration). As regards the use of content from social networks, from the profiles of individual users, the media in Serbia often take statements made by representatives of the authorities who are known for using their profiles (for example, Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić on her Twitter account and many opposition politicians on Twitter). Rules for the use of these content exist in the *Guidelines* in the section entitled "Relationship to News Sources" in three articles. The first article prescribes the obligation of a journalist to check a profile on social networks if he uses it as a news source. Another article establishes a journalist's obligation to seek permission before using information posted on profile by a non-public individual. Journalist does not have to do so when it comes to a topic of public interest. A third article regulates posts on social networks authored by public figures, in which case the journalist uses them as statements, with an obligation to

indicate the channel from which the information is retrieved (*Guidelines*, 2016: 10-11).

## Conclusion

The practice has imposed on online media and journalists in Serbia the need to know the ethical guidelines applicable to the online environment. The Press Council adopted *the Guidelines for the Use of Serbian Journalists' Code of Ethics in the Online Environment* in 2016, and these guidelines regulate the most significant aspects of online journalism. Journalist associations and the Online Media Association also adhere to the ethical guidelines related to the media and journalists in the digital environment. The most common issues are related to user comments and copyright infringement. The important online news media in Serbia have commenting guidelines. Hate speech is not allowed (banned by law), and journalists are outraged by insults spoken by politicians and government officials in their public speeches. As stated in "The analysis of the implementation of the *Guidelines for the use of Serbian journalists' code of ethics in the online environment* in 70 media": "news content from other media is often republished without respect for authorship and permission to republish such content. This has created problems among online media, which has led to numerous media complaints against each other to the Press Council's Complaints Committee. The Press Council is of the opinion that this issue should be solved through self-regulation, that is, that the media should self-regulate the rules and guidelines for the free sharing of content from their websites, however, in accordance with the copyright and related rights" (Press Council, 2018: 4).

The relationship of online media to social media is also a new area that raises ethical concerns in practice, and is accordingly subject to regulation in the *Guidelines*, with the aim of regulating this new area through a mechanism of self-regulation.

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# FRAMING OF MEDIA DISCOURSE ONLINE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN SERBIA<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract:* Through selection and positioning of certain topics, media create an agenda of relevant social issues and through framing and reinforcing, they also determine citizens' way of thinking on these issues and participate in constructing a certain discourse. Acting as public dialogue facilitators, media assume a role in the social power reproduction. But, the online sphere implies greater citizen participation in public dialogue, as opposed to the traditional media's prime task of audience informing.

This paper explores the framing of violence against women in Serbian online media. Our objective was to explore how the media discourse on violence against women is shaped through the dynamic of interaction between interpretive frames set by the online media editorial teams and the manner in which online commenters frame the news. The paper leans on an empirical survey covering the period January-February 2019, which applies content analysis and discourse analysis to the convenience sample. The research covers both physical and verbal violence.

We particularly focused on exploring how open networks participate in the public framing of misogyny discourse and we came to the conclusion that the subject of violence against women is politically abused in the Serbian society. We also observed that social media, instead of contributing to debate consensus, actually contribute to a populist-style antagonizing and polarizing of the public sphere.

*Keywords:* Online media, social media, media discourse, violence against women, the Republic of Serbia

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on a part of the research fully published in the journal *CM – Communication and Media*, Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade (2019), under the title: "Discourse on violence against women in Serbian online media: dominant communication strategies" (in Serbian). Before, this part of the research was presented at the CEECOM 2019 in Sofia.

## Introduction

In the long period of pre-digital mediasphere, news agencies opened platforms for public debate in the form of forums or letters to the editor. Interactive participation of the audience in the creation and publication of media content was enabled by the popularization of the Web 2.0 system which, at the beginning of this century, exponentially accelerated and irreversibly changed the manner of mass communication. By enabling an interactive participation of their users in the production and presentation of media contents and their meanings, website news sections have become the new public sphere. In this paper, we will explore how media discourse on violence against women is shaped through the dynamic of interaction between the interpretive frameworks set by the online media editorial teams and the way in which website and social network commenters frame the news.

## Theoretical frame and methods

The theoretical basis of this research is the theory of framing. Framing implies the use of frames in the shaping of reality by the media and frames are interpretive patterns we use to interpret and present phenomena and occurrences.<sup>2</sup> Lexical choices, source selection, formulation of titles, adequate visualizations, etc. are all tools of framing. The framing concept refers to the structuring of news: journalists highlight some aspects of reality, while downplaying, ignoring or concealing others, consistent with specific interpretive frames, in order to “promote an issue, causal interpretation, moral evaluation or recommendation for addressing an issue”.<sup>3</sup> Aside from setting frames for their own interpretation of occurrences they process, media also act as intermediaries or transmitters of frames shaped by other public or communication actors.<sup>4</sup>

In the contemporary mediasphere, there is an intensive contextualization of frames defined by online media users. Thus, professional journalists no longer have the monopoly on the production of meanings of public issues – since their interpretations are subject to challenge by online media users. However, editori-

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Kunczik and Astrid Zipfel, *Uvod u znanost o medijima i komunikologiju* (Zagreb: Zaklada Friedrich Ebert, 2006), 148.

<sup>3</sup> Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43, no 4 (1993): 52.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Brüggemann, “Between frame setting and frame sending: How journalists contribute to news frames,” *Communication Theory* 24, no 1 (2014): 64.

al teams strive to monitor the effects of audience participation on websites. Thus, users do not become the co-producers of news contents, as the audience is activated only at the end of the news production process, in the interpretation phase; the audience also does not articulate the content of the agenda, nor does it have the capacity to assess the importance of “news”, etc.<sup>5</sup> Acting as public dialogue facilitators, media assume a role in the social power reproduction: through selection and positioning of certain topics, media still create an agenda of relevant social issues and through framing and reinforcing,<sup>6</sup> they also determine citizens’ way of thinking on these issues and participate in constructing a certain discourse. However, the online sphere implies greater citizen participation in public discussion, as opposed to the traditional media prime task of audience informing. Online media users practice diverse approaches to media interpretations: participants in an online debate may adopt the media framing model, but they may also challenge the dominant interpretive matrix; thus, in different ways, by their contribution in the comments sections, they participate in the framing of a particular media discourse. Norman Fairclough especially highlights manipulative risks in this process of the media’s framing of reality.<sup>7</sup>

In Serbia, aside from their ‘intrigue’ aspects, neither the online public nor violence against women have received adequate research attention. Research available suggests that, in the domestic online discourse, hate speech and verbal violence are treated as an acceptable form.<sup>8</sup> Researchers also rightly argue that in Serbia, the online debate is predominantly characterized by an inadequate, antagonized and polarized discourse, eroded by the political instrumentalization of virtually any current topic or polemic.<sup>9</sup> Specifically, when it comes to violence against women, our research published by the Faculty of Political Sciences indicates a tendency of inadequate media treatment of this social issue and its

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<sup>5</sup> Dimitra L. Milioni, Konstantinos Vadratsikas and Venetia Papa, “‘Their two cents worth’: Exploring user agency in readers’ comments in online news media”, *Observatorio (OBS\*) Journal* 6, no 3 (2012): 21-24, 42.

<sup>6</sup> Renita Coleman, Maxwell McCombs, Donald Shaw, David Weaver, “Agenda setting,” In *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. K. Wahl-Jorgensen and T. Hanitzsch (New York: Routledge, 2009), 150.

<sup>7</sup> Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Arnold: 1995), 83.

<sup>8</sup> Irina Milutinović, Jovica Pavlović, “Diskurs o nasilju nad ženama u srpskim onlajn medijima: dominantne komunikacijske strategije,” *CM – Communication and Media* 14, no 45 (2019).

<sup>9</sup> Milutinović and Pavlović, “Diskurs o nasilju”; Jelena Kleut, Ana Milojević, “Protest i nasilje: uokvirivanje protesta ‘protiv diktature’ u onlajn medijima i komentarima korisnika,” In: *Digitalne medijske tehnologije i društveno-obrazovne promene* 8, ed. D. Pralica, N. Šinković (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet, 2019), 191-210.

exposure to a high degree of political abuse.<sup>10</sup> In Serbian media, violence against women is rarely interpreted as a human rights violation and a consequence of gender inequality, in the meaning of the Istanbul Convention. According to this Convention, violence against women is defined as: a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination and perceived strictly as an act of gender-based violence implying physical, sexual, psychological and economic suffering for women.<sup>11</sup>

The research methods used in this study are a combination of qualitative description and numerical analysis. The quantitative analysis was conducted on the basis of a pre-defined list of code categories. The analysis unit is one online newspaper text and one online comment. Following their quantification, numerical results were compared and interpreted. The qualitative content analysis was carried out with a focus of language content and contextual meaning of news item text and corresponding reader comments, according to the Hsieh's and Shannon's model.<sup>12</sup> Fairclough's language text analysis model was also applied, as a level of critical discourse analysis.<sup>13</sup> These methods are used to research the lexical and semantic framing of violence against women, to examine the topics and figures of speech employed in the process and the interpretive function of marked lexical choices.<sup>14</sup>

We concentrated on daily press portals and Twitter as it best exemplifies the discussion in the Serbian online public sphere. We used the MecoDify application to sample the most relevant tweets by typing in identified keywords. We sampled 665 tweets that deal with violence against women and misogyny by typing in relevant keywords and by limiting the search to tweets published in Serbia during the timeframe of our analysis (January and February 2019). The online news sample consisted of 349 newspaper texts published over this period of time on the websites of information/political daily press: *Politika*, *Danas*, *Večernje Novosti*, *Blic*, *Kurir and Informer*, and 1500 related readers' comments.

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<sup>10</sup> Milutinović and Pavlović, "Diskurs o nasilju".

<sup>11</sup> Council of Europe Treaty Series - No. 210 "Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence", Istanbul, 11.V.2011, Article 4(a), accessed October 23, 2019, <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>.

<sup>12</sup> Hsiu-Fang Hsieh, Sarah E. Shannon, "Three approaches to qualitative content analysis," *Qual Health Res*, 15 no 9 (2005): 1278, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>

<sup>13</sup> Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Arnold, 1995), 57.

<sup>14</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, "Discourse and Manipulation," *Discourse & Society* 17, no 2 (2006): 364.

## Results and discussion

In the monitored period, the largest number of items on the subject of violence against women was posted on the websites of the tabloids *Informer*, *Blic* and *Kurir*. The most items on this subject were covered in the sections: *Black Chronicle* (38%) and *Politics* (30%), followed by the sections *Planet* (7.3%) and *Society* (5.5%).<sup>15</sup> It is quite interesting to observe that a number of texts about violence against women can be found in the section on political topics (especially in the pro-regime daily *Informer* (even 72%)), and we can also find some in the sections *Stars/Entertainment*, while on the other hand, in our monitored two-month sample, we did not come across a single analytical text which addresses this topic.

Another peculiarity spotted in our research sample was the share of high government officials who appear in the role of sources and commenters of these news. This kind of sources is linked only to the phenomena of verbal violence. Despite a number of cases of “non-verbal” violence against women during this period of time, of which several with fatal outcomes, government representatives were not consulted for interpretation in their media presentation. We seldom saw that experts, such as criminologists, sociologists, psychologists, human rights activists and commissioner for equality were invited to speak on the subject. Consequently, these articles often remained at the level of describing an isolated crime. Reporting often lacks information about the sentencing of perpetrators and rarely challenges the responsibility of the relevant institutions.

When it comes to the forms and motives of this type of violence, most items reported on the phenomena of physical violence and murders (34%), then verbal (32%) and sexual violence (30%).<sup>16</sup> It is problematic that neither economic violence against women nor trafficking for the purpose of prostitution was identified as forms of violence.

But, the most important finding of this research is that the largest proportion of coverage of violence on daily press websites and Twitter was motivated by political antagonisms between the regime and the opposition, and the research recognizes a gender inequality as the second placed motive.<sup>17</sup> The most media space was devoted to verbal violence initiated on Twitter, when a famous actor and opposition activist Sergej Trifunović wrote on his Twitter profile that a female journalist of a pro-government paper was a whore, because of her un-

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<sup>15</sup> Milutinović and Pavlović, “Diskurs o nasilju”.

<sup>16</sup> Milutinović and Pavlović, “Diskurs o nasilju”.

<sup>17</sup> Milutinović and Pavlović, “Diskurs o nasilju”.

professional political partiality. His tweet was perceived in the media as violence against women and served as a trigger for the proliferation of moral panic in the tabloids. What was the online media response to verbal violence initiated on Twitter? In a tide of reporting, mostly women holding public office or supporting the government were labeled as the victims of the verbal violence, while instances of verbal violence targeting female opposition members or their supporters were downplayed. Overall, in the monitored media, a significantly larger media space was given to verbal incidents against women perpetrated by opposition activists than by those close to the regime.

In the following representative examples from the research sample, we will present how interpretive frames on the actor's verbal incident on Twitter, defined by the editorial team, correspond with the accompanying comments on online media portals and on Twitter.

Most media coverage of this incident was articulated in the interpretive frame of politically instrumentalized condemnation of verbal violence against women. This was primarily achieved by an unbalanced selection of sources and commenters of an act of verbal violence, who support a particular political option. As targets of the violence tabloids present strictly women who are in positions of authority or close to the regime. The identified violators in these media are opposition leaders and activists. In the majority of media, the verbal incident of the oppositional actor was interpreted along the following lines: "Oppositional political actor calling for lynch, violence and rape"; "The policy of insulting women"; "Disregard for European values".<sup>18</sup> The interpretive frame based on the thesis that opposition insults women due to the lack of political ideas and programmes was adopted by the majority of participants in the online debate, who joined the matrix of politically instrumentalized condemnation of the offensive tweet (Examples 1 and 29).

*Example 1.* ~Goca: "Insulting women is all the opposition knows, they have no other plan or policy programme" (Blic Comment, January 22, 2019, 17:10).

*Example 2.* ~lazar: "Trifunovic is a true opposition member, rude, arrogant and violent, the true promoter of hatred and people are fed up with the likes of him" (Večernje novosti Comment, January 23, 2019, 09:46).

The most recurrent metaphors and other lexical choices by online commenters are: "crossed the line", "appalling behaviour", "disaster", "must not be tolerated", "role model", "responsibility towards young people". These for-

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<sup>18</sup> Milutinović and Pavlović, "Diskurs o nasilju".

mulations shape the interpretive frame of condemning the verbal incident. The message that the opposition is not civilized recurs in various semantic matrices. Pedagogical duty is quite exploited as the norm of behaviour of a public figure in this discourse.

Online comments condemning the offensive tweet were often lacking any adequate arguments. In the *ad hominem* manner, many commenters dislocated the debate to the private sphere, focusing, in an equally offensive manner, on the real or perceived characteristics of the person (author of the tweet) to be stigmatized (Examples 3, 4 and 5).

*Example 3.* ~Milorad: “Only a failed actor and non-human can offend a lady this way. (...)” (Informer Comment, January 22, 2019, 16:09).

*Example 4.* ~Lala: “He is a faggot, that’s why he dislikes women!” (Informer Comment, January 22, 2019, 17:21).

*Example 5.* ~Gimnazion: “Drugs have totally burned his brain. This rotten drug addict is beyond help” (@gimnazion01, January 21, 2019, 20:55).

Personal insults in readers’ comments on online portals and Twitter mainly targeted the author of the problematic tweet, his political activism and characteristics. The author of the tweet was manipulatively discredited, with suggestions of his affinity for narcotics, in a disparaging manner by quoting commenters’ speculations as irrefutable evidence, in which negative qualifications should be overstated to provoke emotional repulsion toward the target of the criticism.<sup>19</sup> On Twitter, this interpretive pattern is most prevalent because of the high number of insults targeting political opponents. This is mostly the result of direct interaction between commenters within a highly polarized public sphere, where any disagreement boils down to the key issue which divides the Serbian society: supporting vs not-supporting the current government. In such a highly intense discursive setting, discussion on violence against women and misogyny quickly turns personal, arguments turn into insults and debating points are evaded for the purpose of winning the debate by slandering and labeling an opponent. Unlike Twitter, verbal aggression between the commenters was not as intense on online portals. Participation in news portals is subject to regulation and self-regulation mechanisms (stricter than the regime of social networks), which prevent or moderate hostility between the commenters in this community.

The political instrumentalization of verbal violence against women was supported by bot activities, both on the portals and on Twitter. Indicative of this activity is the high rate of semantic matching among serial posts, extremely short

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<sup>19</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, “Discourse”, 376-380.

time span between posts and short aliases on the personal profiles of dubious authenticity. These messages are monotonous, like-minded and targeted. There are no arguments to corroborate the claims in the comments. It is interesting that they are much more frequently used within the comments sections of traditional online media, and not so much in the Twitter domain, thanks to a Twitter application that recognizes and neutralizes such orchestrated posts.<sup>20</sup>

The political instrumentalization of this tweet, in the user comments on the portals and on Twitter, was highly divergent, from its condemnation (as shown in previous examples) to support for the offensive tweet. Unlike condemnation, the interpretive frame of support to the problematic tweet was not taken from the media, but a smaller user segment of the news portal and a larger part of the “Tweeters” community framed the news on violence against women in favour of the opposition’s interests. And hence, also in the manner of political instrumentalization of this social issue (Examples 6 and 7).

*Example 6.* ~potsdam: “Support for Sergej! This is the only way to communicate with the mafia!” (Blic Comment, January 22, 2019, 20:15).

*Example 7.* ~DaliborSinanov: “One negative comment and all voices raised at once... the man is right, whether you and Brnabić<sup>21</sup> like it or not...” (@DaliborSinanov1, February 21, 2019, 11:16).

Legitimizing misogyny as public discourse can be observed in readers’ comments, especially in the so-called “red herring” formulations, where verbal violence against women is condoned in some cases, i.e. when used in the context of criticizing public institutions perceived as delegitimized, as well as those who support them.

The smallest share of users (31%) of online daily press portals and Twitter approached verbal violence in an appropriate manner – i.e. argued and constructive, with a clear message that the so-called public figures aspiring to political leadership are obliged to act in an argued and civilized way, respecting their opponents in the debate regardless of their political affiliation. Framing condemnation of misogyny as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination, in the spirit of the Istanbul Convention, these commenters discussed the issue in a competent and balanced manner. This framing approach was the least in use.

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<sup>20</sup> Milutinović and Pavlović, “Diskurs o nasilju”.

<sup>21</sup> Mrs Ana Brnabić, Serbian Prime Minister.

## Conclusion

In the monitored two-month sample, media online discourse on violence against women was dominantly framed in line with interpretation defined by pro-regime actors. In this interpretive pattern, verbal violence against women was mostly instrumentalized with the aim of stigmatizing political opponents. The large majority of comments on daily press online platforms accepted the dominant model of media framing, joining the matrix of politically instrumentalized condemnation of the offensive tweet. A smaller number of commentators on newspaper platforms and a larger part of the Twitter community were opposed to this framing model and supported the offensive tweet in favour of the opposition's interests.

Online discussion on misogyny is primarily used as just another platform for the verbal contest between government supporters and opponents, as it rarely develops further than the simple identification of "others" as misogynists. Even when condemned, misogyny it is not condemned as a phenomenon, as the condemnation is highly personalized and targeted at politically discrediting the person being identified as a misogynist. Political animosities expressed in online comments encourage the deepening of the social polarization, characteristic for the populist discourse and method of political mobilization. In particular, Twitter discourse in Serbia is highly polarized, vulgar and antagonistic towards the identified political opponents. On the other hand, newspaper websites showed a high degree of authority in the distribution of interpretive patterns reflected on the public opinion.

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# COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SYMBOLS OF THE BULGARIAN PROTESTS IN 2013 AND 2018-2019, REFLECTED IN THE BULGARIAN MEDIA ECOSYSTEM

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*Abstract:* The study discusses some major political and social implications of the new roles of the audiences viewed through the prism of the media activism in Bulgaria. It is based on comparison of two case-studies, focused on rigorous social events in the country that had significant political effects. The first one, triggered by the raise of electricity bills in 2013, is connected with disapproval of the living standards. Later in the same year the social protests developed towards sustaining the democratic achievements. The second case study is based on the many-sided social discontent in 2018, caused by existential problems and welfare divide. The proposed study aims to trace the messages of the civil protests in Bulgaria, reflected by traditional media, social media and social networks. The subject of the study is the comparison of the major societal demands as well as of the way citizens struggle for their rights in 2013 and at the end of 2018 and early 2019. The main research question is to explore the transformation, which has occurred in the communication process over the years between the maturing Bulgarian civil society and the elites in the context of the Internet based environment. Main task is to trace how traditional media, social media and social networks are involved and step in as a catalyst in organizing the protests in Bulgaria. The study method is a comparative analysis of the messages, delivered through the visual images of the 2018 and 2013 protests.

*Keywords:* social protests, citizen’s participation, public trust

## **Introductory words**

The democratic development in Bulgaria, a member state of the European Union is still on the make. The people are in the center of the democratic processes with their social movement activities, protests and mobilizations. The frames of the public discontent against politicians, disputable laws, oligarchs, etc. is characterized by various overlapping events over time, which less or more are connected. Thus, the similarities can manifest itself in two ways: in the motives for the protests and in terms of the used tactical actions for achieving the goals of the protesters, framed by the traditional and social media. In order to study in-depth the similarities and differences in the means used by the protesters our research is focusing on the symbols of the Bulgarian protests in 2013 and 2018-2019.

## **Social protests 2013**

### **Chronology**

The protests in Bulgaria are a telling sign of the activities of the awakened civil society fighting against the monopoly of the oligarchic corporate structures and for integrity of the political parties and the state machine (Velinova, Tomov, Raycheva 2015).

The protests flared in late January - early February 2013, provoked by the repeated increase in electricity and steam bills, as well as against the monopoly position of the electricity distribution companies. Although initially primarily socially and economically oriented, the protests quickly turned to the political system as a whole. This action of EPCs (electricity distribution companies or energy distribution companies such as CEZ, Energo Pro and EVN) is a drop that overflows the cup of patience of the Bulgarian people and releases the accumulated tensions over the years for Bulgarians.

The second protest wave begins immediately after the appointment of DPS MP Delyan Peevski as head of SANS on June 14, 2013. The protests are directed against the newly formed government of Plamen Oresharski. Although Peevski withdraws his candidacy, the people continue to demand the resignation of the government.

With varying intensity, protests cover nearly the entire second half of the year, with Bulgarians taking to the streets with even greater fervor and fervor.

The so-called a series of #DANSwithme protests against the political leadership of Prime Minister Plamen Oresharski.<sup>1</sup>

***The fire was used as a symbol of the brutal force in 2013 (Winter)***

On February 10, 2013 a group of protesters burned two cars, belonging to the Austrian Energy supply company EVN<sup>2</sup> (Energieversorgung Niederösterreich). This was the first of the subsequent series of symbolic actions of that kind.



Photo 1: *Impact Press*



Photo 2

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<sup>1</sup> VELINOVA, N. (2018). *Characteristics of the Media Ecosystem in Bulgaria in the Prism of Social Protests in Bulgaria in 2013*

<sup>2</sup> EVN Group is an Austrian-based producer and transporter of electricity, working also in Bulgaria, one of the largest in Europe.



Photo 3

Photo 2 & 3: *Dimana TODOROVA (BLITZ agency)*

A similar but much more symbolic was the act of burning electricity and central heating bills.

On February 25, 2013 a copy of the Constitution was burned as an act of dissent against the status quo and the restrictions of the civil rights.

Symbolic act, which took place in several cities, was the burning of dummies of politicians.

### ***Self-Immolation of Plamen Goranov***

Saturated with symbolism and protest against the ruling politicians and in particular - against the then mayor of the City of Varna Kiril Yordanov, was the self-immolation of the 36-year-old photographer and mountaineer Plamen Goranov on February 20, 2013. Although the mayor resigned, after his death Plamen Goranov became a symbol of the protests. He was compared with Mohammed Bouazizi, whose self-immolation ignited the start of the Arab Spring, as well as with the Czech student Jan Palach, who set himself on fire during the Prague Spring of 1968.



Photo 4: *Mario EVSTATIEV (inews.bg)*

The self-immolation of Plamen Goranov remained the most emblematic, although he was followed by other desperate people who committed suicide by self-immolation.

### ***Theatrical Symbolism of the Performance in 2013 (Summer)***

Unlike the February protests, the June protests were characterized mainly by their peaceful nature, as well as with the symbolic creativity of the protesters' actions.

Here we can see the children as symbol of protests. Protesters took their children at the marches namely to express the peaceful character of the events. Moreover, children were a clear symbol of the purity and fairness, so much cherished for the future of the country.

### ***The Symbol of the Painting *La Liberté guidant le peuple* by Eugene Delacroix***



Photo 5: © Sofia Photo Agency

The symbolism of the June protests was far more sophisticated and carefully directed in some cases. Some of the symbols included the impersonation of famous paintings; paraphrase of existing and already used slogans and messages, puns, theatrical sketches, etc. Artistry and creativity in the June protests displayed a new face of the people, far more conscious and confident, ready to fight for their cause with a smile.

A telling example of street performance in Sofia was the symbolic “revival” of the picture *Liberty Leading the People* by the French painter Eugene Delacroix. Originally this picture has been dedicated to the July Revolution of 1830 in France. The performance in Sofia was organized on the eve of July 14 - the French national holiday.

One of the key features of the June protests was the demonstratively non-confrontational manner of their conduct.

June’s protests had the desire to improve the quality of democracy associated with expectations to improve the integrity of the politicians.

Students from the National Academy of Theatrical and Film Art displayed their messages interrupting regularly on a daily basis the traffic of one of the main streets in the capital of Sofia. The main idea of the performance was connected with the transformation of the young people from passive witnesses to active participants in the social matters of the country. The final of the performance was memorable – they form with their bodies the word “Resignation”.

Unlike the protests in 2013, the protests in 2018 were neither so aggressive and destructive as the February ones, nor that peaceful and artistic as the June protests. In 2018 the social dissatisfaction of the high fuel prices and the living standards was expressed by blocking key highways and paying in coins at the gas stations. Civil society has taken firm steps to uphold its demands.

Also in 2018 there were series of protests of mothers of children with disabilities chanting the slogan: “Our system kills us!” in front of the Council of Ministers’ building with the request the Deputy Prime Minister Valeri Simeonov to resign.

## **Social protests 2018**

### **Chronology**

At the end of 2018 the social dissatisfaction of the high fuel prices and the living standards is expressed by blocking key highways across the country and paying in coins at the gas stations. There are demonstrations in over 50 towns across the country (<https://frognews.bg/novini/nad-50-grad-balgariia-izlizat-protest-dnes.html>). One of the most affected motorways is the E79, which connects the capital Sofia with Blagoevgrad and the border with Greece.

People took to the streets calling for the resignation of the government led by PM Boyko Borisov leader of the center-right political party CEDB and for a radical change in the political system.

On November 11, the Sofia citizens gathered in front of the building of the Council of Ministers shouting slogans such as “Mafia” and “Resign”. The protesters demand for increasing of the minimum wage to 750 leva (383 euros), the minimum pension to 350 leva (179 euros), the starting salary of a nurse to 1200 leva (614 euros) and for a doctor – 2000 leva (1023 euros). In comparison, Bulgaria has the lowest average salary in the European Union, at €575 a month, the lowest minimum wage, at €260, and the smallest average pension, at €190.

The previous day, citizens of the northern town of Ruse and the southwestern town of Pernik protested against air pollution in their towns. Ruse, which lies on the Danube river and the border with neighbouring Romania, saw its bridge crossing into Romania blocked. The protest’s organisers stated that by blocking a major European route, they wanted European citizens to pay attention to the issue of air pollution in the city.

Pernik’s residents’ cleaner air initiative involved a concert held under the slogan Breathe Pernik. Representatives of Greenpeace Bulgaria and Zero Waste

provided those attending with information regarding the city’s air and pollution problems.

### ***The resignation of the Deputy Prime Minister Valeriy Simeonov***

On October 16th, Simeonov made a statement on television where he called mothers of disabled children “shrill women” and their descendants “supposedly ill children”. The comment is address towards the women who have been campaigning for a reform in the country’s system of assistance to children with disabilities. Due to this, protest erupted demanding Simeonov’s immediate resignation. While he has refused to resign from his position, he also refused to apologize until Prime Minister Boyko Borissov forced him to. The latter has not asked Simeonov for his resignation, as this would mean that the “construction of the government“ could eventually fall.

### ***The symbols of the 2018 protests***

#### ***Horo dance***

The mothers of disabled children celebrated the resignation of Deputy Prime Minister Valeriy Simeonov with traditional Bulgarian horo dance.



Photo 6: *BGNES*

In the demonstrations horo dance is part of the protest attributes - flags, slogans, signs. On the road blockades along the border with Greece, on the main roads or on the central streets of Sofia the folklore is inspiring element for the protesters. Mainly because the horo dance is a symbol of the collective spirit, an

important part of the Bulgarian traditional culture, which creates the feeling of unity and cohesion. It is also a metaphor of power and attribute of the festivity.

Related to this, in the many Israeli and Palestinian historical accounts of the first Intifada (uprising), the role of expressive culture has largely been characterized as epiphenomenal. As in popular memories of revolt, contemporary conversations on the nature of Palestinian resistance, it is striking how many cite traditional music, poetry, song and dance as a predominant means of mobilizing and sustaining the Intifada. (Kanaaneh, Thorsen, Bursheh & McDonald, 2013).

### *The system kills us*

‘The System Kills Us’, a networked social movement in Bulgaria, is born after a series of offensive verbal attacks and aggressive actions from the former Vice Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Valeri Simeonov.



Photo 7 & 8: *bTV*

The community of mothers of children with disabilities formed an online movement in 2015. After being put at a disadvantage for years, they managed to mobilize and organize eight protests in three years, which became popularly known as “the protests of the mothers”. Being neglected with their “personal” problems for years and years, the mothers realized that their personal problems are actually a problem of the state. This is why they started tent protests, camping in front of the National Assembly in the capital city Sofia on June 1, 2015. People from other cities joined the protests and the movement grew to a national level. During the protests people are wearing black T-shirts with the slogan “The System Kills Us”.

“We realized that if we wanted a decent life for our children so that they would be an equal part of the society, our efforts should be focused not only on social policy reforms for people with disabilities. Because not only the social system kills us – it is also the health system, the education system, and court, and...” explain the mothers of children with disabilities on the official Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SystemKillsUs/>

‘The System Kills Us’ cannot be understood as a leaderless movement or an instance of networked individualism. It is the exiting community of activists that used digital media to upscale their activism by creating an open Facebook page with the name ‘The system kills us’ on June 23, 2018. Currently the page has reached 13k likes and 15k followers.

### ***Blocking major roads***

An important factor in the impact of the protesters is the road occupation. Among the many areas affected is the road via Blagoevgrad to Greece, three parts of Trakiya Motorway – near Stara Zagora, Yambol and Bourgas – and the highway close to the town of Shoumen. There are also large blockades in major cities including Plovdiv and Bourgas. Hundreds of people gathered on the international road at Poligon at the exit of the district town towards Kulata. Traffic is completely stopped in both directions. In Bansko, residents stopped traffic to protest against the appreciation of the water price increase.

Using this tactic, the protesters are trying to attract media attention stopping important business connections and to achieve their goals faster with mass disobedience, radicalizing the protests.



Photo 9: *PIK Agency*

### **Concluding words**

Over the last 10 years there have been serious changes in the protesting culture in Bulgaria and in the communication between protesters and the ruling party in the country. As a result is observed a noticeable maturation of the Bulgarian civil society and certain differences in the way of making a dialog between protesters and Government. The distinction is noticed in the change of the protesters' symbols, reflected by the Bulgarian mass media.

The social protests at the beginning of 2013 were more violent than those in middle of 2013 and in 2018-2019. The protests in Bulgaria in 2013 (winter) & 2018 started as a demand for economic justice. The symbols of the protests in 2013 (winter) are numerous acts of burning: the EVN corporate cars, the electricity bills and the politicians' effigies. The most radical acts against the social injustice in 2013 (winter) included several acts of self-immolations and bloody clashes in front of the Parliament building. After these scenes, broadcasted by the mass media worldwide, the Bulgarian government resigned.

The protests in the middle 2013 started as a moral corrective of the ruling Government. Their symbols are theatrical performances, children presence at the protest marches, music concerts, puns (#DANSwith me), etc.

On July 23, because of the intention of the government to not transparently amend the 2013 State budget, demonstrators blockaded the house of the Bulgarian Parliament with trashcans, park benches, paving stones and street signs.

Despite the mounting pressure and the growing people's discontent, the government largely ignored the protesters and dismissed their claims.

The elections for European Parliament in May 2014 were not favourable for the ruling Coalition of Bulgaria and with no sufficient support by the National Parliament and the government was forced to resign after 14 months of social tension and discontent.

The outcome of the 2018 protests: Protests (2013 & 2018) have been organized via social media. The symbols of the protests in 2018 and 2019 are the traditional horo folk dance; paying in coins at the gas stations; blocking major highways.

As in the protests in 2013 the protesters didn't want to engage with political forces and distance themselves from all parties, but do not point out the tools to serve the political system in order to fulfill their demands.

Vice-premier Valeri Simeonov resigned because of his comments denigrating campaigning mothers of children with disabilities. Fuel prices were reduced but taking into consideration that the cost of fuel depends on the price of oil on the international financial markets and the Bulgarian authorities are unable to regulate it, although they could take measures and social policies to offset the inflationary effect. However the 2018 protest wave was not able to destroy the political stability although more frequently, the protests lead to policy changes and personal resignations. In the long-term these protests resulted in public awareness, which has to be prioritized by the ruling powers in the future.

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# FEATURES OF INFORMATION IN ALBANIAN MEDIA ON THE ONLINE PLATFORM

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*Abstract:* The internet brought a new meaning to the information. Thanks to digitization and convergence, new ways of interacting information between online media and different audiences took shape. One aspect of change of information is its quality. It is presented, in different nuances, so and the same in many themes or issues. We undoubtedly see a special attention to the easy and pleasant information, as well as shallow. The quality of information is important to audiences, but it is seen that this quality fades day by day, confusion increases. In saturated information terms, we find that sensationalism is packed as key information. It does not remain after sensational appearances or scandals that seem to want to say something, but they do not really say much about issues of the day. More they hide the problems of the citizens. What is the prowess with the quality of information through the internet? This approach tries to shed some light on its quality.

*Keywords:* information, online media, portals, information homogenization, sensationalism, audiences

## **Introduction**

The quality of information in the media has always been discussed in the classical media and this problem is now being conveyed with deeper meanings in new media such as the internet. New media on a variety of factors related to how we receive and deliver information has created a deep gap between that quality and amateur information. This theoretical approach is intended to identify some features of the provision and receipt of information on the Internet.

The subject of the study is the new media and mainly all-Albanian web access portals, which are either forms of classical media reconstructed for social platforms or born as a need for daily information, ie news media.

The hypothesis of this paper is that the new media follow the same characteristics as the classical media, they are affected by the same behaviors. New media also reinforces this behavior by degrading the information into several features that will be explained below.

This theoretical analysis is based on the theories and reference studies of communication sciences regarding the characteristics of classical or new media, on many world studies and also on the current situation in Albania about the state of information in the Albanian media. This paper also relies on a series of monitors in classical and new media in Albania and Kosovo.

First of all, this treatment will exhaust as many questions as possible, such as: what kind of media model is being created between the gap between giving and receiving information from old media to new media? What features do they present? Why does the information come and go and turn into worthless information? This study is not intended to exhaust the whole range of achievements and problems of the new media in general, it confines itself to information quality characteristics of some classical and new media in its rituals.

## **1. Characteristics of the classical media in the transmission of information**

### **1.1 Superficiality of information**

In a 1994 interview by Antonio Gnoli in “La Repubblica” Noam Chomsky states: “It is the big newspapers and television networks that fabricate or manipulate the opinion of 80% of the population. There is a way of dealing with the news, selecting it, restricting it and rearranging it that is functional for the power elite. A suffocating system that is impossible to escape, in the United States there are about 1800 newspapers, 11 thousand weekly, 11 thousand radio stations, 2000 television stations, 2,500 publishing houses, more than 50% of which are all controlled by about twenty societies, their source of survival is publicity. It’s not public approval that keeps them alive, but publicity.<sup>1</sup> So going back to the argument we see that the more traditional media grow and develop under the free competition that comes from publicity, according to Noam Chomsky’s statement, the more they are subject to the censorship and control of a concentration of capital in the 20 company. The quantitative growth of the media does not mean that the quality of information is increased, but according to Chomsky, it is moving away from audiences, from its mission of giving information to the public.

In the 1950s for the American model of communication, scholars from the Frankfurt School, Adorno and Horkheimer, make a strong critique of both standardized and economical political information: “Since the 1950s, both philosophers have a harsh criticism of the more widespread mass media, the radio, blaming it for adopting the American way of communication, for vulgarizing

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<sup>1</sup> COLOMBO, Furio, Lajmet e fundit mbi gazetarinë, ISHM, Tiranë, pp 284

any cultural content, for balancing and uniformizing the complexity of European literary and artistic expressions; the radio does not broadcast every hour of the day and night ‘jazz band and boogie-woogie’, stunned and murmured to all listeners.”<sup>2</sup>

“The power of the classical media in the importance of information can make it a source of first-hand information in the new media as well. Dinner television in many cases becomes the instrument of tomorrow’s press information day.”<sup>3</sup>

But this kind of information also occurs in the media like newspapers. Media researcher Gianfranco Marrone states:

“However, the reading result of daily newspapers has not changed. From a cognitive point of view, it is understood that “people” speak with prefabricated phrases and, consequently, the newspapers are filled with familiar things that practically do not inform anything<sup>4</sup>

Domenique Wolton thinks this creates a media despotism that pushes information across more media goals than the public, he says:

“The consequence of this conductor-free process is a form of media despotism with a “media style” style and a simplification that is imposed on everyone. With the prospect of more clarity for a large number of people everything is simplified. Sometimes, up to the cartoon, with a form looming over the content. Who and who to invent short phrases and formulas faster.”<sup>5</sup> Even German researcher Stephan Russ-Mohl agrees with classical media: ‘Overloading with information can have similar consequences as lack of information or incomplete information. Since it does not grow at all with the same term our ability to process information<sup>6</sup>

## 1.2 Homogenization of information in classical media

In this line, in the competition between each other they produce themselves. Gianfranco Marrone in his book “Social Bodies: Communicative Processes and the Semiotics of the Text’ identifies the symbiosis of the relationship of information and relevant agendas with the same editorial policies in informa-

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<sup>2</sup> Stefano Zecchi, *Njeriu është ai cka sheh: Televizioni dhe publiku*, Max, Tiranë, 2005, pp. 27-29

<sup>3</sup> Artan Fuga, *Komunikimi në shoqërinë masive*. Papirus, Tiranë, 2014 pp. 478

<sup>4</sup> MARRONE, Gianfranco, *Trupat shoqërorë: Proceset komunikuese dhe semiotika e tekstit*, Dudaj, Tiranë 2008, pp. 97: citim 10 Shih Eco, U. (1999) *La bustina di Minerva*, Bompiani, Milano. pp. 54

<sup>5</sup> Domenique Wolton, *Të shpëtojmë komunikimin*, Papirus, Tiranë, 2009, pp. 54

<sup>6</sup> STEPHAN, Russ-Mohl, *Gazetaria*, K&B, Tiranë, 2010, pp. 35

tion, he states: "... but precisely the general system where newspapers enter in relation to each other that create their own identity based on the relationship of difference and contrast with other newspapers, which are, directly or indirectly, in the same system. This relationship, if competitive from a market perspective, from a semiotic perspective is self-productive."<sup>7</sup> In this line, Pierre Bourdieu in his book "On Television" puts forward his thesis that despite having pluralistic media and a market economy, information is homogenized. So concentrating the pluralist model under the motto of economics does not lead to its diversification. "As the researcher Pierre Bourdieu points out, the free market of communication, while fully respecting the freedom of entrepreneurial initiative in the media field, can lead to uniformity of information. The tool often does not lead to the result for which it was conceived and hoped to yield."<sup>8</sup> According to him, diversity of ownership leads to information homogenization. He adds: "Diversity of media ownership, anti-concentration laws, the free market of communication, etc., all indispensable indicators for the democratization of information do not necessarily lead to its pluralism, to an expressive plurality of sources, information content."<sup>9</sup>

The information provided by the Public Relations offices of various state institutions or organizations can serve as compulsory but also repetitive information from media to media. According to researcher Artan Fuga "The source of political news is to a large extent the press office of the government of some state institutions or of major political parties, the same phrase of a politician without much meaning, recaptured by hundreds of media and chewing slogans and clichés, perhaps losing even its primary meaning, a great deal of news is downloaded directly from the same sources on the Internet."<sup>10</sup>

In this line in the book *Communication in Mass Society* he states that "However, uniformizing tendencies are far more powerful than pluralistic ones. This happens paradoxically at a time when individuality, personal rights, self, personal opinion seem to have risen to the pedestal, while uniformizing tendencies have a convergence that leads to the creation of common clichés, to collective consciousness, to a kind of "embarrassment" of public opinion, towards the creation of standard habits in consumer tastes, behaviors, types of social

<sup>7</sup> MARRONE, Gianfranco, *Trupat shoqërorë: Proceset komunikuese dhe semiotika e tekstit*, Dudaj, Tiranë 2008, pp. 106

<sup>8</sup> Artan Fuga, *Komunikimi në shoqërinë masive*. Papirus, Tiranë, pp. 477

<sup>9</sup> Artan Fuga, *Komunikimi në shoqërinë masive*. Papirus, Tiranë, pp. 477

<sup>10</sup> Artan Fuga, *Komunikimi në shoqërinë masive*. Papirus, Tiranë, 2014, pp. 478

reactions, towards common stereotypes in clothing, fashion, behavior, that is, to some degree of human 'cloning' 'as part of the public.'<sup>11</sup> He also thinks that:

"Journalists' relationships are such that they exchange news, topics, problems with each other."<sup>12</sup>

### 1.3 Spectacle information in the classical media

Gy de Borg's book "The Spectacle Society" is a critic of this kind of method of doing media, of communicating and of mass media information. He analyzes that: "Spectacle embodies society itself, represents a part of it and serves as a means of unification ... Spectacle is not a set of images, but a social relationship between individuals, mediated by images"<sup>13</sup>

Researcher Dominique Wolton further exacerbates the problem when he says:

"This implies simplification, the actors of this process (journalists, spectacle leaders ...) rising to the rank of temple conservationists of this communication to the general public tend to reinforce its movement."<sup>14</sup>

According to him: "Moreover at the same time information is moving towards spectacle, skop, dramatization."<sup>15</sup> Stefano Zechi is on the same line when he says:

"Television is the most faithful tool of spectacle society and its way of communicating is a typical example of how any content is simplified when it is spectacularized"<sup>16</sup> Furio Colombo, a researcher, adds to their arguments:

"Before the danger I just described, to stay on the point of constantly changing events and moods and to resist a public outcry and a political system that demands loyalty (from local governments to international organizations), many editors become spectacle entrepreneurs, the formula requires the use of sensationalism, variety, difference, humor and play, these tools that attract popular attention and attract the support of an increasingly elusive public are imposed on the print press from television, while the latter have been forced by an increasingly skeptical link to the news."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Artan Fuga, *Komunikimi në shoqërinë masive*. Papyrus, Tiranë, 2014, pp.480

<sup>12</sup> Artan Fuga, *Komunikimi në shoqërinë masive*. Papyrus, Tiranë, 2014pp. 478

<sup>13</sup> Stefano Zecchi, *Njeriu është ai cka sheh: Televizioni dhe publiku*, Max, Tiranë, 2005, pp. 65:  
Gy Debord, *Shoqëria e spektaklit*, Paris 1992, f. 16

<sup>14</sup> Dominique Ëolton, *Të shpëtojmë komunikimin*, Papyrus, Tiranë, 2009, pp. 54

<sup>15</sup> Dominique Ëolton, *Të shpëtojmë komunikimin*, Papyrus, Tiranë, 2009, pp. 40

<sup>16</sup> Stefano Zecchi, *Njeriu është ai cka sheh: Televizioni dhe publiku*, Max, Tiranë, 2005, pp. 65

<sup>17</sup> FURIO, Colombo, *Lajmet e fundit mbi gazetarinë*, ISHM, Tiranë, 2008, pp. 17

## 2. Features of new media in giving and receiving information

In Gutenbergian logic, journalism and the media was a “push” model of communication to the public where it was a passive communication medium. The new Internet media model is already “pulling”, audiences want to act, communicate, interact, criticize, become the media themselves to have fast, debut information. It seems that communication and information as a public good creates valuable and useful features, but it also exhibits the same characteristics of its development as in the time of classical media.

The importance of information online is also confirmed by a French study by Erich Scherer:

“The Internet and digital have now become the most important systems of distribution of original content. After a few years, Google predicts, there will be no difference between the TV, radio and Web broadcast channels. And so, there will be no more difference in line between these media, not even the newspapers and magazines that offer all the videos”<sup>18</sup>

### Superficiality of information in online media

MIT professor Joseph Weizenbaum, a well-known researcher for the ELIZA program of automated therapy in 1966, once had a critical opinion. In 1976, in his book “Computer Power and Human Reason” he states that:

“The internet is nothing more than a huge mass of crap, a mass medium that up to 95% consists of empty words, almost the same as the medium of television, to which the web is in fact going inevitably, the so-called information revolution is, in fact, rapidly turning into a flood of disinformation.”<sup>19</sup>

Researcher and critic Giovanni Sartori in his book ‘Homo videns’ quotes Alberto Arvasino and shares the same rationale for the quality of mass media information in which he says:

“Does it seem to me that the highways celebrated through the Internet’s exaltations have, in addition to a great deal of information needed, an endless amount of stupidity, neither fun nor necessary? The question is rhetorical. The explosion of stupid is obvious and the Internet, itself a wonderful multiplication.”<sup>20</sup> Sartori (2013: 42) Arvasino(1995-1996)

<sup>18</sup> SCHERER, Erich, A na duhen më gazetarët?, Papirus, Tiranë, 2012 pp 22

<sup>19</sup> Beert Lovink. Shoqëria e pikëpyetjeve dhe goole-izmi i jetës sonë, në *Media në erën e internetit dhe globalizmit* ISHM, 2009 Tiranë, pp 83

<sup>20</sup> Xhovani Sartori, Xhovani. (2013) *Homo Videns (Televizioni dhe postemendimi)*, Dituria, Tiranë, PP 42: Arbasino, Alberto(1995-1996), Io e il computer, në “Telema”, dimër

There may be superficiality, banality but also everything and at the same time nothing of particular interest to audiences, just information that the media wants to push, but not that the public has an interest in getting.

“With the aim of communicating with a growing number of them they are becoming more superficial, increasingly standardized by continually balancing content, traditional platforms serving a geographically well-off community, today’s public can find everything in the market of information, but, nothing addressed exclusively.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Homogenizing of the online information**

Communications researcher Paul Starr in his analysis of the media thinks that: “Studies on newspapers and electronic journalism have repeatedly shown that electronic media news follows the agenda set by the newspapers, often repeating the same issues, perhaps treating them in a more shallow way.”<sup>22</sup>

From the economic aspect of building the media industry on their platforms we see that behaviors are such that there is a risk of concentrating the economic assets of the media industry. Gillian Doyle in the book “Media Economics”, in the face of digitalization and convergence with multifunctional forms and the online integration of some conglomerates of the media industry, puts the public interest and monopolistic model at risk. This way:

“When certain companies have franchises over a life event or infrastructure part that all media operators need to capture audiences or collect fees, then, because of the control they exercise over payment, they are in a position to act as gatekeeper and decide who should or should not have access to the market”<sup>23</sup>

But on the other hand, this approach also brings about the same content, necessarily, shareholder and proprietary forms can create a chain of mechanisms, such as ‘resubmitting’ issues, retrieving news for different newsrooms. It can bring light forms of censorship for journalists to bring information content to converged media forms such as television, newspapers, radio.

The forms of obtaining information are again ordered by the same political and institutional sources that relate to powerful organized media forms. This can also lead to the homogenization of information in the new media. This way also

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<sup>21</sup> Mark Marku, Informimi qytetar: Audiencat, transformimi dhe orientimi i tyre: Dinamika e zhvillimit të audiencës së medaive bashkëkohore shqiptare, *Media ne demorkatizim*, Papirus, 2014, pp. 18

<sup>22</sup> STARR, Paul. (2009), *Lamtumirë epokës së gazetave, në Media në erën e internetit dhe globalizmit*, ISHM, Tiranë, f. 11

<sup>23</sup> DOYLE, Gyllian. (2015) *Ekonomia e Medias*, Papirus, bot.2, Tiranë, pp. 205

risks the news being identical across many media sources depending on their interests.

This is also due to the fact that this information flow is often realized as an imitation as long as no ordinary individual is able to judge all the diverse information he receives within the day..”<sup>24</sup>

One reason for the homogenization of information on the Internet is the very functioning of the new media that is being introduced and the print media that is interpreting their content. Mark Mark (2014: 18) thinks that:

“By aiming to communicate with an increasing number of people, they are becoming more and more superficial, increasingly standardized, constantly content-banal. Traditional platforms served a well-defined geographic community. Today’s audiences can find everything in the information market, but nothing that addresses it exclusively.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Quality of information in Albania**

In Albania, according to many monitoring statistics, social and economic themes have already disappeared from the information function at 1% of the total discourse, cultural themes shrink to 10% of the total discourse in the new media. Studies on the whole Albanian space show that 98% of the information is homogeneous in topics, titles, content. Sensationalism in culture has grown to 70%, and political information according to many studies exceeds the quota of 79%<sup>26</sup> in both classical and new media. The same thing is happening as predicted by many world studies. The role of the media is invalidating the information we want. In cultural themes, there is an overwhelming sense of cultural sensitivity represented by the category of national and international ‘VIPs’ at a rate of 77%, (homogenization of inf). Political information accounts for 5-fold of cultural and 20-fold for scarce social or economic information. In the new media the trends are the same according to studies, homogenization passes across all Albanian media to 98% with 2% titles and issues, diverse content. The black chronicle and political themes as well as the ‘Vip culture’, which now represents the most important culture in spectacular information, grow to 15%. The tendencies of the

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<sup>24</sup> Artan Fuga, *Komunikimi në shoqërinë masive*. Papyrus, Tiranë, 2014, pp. 480

<sup>25</sup> MARKU, Mark. (2014) Informimi qytetar: Audiencat, transformimi dhe orientimi i tyre: Dinamika e zhvillimit të audiencës së mediave bashkëkohore, në Media Demoakratizim, Papyrus, pp 18

<sup>26</sup> <https://dspace.aab-edu.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/1068/Eugent%20Kllapi.pdf?sequence=1&isAlloçed=y> : see also <https://aab-edu.net/assets/uploads/2016/12/02-2015-SQ-12-Zylyftar-Bregu.pdf>

Albanian media are the same as the concerns of scholars with modern models of information provision. They are merely a guide imitated in their most stupid model.

## Conclusions

From this theoretical research, there are some conclusions regarding the way and behavior of media provide information. It is first noticed that the behavior of the media, although with different technical practices, does not avoid superficiality, the banality of information, and a very ugly phenomenon called information homogenization. They go back to their old model of conveying information. Thus the model of strong “Watchdog” journalism has become a “parasite-dog” journalism where everything is accompanied, approved, agreed upon, until spectacular information, banalizing and imitating it, to avoid those social and cultural problems which are the basis of a modern democratic society. The information is being returned more to the propaganda of conforming societies than to masses otherwise called crowds.

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# DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE BULGARIAN MEDIA

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*Abstract:* The article aims to explore the conflicts in the field of Bulgarian demographic development. For this purpose the study analyses the work of state institutions, expert opinion and media coverage of this problems.

The specificity and wide scope of demographic problems, as well as their impact on all spheres of society, make journalism a serious challenge, both in understanding and reflecting on the problem.

The purpose of the paper is to research how the topic is present in the public space and to highlight the conflicting fields at the media, institutional and expert levels.

The methodology used includes analysis of scientific literature, regulations and content analysis of 130 publications for the period October - December 2018 in the printed edition of the newspaper “24 Chasa”, which is part of the complete empirical study, cover the period of one year.

*Keywords:* demography; media; demographic development; journalism; publicity

## Introduction

Bulgaria has been in a severe demographic crisis for almost 30 years. According to statistical data the population decreases annually with nearly 50 000 people<sup>1</sup>, and the demographic forecasts for the period until 2040 expect that the population will drop by 1.3 million, people, or 18%.

This tendency outlines the increasing significance of the demographic problem and the need to undertake specific actions at institutional and public level. The negative processes have placed the demographic issue in the limelight of the public debate and have made the problems topical. Their specifics and wide scope, as well as their impact on all social spheres, faced the institutions and journalism with a serious challenge such as understanding, finding a solution and depicting the problem.

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<sup>1</sup> National Statistical Institute. Demography and Social Statistics Population - Demography, Migration and Forecasts. Press releases Population and Demographic Processes in 2018. (online). Available at: [https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/Population2018\\_ZG7X53J.pdf](https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/Population2018_ZG7X53J.pdf) [visited on 10.09.2019].

A predetermined thesis of hopelessness of the demographic situation in Bulgaria and absence of specific actions to overcome the crisis is observed at both institutional and media level. There is no evidence of will for that in the ruling circles and the journalists are apathetic, as the information they publish without any effort is just the one shared by the representatives of the institutions, who in turn use the opportunity to create a positive public image.

The experts and specialists in the field of demography are the only ones trying to identify and streamline specific steps for a better demographic future, yet their voice is ignored in the public domain.

All of the above allows reaching to the thesis that there are conflicts at institutional, expert and media level about the demographic development of the country.

These conflicts are the subject of the present study.

The scope of the study includes normative documents, scientific literature, the role of the state authorities and the media contents in the national daily newspaper “24 Chasa“.

The purpose of this paper is to study how the issue is presented in the public domain and to outline the areas of conflict at institutional, media and expert level by juxtaposing the various viewpoints.

The methodology employed includes analysis of the scientific literature, normative documents and content analysis of 130 publications in the printed issue of “24 Chasa” in the period October - December 2018, part of the comprehensive empirical study, covering a period of one year.

The following tasks have been summarized:

- systematization of the studied scientific literature and normative documents;
- analysis and monitoring of research hypotheses relating to the public speaking on demographic topics;
- analysis of the contents of the printed “24 Chasa“ issue

## **1. Demographic problems in Bulgaria and globalization**

Part of the researchers in the field of demography considers that the demographic crisis in Bulgaria is a result of adopting the modern society model and utilising the values of the global epoch<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> DIMITROVA, Elitsa. Change in Birth Rates in Bulgaria - Behavioural Standards and Standards of Value. Sofia: Prof. Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, 2011, p. 9.

On a worldwide scale these processes started at the end of 1960s, when the second demographic transition emerged. Its standards are reflected in the new behavioural and value aspects of contemporary life, which are becoming part of the globalization process<sup>3</sup>. These are the relatively advanced maternal age and reduced birth rate and marriage rate, in the emergence of new forms of cohabitation, in the increasing instability of the cohabitation bonds and their turning into an alternative form to raise a child as compared to the institutional form of the marriage.

The new behavioural standards and standards of value of the contemporary life have been part of the Bulgarian reality for nearly 30 years. The second demographic transition in Bulgaria is a product of both the economic crisis and the globalization<sup>4</sup>. This mixture faces the individuals in the society with serious changes in their social and role behaviour. As a result of this, decreasing birth rates, change in the fertility behaviour of women, growth of common-law cohabitation and a stronger domestic and international migration are observed<sup>5</sup>.

The new behavioural forms are implanted in the society even stronger, keeping Bulgaria in the grip of the demographic crisis. Therefore, it should be adopted at both public and institutional level that the traditional measures will not help overcoming the problems. New visions and approaches, adequate to the new demographic phenomena, are needed. The demographic policy must seek methods to adapt the economic and social systems to the new trends and global processes.

## **2. The demographic processes in the public domain**

### **2.1 Expert opinion**

Over the last years the demographic situation in Bulgaria has become a topic of a public debate and it has been already discussed that measures should be taken for its improvement. The issue is depicted in very dark colours in the public domain and the forecasts about the demographic future of the country in the media are abundant with apocalyptic and pessimistic messages. The demographic problem seems insurmountable but for part of the researchers in the area this information is inaccurate and manipulating, especially in terms of birth and mortality rates.

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<sup>3</sup> Id., p. 10

<sup>4</sup> Id. p.12

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The standpoint of a group of experts, among them Prof. Marta Sugareva, is that “various commentators and journalists blow the horn that the mortality rate in Bulgaria is very high, even among the highest in the world”. As to the birth rate, it is known in the society that it is extremely low and as a result of that we are “disappearing as a nation”<sup>6</sup>. She believes that from the viewpoint of the demographic science these statements are non-scientific, extreme and distort the reality.

Despite the information published in the media is based on demographic data, the expert determines the information as manipulating and false. The reason for that lies in the complexity and the difficulty of the lay interpreters to understand the demographic processes, as they, while willing to inform, may unintentionally mislead the public. Despite that the interest in the demographic development is huge, the interpreting of the indicators in the media frequently leave the statistical nature and lead to distorted and misleading conclusions due to the fact that they are not understood<sup>7</sup>.

Other experts, among whom is Assoc. Prof. Georgi Bardarov, claim that the public debate regarding the demographic situation in Bulgaria is lead in “several wrong directions and the focus and measures taken are not related to the most important issues and hence the lack of results”<sup>8</sup>.

The media are focused on the low birth rate and ageing of the population, which facts are true, but they are not the major problems, claims the specialist. He believes that the main stress should be laid on education and quality career, because this is the way to keep young people in the country<sup>9</sup>. The low birth rate and ageing of the population are overstated clichés, which shift the attention from the real demographic problems, such as emigration of young people, which leads to imbalance in the active-elderly population ratio.

The effects of the demographic problems suffered by the country are presented in dark colours mainly<sup>10</sup>. This is the conclusion of the study by Assoc.

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<sup>6</sup> SUGAREVA, Marta. Mortality and Birth Rates in Demographics - Definitions and Terminology. Statistics Magazine, National Statistical Institute. No. 2, 2017, p. 9. [online] Available at: [https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/publications/sp\\_2\\_17.pdf](https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/publications/sp_2_17.pdf) [visited on 10.09.2019]

<sup>7</sup> Id., p. 9

<sup>8</sup> BARDAROV, Georgi, ILIEVA, Nadezhda. Horizont 2030: “Demographic Trends in Bulgaria” Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Sofia 2018. p. 2

<sup>9</sup> Id, p. 2

<sup>10</sup> KOTSEVA, Tatyana, Elitsa DIMITROVA. Visions of the Demographic Problem in Bulgarian after 1990: Pronatalism and Social Policy. Sofia: Prof. Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, 2014 Sofia, p. 64

Prof. Tatyana Kotseva and Assoc. Prof. Elitsa Dimitrova The study includes 589 online publications on the demographic topic in the period November 2011 - April 2013.

The results of the study demonstrate that the prevailing tone of the materials on the demographic topics is neutral and the pessimistic messages prevail the positive<sup>11</sup>. More than the half of the publications lack any references to official sources and clearly stated recommendations, as well as a specific vision how the demographic problems can be solved.<sup>12</sup>

All quoted experts claim that Bulgaria fits normally in the contemporary demographic trends of the developed world. The media focus on the topic should be shifted from low birth rate and ageing of the population to significant problems, such as emigration, quality of education and professional development. In terms of accurate coverage of the demographic issue the journalists need sound background, so that they can correctly interpret the demographic data.

## **2.2 Content analysis of the publications in “24 Chasa” in October - December 2018**

The findings of the experts and the content analysis covering 130 publications in the printed edition of “24 Chasa“ in the period October - December 2018 demonstrate that there is a conflict between the media representatives and the demographics specialists. Generally, this conflict is evident in the critical attitude of the experts to the way of presentation of the information and the absence of their opinion in the media.

Out of the total number of publications, the author is an expert in only 4 of them, which means that the expert opinion has been ignored. (Table 1) Half of the processed publications are authored (65), while in the other half the author is not specified. 55 of them are by journalists and the remaining 6 are editorials.

Table 1. *Authored articles*

<b>Author</b>	<b>No.</b>
Journalists	55
“24 Chasa“ editorial	6
Experts	4

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<sup>11</sup> Id. –

<sup>12</sup> Id, p. 65

The topics with demographic content are mainly included in the section with national news, analyses and opinions (fig. 1). The demographic problems see the least coverage on the pages dedicated to the family and to the pages with interviews. During the studied period six publications dedicated to demography were covered on the first page of the newspaper, with a cross-reference to the internal pages. The section ‘‘Entertainment’’ on the last page of the newspaper, containing softer news, including news from the show business, entertainment and culture, contains the same number of articles as the one dedicated to social news, such as ‘‘Life’’ and at the same time contains more publications than the sections for economic and local news. This imposes the model of setting frame by the media approaches while constructing the reality with regards to the demographic problem and neglecting the topic. The American sociologist Tod Gitlin defines framing by stating that ‘‘media frames are a stable model of knowledge, interpreting and presentation of a choice, assertion and exclusion’’. However the problem is that many significant professional substitutions have been recently made at this level - framing conflicts stand out and real conflicts are concealed - this indicates that there is a total media non-conflictness<sup>13</sup>’.

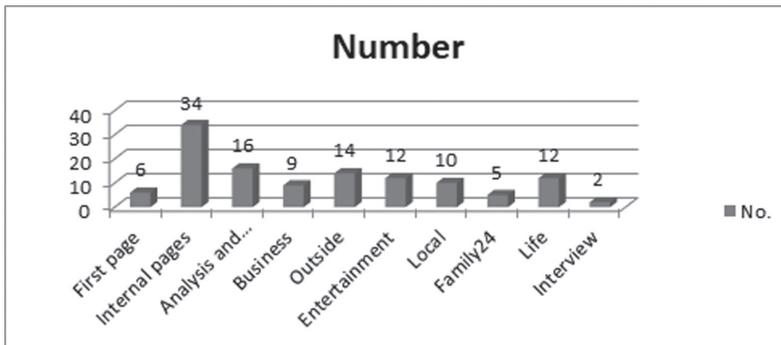


Fig. 1 Comparison of the materials with demographic contents by sections

With regard to genre characteristics, the information publications with demographic content are significantly more in terms of volume than the analytical ones. (Table 2) In terms of percentage, information genres take up 83% and the analytic - 17%.

<sup>13</sup> KRASTEVA, Lulivera. Media Non-conflictness Journalists in Theory, Journalists in Practice. Media, Power, Money. Sofia: Avangard, 2012, p. 90

Table 2. *Genre characteristics*

Genre	No.	Percentage
Informational	108	83%
Analytical	22	17%

Despite the prevailing information genres, the study has established that most of them are not own information but information from press releases, \ shared by various institutions. The number of actual journalist news is 35. (Fig. 2) After the news the strongest coverage has the commentaries, the coverage and the interview. The scope of the study includes also three correspondences and one feuilleton. As a result of this it can be summarized than the range of genres is quite diverse.

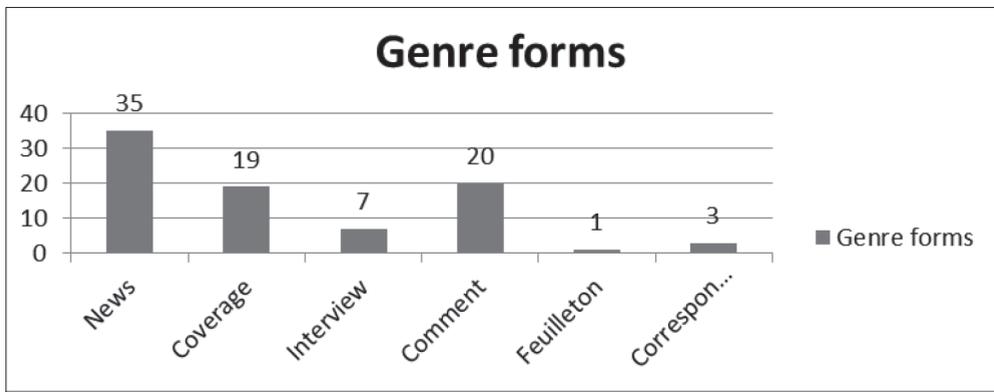


Fig. 2 *Genre forms*

The sources of information are specified in 95 of the publications. In 78 cases the source is Bulgarian and in the remaining 17 it is foreign; quoted are also media such as Guardian, Times, Reuters, BBC, Daily Telegraph, DPA and several studies of prestigious universities in Europe and in the world.

Generally, the sources of information are the people, places and organizations generating the interests of the journalists, because journalist articles may be prepared for them and they can be contacted to verify the authenticity of potential journalist stories<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> POPOVA, Maria. *Theory of Journalism*. Sofia: Faber Publishing House, 2012, p. 179

In connection with the above, the sources in the empirical study are grouped in four categories: Press releases, official statements, information from other media and social networks (Fig. 3)

The official statements made at a certain event are the most frequently used (39%). This is the news coming directly from statements and interviews of politicians, businessmen and other people, within an event, press conference or an official occasion. In this case the authenticity of the information is guaranteed by the position of the person providing it<sup>15</sup>. The analysis of the empirical materials demonstrates that the official statements exist as fully independent news in the text, which means that the journalists trust only the information presented at the specific event, without seeking additional sources, and thus the coverage of events from press conference is reduced to the information provided there.

The second most used source is the press releases made by various state authorities (37%). In this case also they are present in the publications independently, without any other comment, analysis or opinion on the topic. The typologization made by Assoc. Prof. Maria Popova in “Theory of Journalism“ considers the press releases as institutional sources of information. She considers that their strong presence may raise the question of demonstration of dependence or cheerleader journalism, which may be also in place in case of intensive communication of the media with the institutional sources of information<sup>16</sup>.

References to other media is the third most used source, which also questions the own investigations of the issue (16%).

Recently, the use of the social media and copying and pasting posts of celebrities in their social profiles are increasingly popular (8%).

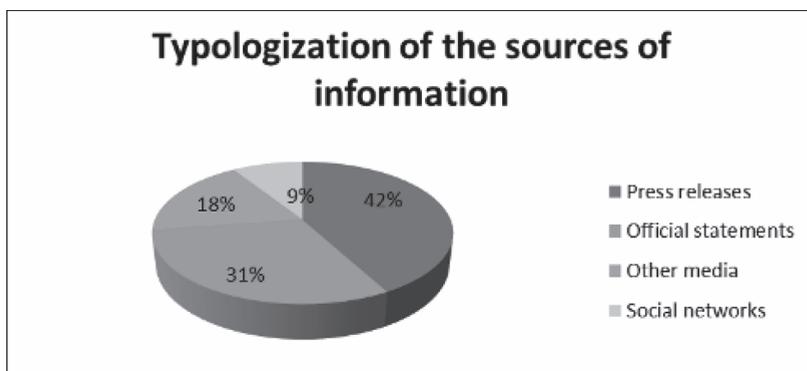


Fig. 3 *Typologization of the sources of information*

<sup>15</sup> Id., p. 179.

<sup>16</sup> Id. p. 179

Regarding that who the speaker on the topic is, the study has established that the politicians speak about that problem the most, demonstrated mainly by representatives of the party in power. (Fig. 4) The second most used source is the journalist opinion and least attention is given to experts, such as specialists in demography, statistics, sociology and economics.

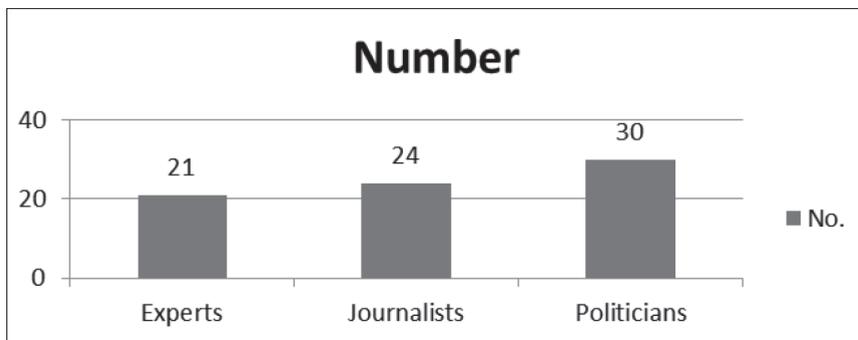


Fig. 4 *Who speaks on the topic?*

The positive statements prevail, for they originate mainly from representatives of the ruling circles, such as ministers, MPs and mayors of municipality, who are members of the ruling coalition government. (Fig. 5). They use the demographic issue to build up a positive public image by stating for the media how much they have done for the specific town or village. The politicians making negative statements are from the opposition parties. The negative and neutral statements are typical of experts and journalists. Neutral statements involve publication of statistical data, analyses or other studies related to demography. Negative speaking, mainly by experts, comes hand by hand with critical attitude to the state authorities and the ruling circles and insists on taking specific actions.

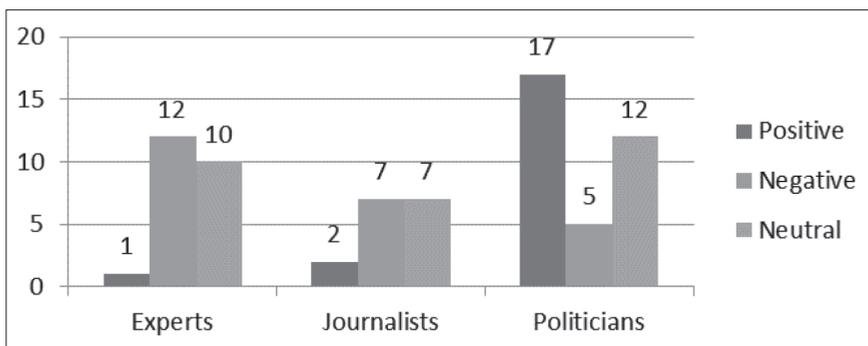


Fig. 5 *What is the tone of speaking on the topic?*

Based on the conducted study, it may be concluded that journalists prefer to give the floor to politicians, who are part of the ruling circles and are trying to build up a public image while tacking the demographic issue. Using mainly their statements and press releases of the institutions as sources of information, without seeking additional viewpoints, consolidates this trend. The absence of an expert opinion, which is most often a correction of the institutional practice, as well as the weakly used analytical materials, is an indication of avoidance of the problem and poor coverage of the topic. As a result of this it turns out that the journalists follow those in power, praising their official and institutional sources, from which they receive and share information.

The framework model is being imposed, because the topic is more actively presented in the sections for entertainment and culture than in those dedicated to social and economic news.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis performed allows to summarize that there are considerable discrepancies between the viewpoints of politicians, experts and journalists. There are conflicts at both institutional and media level. The ruling circles use the media as their forum to demonstrate the pretended success they claim to have achieved in fighting the demographic crisis. And while they make use of the opportunity to speak how much they have made for the country, the statistical data shows quite a different reality, quite far from that of the politician's statements.

Another area of conflict is the clash between the media and the critical attitude of the experts, because of the inaccuracy in the modes of reflecting the demographic indicators, the inevitability in coping with the demographic crisis, which is being spread, and the shifting of the attention from the challenges that are important for the sector.

The empirical study leads to the following conclusions:

1. The issue is becoming increasingly topical for the media, yet the focus must be shifted to the significant problems of demography, such as emigration, education, professional realization.
2. The expert opinion has not been taken into account and the demographic issue is found in the entertainment sections instead.
3. Politicians speak more often about the issue than experts and journalists.

4. Institutional data is mainly used, presented as press releases and political statements, which is an indication of a copy-paste journalism and dependence of the media on those in power.

5. There are no in-depth journalistic investigations and aspiration to seek various viewpoints

6. The genres used are quite limited in number.

7. The coverage of the problems in the area needs qualified interpreters and field journalists to interpret and cover accurately the statistical and demographic indicators.

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# USING VISUAL CONTENT FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

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*Abstract:* The paper discusses new online visual content forms. The authors suggest that the visualised information has enriched both traditional and new types of media. By examining online visual content for the purpose of the communication management (CM) in particular, the authors demonstrate how the utilisation of “cultural software” gives rise to a series of innovative visual content forms. In this regard, the paper identifies and then maps several “hybrid” and “genuine new” forms of this kind.

*Keywords:* communication management, visual content, digital content

## 1. Introduction

Communication management can be defined as the consistent planning, implementation, permanent monitoring and evaluation of all internal and external communication strategies and tactics of an organisation. Communication management involves the planning and coordination of corporate strategies and their proper and effective communication through various communication channels. Some of the aspects of communication management include the planning of communication campaigns for various projects, managing the internal and external communications of the organisation, managing the information flow in an online environment.

According to Juliana Raupp and Betteke van Ruler communication management is more and more seen as an occupation on a strategic, managerial level and that it is developing towards the status of a true profession<sup>1</sup>. According to the two authors, the tendency in the practical sphere is to integrate all communi-

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<sup>1</sup> Juliana Raupp, Betteke van Ruler. Trends in public relations and communication management research. A comparison between Germany and The Netherlands, *Journal of Communication Management* Vol. 10 No. 1, 2006 pp. 18-26, Emerald Group Publishing Limited 1363-254X, p.18, <http://emeraldinsight.com/1363-254X.htm>

cation processes within an organisation into one area – communication management. The term “communication management” is often associated with strategic communications such as PR, advertising, public affairs, and more. Van Riel distinguishes three main aspects of overall organisational communication: marketing communication, organisational communication (PR and internal communication) and communication management (all communication processes in the organisation that help the organisation to function effectively)<sup>2</sup>.

According to Betteke van Ruler and Dejan Vercic four characteristics of European communication management can be defined: managerial (deals with planning of communication programs in order to execute the organisational mission and strategies), reflective (dealing with social values and communication in strategic decision making), educational (dealing with communicative competence of the members of an organisation) and operational (dealing with the means of communication and communication tactics)<sup>3</sup>.

Communication management involves the management and planning of communication processes in organisations, but also relates to the monitoring and analysis of the environment, implementation and evaluation of various communication strategies for internal and external audiences.

An essential part of communication management is the development of a communication plan. Communication plan needs to answer to following questions:

What needs to be communicated?

Who is the target of communication?

What is the purpose of communication? (Why?)

When the communication should be used? (Frequency)

What is appropriate type/model of communication?

Who is responsible for issuing the communication?<sup>4</sup>

According to John Spacey the term management communication, can also be used, whereby he defines it as a written, verbal or visual communication that is relevant to the direction and control of an organisation. This can

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<sup>2</sup> Juliana Raupp, Betteke van Ruler. *Trends in public relations and communication management research. A comparison between Germany and The Netherlands*, *Journal of Communication Management* Vol. 10 No. 1, 2006 pp. 18-26, Emerald Group Publishing Limited 1363-254X, 25, <http://emeraldinsight.com/1363-254X.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Betteke van Ruler, Dejan Vercic, Buetschi, G. and Flodin, B. *A first look for parameters of public relations in Europe*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, Vol. 16 No. 1, 2004, pp. 35-64, 35

<sup>4</sup> Ewa Sonta-Draczkowska. *Project Management as Communication Management* (Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 2015), 105

take the form of conversations, presentations, documents, messages and visual communication<sup>5</sup>.

Information and communication technologies, as well as the emerging digital, social and mobile media platforms, are fundamentally changing strategic communications across organisations. These changes are not only instrumental and technological, but have their projections at the social, economic and business levels, reinforcing the importance of communication within organisations.

According to Beatriz Peña Acuña and Alejandro Formanchuk companies have understood that an intelligent communication direction is translated into a value for the company where the asset, that is, people can be involved and flow in production processes with higher quality, the culture and values of the company are strengthened. The company and, of course, directly affects the productivity and economic performance of it<sup>6</sup>.

The results of the European Communication Monitor 2017, which addresses the issues of communication management and its practical projections, outline transformation trends that relate to media content and the planning and management of said content: visualization, automation and robotisation, the need for strategically oriented communication, not one based solely on individual operations<sup>7</sup>. The importance of communication management was intensified in the 21st century, which was characterized more as an era of hypermodernity (an era that followed postmodernity). The concept of hypermodernism has been developed by the French philosopher and essayist Gilles Lipovetsky. Hypermodern societies are characterized by hyper consumption, hyper change and hyper individualism. The European Communication Monitoring for the first time raises questions about hypermodernity in front of European communication professionals and how the organisations in which they work adapt. About 43% of respondents say that the organisations they work in are already facing the challenges of managing continuous change, decentralization of IT technologies, workplace dynamics and expanding communication competencies, adherence to ethical principles and the implementation of creativity.

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<sup>5</sup> John Spacy. 22 Examples of Management Communications, 2018, Simplicable, <https://simplicable.com/new/management-communication>

<sup>6</sup> Acuña, Beatriz Peña, Alejandro Formanchuk. Introductory Chapter: Changing Panorama of Digital Communication Management, 2018, <https://www.intechopen.com/books/digital-communication-management/introductory-chapter-changing-panorama-of-digital-communication-management>

<sup>7</sup> European Communication Monitor 2017, <http://www.communicationmonitor.eu/2017/06/04/ecm-european-communication-monitor-2017-social-bots-visualisation-hypermodernity-benchmarking-strategic-communication/>

In the European Communication Monitoring of 2017, 94.4% of communication professionals share their observations that there is a trend in the field of transition from verbal to visual communication. Seven out of ten respondents reported an increasing preference on part of the different visual communication target groups, while 89.5% felt that new competencies were needed for communication professionals to be able to understand and manage communication processes properly<sup>8</sup>.

The fastest growth in visual communication is seen in the use of online video, infographics (so-called explanatory content), snapshots (spontaneous, unedited) and business graphs (tables, smart graphics containing data). All this is directly related to the development of social, digital and mobile media<sup>9</sup>.

The long-term discussion of strategic communication and communication management issues is divided into two main areas: how to make the organisation's business strategy more clearly tied to communications, and how communication professionals are to handle digital evolution and social media. Strategic communication involves the management of various media platforms in which visual content is the main medium to carry information and message. As technology continues to facilitate the creation of visual content, its forms are expanding and becoming more diverse. The rapid development of social platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, the content creation applications developed for them, increases the use of visual messages.

The visual content and its traditional and hybrid forms in the structure of communication management commits the target audiences more quickly and effectively. In the world of social media, visual content is 40 times more likely to get shared, and articles that feature an image every 75-100 words receive double the social media shares than those with text alone<sup>10</sup>. The use of visual narrative for communication management purposes makes detailed information easier to perceive and remember. The visual content creation toolkit is developed and enriched with a variety of software applications, processing programs, etc. that allow any communication specialist with good digital literacy to create visual content such as infographics, video infographics, 3D photos, vertical and horizontal videos, slideshows, memes, storymaps and more. Recent advances

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<sup>8</sup> European Communication Monitor 2017, <http://www.communicationmonitor.eu/2017/06/04/ecm-european-communication-monitor-2017-social-bots-visualisation-hypermodernity-benchmarking-strategic-communication/>

<sup>9</sup> Dejan Verčič, Ansgar Zerfass. Digital and Visual, Communication Director, 3/2017, 16

<sup>10</sup> Buffer Social. 9 Informative Infographics to Guide Your Visual Content Marketing, [https://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics?\\_ga=1.75559958.289703604.1480384990](https://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics?_ga=1.75559958.289703604.1480384990)

in software and computer technology enable designers of computer-based instruction to use dynamic visualizations, such as animation and video, to help learners remember complex dynamic systems and, ultimately, to understand the materials<sup>11</sup>. Proper strategic planning of visual content must be tailored both to the target audience as well as to the communication and media channels. The video content feature used in the early stages of a communication campaign can not just emotionally engage and attract the audience's attention, but it can also raise awareness of a problem. During the course of a campaign, visual content planning can be populated with other formats that focus in a various degree on the text, the animated or multimedia content.

The impact of digital technology on consumer behaviour, the content consumption mainly through social media and online platforms, has led media organisations to rethink their content creation strategies. Many of the established media such as The New York Times, The Guardian, HuffPost, Sky News, BCC and others started presenting their news content through video formats. In doing so, they have increased the reach to their audience through social media channels. Through digital channels, visual communication emerges as the primary means of communication and of informing. Media organisations plan their visual strategies for content creation not only according to the communication channels they use, but also according to the audiences' changed habits of receiving information. Micro-narrative formats such as short videos, interactive graphics, GIFs, and memes that can be easily viewed on mobile devices are noticeable on the social channels of media brands.

## 2. Research Approach

Whereas research interest regarding media content contexts, innovation in the sphere of media and journalism, and especially regarding innovative news production practices has been growing, the amount of available studies is insufficient, and the suggested identifications and classifications are often quite fragmented – or lacking altogether. Another problem is the notable lack of expert reports. The ones that we managed to trace were predominantly training-oriented materials focused on software used for the production of specific types of media content (e.g., timelines, story maps, infographics). We discovered few

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<sup>11</sup> Bart deKoning B, Tabbers H, Rikers R, and Paas F. Towards a framework for attention cueing in instructional animations: Guidelines for research and design. *Educational Psychology Review* 21, 2009, 114

publications dealing with the features of new media content forms; however, a significant number of those were self-advertising materials of media outlets already using the new forms in question.

Bearing these lacunae in mind, for the current study we observed and analysed the mobile and desktop-based platforms of some traditional media brands (newspapers, radio and television stations), and of new media outlets without traditional analogues. We examined the mobile and desktop versions of the respective websites separately. All observations and analyses were completed between April 2017 and October 2018. For the sake of keeping a clearer focus, we decided to leave aside the social profiles of our media outlets available on platforms owned by other companies (such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook). We used both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The mapping of new digital content forms followed the gathering and analysis of a variety of empirical data: we collected over 600 information items coming from diverse traditional news and social media, both desktop and mobile-based platforms

### **3. Findings**

Regarding (1) content, our observations and analysis show that digital content forms can contain text, static visual imagery, dynamic visual imagery, audio, video, or a mix of textual and audiovisual content. Second, as regards the (2) level of technological innovation, these forms can be either ‘hybrid’ (i.e., innovative content transmitted via traditional technological means) or ‘genuine new’ forms (i.e., new types of content transmitted via new technological means). The intersection of these classification criteria (content, level of technological innovation) allows for laying out a tentative map of a variety of new journalistic forms.

Based on our empirical data analysis, we managed to identify and categorize 15 hybrid and 9 genuine new digital forms (see Table 1 below). Further on, for each one of these we followed a uniform structure of subsequent in-depth analysis: (1) definition, (2) general description, (3) case studies, (4) available tools.

Expectedly, we identified a bigger number of pictorial and video media forms.

Table 1. *Digital media content draft map (2018).*

<i>Type of content</i>	<i>Level of technological innovation</i>	
	<b>Hybrid forms</b>	<b>Genuine new forms</b>
<b>Static imagery</b>	Infographics Vertical picture Square pictures Slideshow Satellite photo Meme Drone photo	Story map Timeline 360-degree picture 3D picture
<b>Video</b>	Vertical video Video infographics Drone video Time lapse	360-degree video VR (virtual reality) AR (augmented reality)

This multitude of forms testifies well to the trend that access to technological innovation has enriched the journalistic practices for the production of media content. Media brands invest resources and effort into various ways of presenting information. However, the use of ‘cultural software’ does not appear to be an end in itself but stands in line with the respective topic in order to provide for an accurate and improved presentation of the key content elements. We found substantial evidence that 360-degree videos, for example, allow for attention-catching presentations of otherwise uninteresting stories; catching the exact meaning and the underlying emotion of news turns out to be a key function in this regard. According to professionals in the field, even raw 360-degree materials are far more compelling than conventional video footage. As well, we noticed that linear and static video presentations do not attract new audiences due the low level of interactive content and their inability to put the user at the centre of action, i.e., to give them a 360-degree perspective. As well, the interaction of new technology and journalism adds substantial information value to the topic presented. Digital storytelling or the ‘recreation’ of a given event visualises factual content, and multimedia approaches change the way of perceiving information. Thus, the new forms of digital content allow for the creation of audiovisual simulations of alternative environments, where users can look and/or move in all directions. Technology has even made an additional further step, as evident from our descriptions of practices for the production of mixed-reality content: three-dimensional visualisations of real objects combined with augmented-reality objects presented physically in real-environment conditions. In sum, the key

phrases describing this use of new technology in the process of digital content production could be, e.g., content interaction, strengthening the realistic side of media content, added content value, mixed-reality content, new ways of content perception, stronger perceptions of physical space, content of higher information capacity, upgraded content, etc.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Our findings confirm that there is a steady growth in the number and range of practices for the creation of digital content in convergent media environment. Cultural software and technological innovations have changed the way of telling and presenting digital narratives. As a result, content related communicators practices have been redefined to include the various ways of gathering information as well as the processes of creation, dissemination, and use of media products.

In general, text remains an important information vehicle, yet probably steps aside as the core construction element of digital content. We ran across a number of cases of multimedia content where textual, pictorial, audio, and video elements could all function as autonomous vehicles of information. Multimedia stories remain valuable even when users can interact with one or few of their elements.

New digital content forms demonstrate a higher engagement impact on the digital behaviour of audiences. It is the digital behaviour of audiences that defines the strategic decisions regarding the specific profile and preferred types of digital content. As a rule, today's audiences are active, and this has changed the understanding of how they can be involved in the content creation process. Users today employ a variety of devices to access online news, social networks, or corporate websites. The ways in which they find and interact with media products, as well as the technological means used for the creation and dissemination these products, are different – hence the differences in content designed for mobile and desktop-based platforms. In the case of mobile videos, for example, vertical formats have been trending due to the hardware specifics of mobile cameras and displays.

New digital content offers new types of experience to users. Compared to traditional ones, new content forms allow for much higher degrees of empathy, as well as more realistic sensual perceptions. Technological innovations enable users to reach the inside core of the story, and even to 'replay' it in different re-

ality formats. It is the story's context that determines the most appropriate forms for its media presentation.

New content forms add value to brands. We consider content innovations to be an element of convergent business models. Content based business models evolve around the idea of new content forms and rely on the changed paradigm of audiences as active participants in the content creation process. Content innovations contribute to the formation of loyal audiences around brands.

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# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT AS STAKEHOLDER MAPPING TOOL

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*Abstract:* The impact of communication in social media and the persuasion techniques among different stakeholder groups in online environment has become decisive component of the contemporary political and business processes. On the one hand, social media offer excellent technological and semantic opportunities for any organisation in its stakeholder efforts in different scope – from universal, mass-intended messages to segmented influence upon particular groups. On the other hand, the communication environment of social media ‘equals’ the organisation with stakeholder groups, which can influence negatively the organisational reputation and misuse the ‘online democracy’, applying manipulated or even overtly false information and suggestions.

It is of utmost importance for any organisation to maintain dynamic and up-to-date information database with the relevant stakeholders with key data – general data, degree of collaboration among different groups, impact scope, potential scenarios for implementing engagement strategies, etc. The so-called stakeholder mapping is an applied method for gathering, systematization and information analysis, significantly facilitating the decision making process and applying strategies for stakeholder engagement, resp., for withholding their negative intentions.

The article reviews context, approaches and techniques, which can be applied on personal and/or organisational social media content and can be used as one of the sources for information gathering and attitude analysis and the mechanisms for interaction among stakeholder groups.

*Keywords:* Social media, stakeholder groups, engagement, organisational reputation, manipulation

## **Introduction**

Analyzing stakeholder groups by using information, which is based, exchanged and accumulated in Internet and social media, is a wide spread approach in many social, political and economic practices. The so-called ‘stakeholder mapping’ is basic technique, helping in the creation of comprehensive, user-friendly, easy to update and even artificial intellect (AI)-driven systematizations of stakeholder groups. By utilizing universal or customized (intra-organisational) models, the organisations can benefit from a very advanced approach in managing its stakeholder relations. Rapid increase and intensity of the online activity in all social groups, formation of specific ‘interest groups’ in social media and its

usage in advocacy campaigns, pressure group efforts, social interaction, etc. turn this method into an integral part of management strategies for public relations, investor relations and dealing with other stakeholders, etc. Based on the dynamics of development in online communications, it can be hypothesized that *online* stakeholder behavior analysis is already fundamental to most organizations.

## Literature review

The wide spread usage of Internet and social media as means of political, social and commercial communication raise the importance of their analysis as means of intelligence in all forms. Gathering and analyzing information from open-sourced sites became a valuable form of aggregating information on different stakeholders. Smith (2000) argued, that “Stakeholder analysis typically refers to the range of techniques or tools to identify and understand the needs and expectations of major interests inside and outside the project environment. Understanding the attributes, interrelationships, interfaces among and between project advocates and opponents, assists us in strategically planning our project. Herein lies a large portion of our project risk and viability, and ultimately the support that we must effectively obtain and retain.”<sup>1</sup>

According to Aligica (2006: 80), “Mapping is a basic tool for achieving an understanding of potential roles of the stakeholders and institutions involved, for identifying potential coalitions of support for the project, for scenario and strategy building and for assessing the relative risks entailed. If carried out with the participation of stakeholders, the procedure can also be essential for building legitimacy and policy ownership.”<sup>2</sup> Taylor and Bancelhon (2019: 17) defined stakeholder mapping as follows: “... a collaborative process of research, debate, and discussion that draws from multiple perspectives to determine a key list of stakeholders across the entire stakeholder spectrum... Mapping can be conducted to varying<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> levels of depth. Companies often undertake comprehensive mapping exercises of their entire stakeholder landscape, and then map the results to an engagement approach. Alternatively, for<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> a one-off stakeholder event, the

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<sup>1</sup> SMITH, Larry W., “Stakeholder analysis: a pivotal practice of successful projects”, Paper presented at Project Management Institute Annual Seminars & Symposium, Houston, TX. Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute, 2000. <https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/stakeholder-analysis-pivotal-practice-projects-8905>

<sup>2</sup> ALIGICA, Paul Dragos, “Institutional and Stakeholder Mapping: Frameworks for Policy Analysis and Institutional Change”, *Public Organiz Rev* (2006) 6: 80

mapping can identify who should attend, given the goals and level of ambition of the exercise.”<sup>3</sup>

Surely, there must be nothing wrong about investigating in information arrays, which are accessed publicly. Still, it’s part of the ethical context of digital privacy and should be regarded as sensitive point. Mostly, mapping of stakeholders is related to the political and social attitudes, expressed online. Therefore, it’s essential part of the analysis to present a historical overview of the development of political activism online.

### **Short historical overview of the milestones in political activism online**

The debate on the disruptive role of online communication on the stakeholder relations peaked long before the emergence of social media. Generally, the philosophic debate around media was ‘accusative’, e.g. Baudrillard: “What characterizes the mass media is that they are opposed to mediation, intransitive, that they fabricate noncommunication — if one accepts the definition of communication as an exchange, as the reciprocal space of speech and response, and thus of *responsibility*. In other words, if one defines it as anything other than the simple emission/reception of information. Now the whole present architecture of the media is founded on this last definition: they are what finally forbids response, what renders impossible any process of exchange (except in the shape of a simulation of a response, which is itself integrated into the process of emission, and this changes nothing in the unilaterality of communication).”<sup>4</sup>

The views expressed by either more or less naïve enthusiasts or shrewd consultants in the dawn of commercial Internet was actually the real beginning of a whole new field for the public diplomacy – the *online public diplomacy*. Velchev (2018: 102-103) argued, that public diplomacy “... pursues engagement of the audience of interest on wide range of topic. The hierarchy (gradation) of the public engagement levels (the forms of fulfillment)... is based on *the principle of the increasing involvement and the responsibility of the public in the decision making process*. A specific ascending cumulative scale is emerging in this fashion, where the base is formed by disclosing information and the top – by delegating (empowering) the respective group. In the same time, one should take

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<sup>3</sup> TAYLOR, Alison and Bancilhon, Charlotte, *Five-Step Approach<sup>[1]</sup> to Stakeholder Engagement* (BSR, 2019), 17, <https://www.bsr.org/en/our-insights/thank-you/stakeholder-engagement-five-step-approach-toolkit>

<sup>4</sup> BAUDRILLARD, Jean, *Selected Writings* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2001), 207-208

into account that most of the practical techniques can be applied on more than a single level.”<sup>5</sup>

In the first stage of its development the field of online political activism and resp. monitoring and analysis was actually dominated by non-online technology – the already obsolete 2G short message service (SMS) was used to spread the news around among political activists. E.g. the impeachment trial of Phillippine President Joseph Estrada in 2001, whereas angry citizens spread the news of massive protest in the capital Manilla by forwarding SMS approx. seven million times and converged on one of the main crossroads of the city – Epiphanio de los Santos Avenue – blocking the traffic and drawing the attention of world media. In only three days (17-20 January 2001) Estrada was forced to resign. (Shirky, 2011)<sup>6</sup> It’s also worth mentioning that the ‘Chat Room Era’ was dominated by anonymity and the attitude of the political and corporate action was more or less negative and not of importance for large-scale application as stakeholder relations tool.

As the Internet has grown in popularity, so has the discussion about international, national and local politics. Davis (2005:4) argued that in the USA “...the percentage of Internet users who participated in political discussions remained unchanged between 1995 and 1998, according to Pew Center. However, since the percentage of Americans, who are online users rose from 23 percent in 1995 to 41 percent in 1998, the number of electronic political discussion participants has soared dramatically during this period.”<sup>7</sup>

With the emergence of Facebook (FB) as the widest-spread and most user-friendly social media, the importance of monitoring and analysis of the content on sensitive issues has grown on importance. In the beginning of FB ‘politization’ people didn’t feel quite safe about expressing political attitudes in social networks but felt free to communicate with like-minded (most of them comprising the offline circle of friends, too). One of the first widely known and recognized campaigns with online backbone was the presidential campaign of Barack Obama in 2008. According to Scott, (2011: 164-165) “The 2008 election was the first in which more than half the voting-age populaton used the Internet for political purposes. Some 55 pencent of all adults – and 74 percent of all Inter-

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<sup>5</sup> ВЕЛЧЕВ, Андрей, Управление на комуникациите при публични политики. Изграждане и поддържане на обществена съпричастност, (София, Иврай, 2018), 102-103

<sup>6</sup> Cit.: SHIRKY, Clay. “The Political Power of Social Media. Technology, the Public Sphere and Political Change”, *Foreign Affairs*, (January/February 2011): 28

<sup>7</sup> Cit.: DAVIS, Richard, *Politics Online. Blogs, Chatrooms and Discussion Groups in American Democracy*, (Routledge, New York, 2005), 4

net users – said they went online for news and information about the election or to communicate with others about the race. The research found that social media platforms such as blogs, social networking sites, and video sharing sites played a key role in 2008, as voters went online to share their views with others and try to mobilize them for their cause.”<sup>8</sup>

The utilization of FB as an effective political mobilization tool in the Arab Spring since late 2010 has opened a new stage in the study, analysis and approaches to managing stakeholder relations, both online and offline. The protesters in the affected societies revealed the true power of targeted and stochastic social organisation – “...social media helped them spread awareness and organize protests, which is what helped the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt to succeed. They also had little opposition from the governments in comparison to places like Libya and Syria.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Digital propaganda and the ‘hybrid war’ phenomenon**

There’s no doubt that a vast majority of online campaigning is related to negative impact on political or geopolitical rivals, competitors, civic action groups, etc. “The new perusal” of the potential of information impact and/or manipulation and its utilization in political and military conflicts via media (be they traditional electronic media, print offline issues or entirely digital sites and social media) is projected in the ‘hybrid war’ concept, which is new and entirely unclear to the mass consumer in the context of the current global political and economic processes.” (Ковачева 2018:104)<sup>10</sup> Bradshaw and Howard (2019:1) deepen these observations in the field of computational propaganda, aimed “... to shape public attitudes via social media has become mainstream, extending far beyond the actions of a few bad actors. In an information environment characterized by high volumes of information and limited levels of user attention and trust, the tools and techniques of computational propaganda are becoming

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<sup>8</sup> SCOTT, David Meerman, *The New Rules of Marketing and PR. Third edition*, (Wiley & Sons, New Jersey, 2011), 164-165

<sup>9</sup> GIRE, Sabiha, “The Role of Social Media in the Arab Spring”. *Pangea Journal* (2014, online). <https://sites.stedwards.edu/pangaea/the-role-of-social-media-in-the-arab-spring/>

<sup>10</sup> КОВАЧЕВА, Светослава, “Информация, манипулация и хибридни войни”. Международна научна конференция “Асиметрични заплахи, хибридни войни и влиянието им върху националната сигурност”, сборник научни трудове, Радулов, Николай (ред.), (София, НБУ, 2018 г.), 104

a common – and arguably essential – part of digital campaigning and public diplomacy.”<sup>11</sup>

Both in business and politics (especially – in geopolitics) the same set of instruments is increasingly used in the strategic approach toward online presence and reputation management. Intelligence methods (and team profiles) are basically the same. Internet technologies do comprise an excellent opportunity for the intelligence services to analyze and hold operations for gathering **Open Source Intelligence** (OSINT). Main constraints for such type of operations are the platform restrictions, applied to safeguard the individual privacy. Therefore, mainly publicly available information is used for analysis. Using search engines, information mining that previously required days or weeks of observation can be collected within minutes online by browsing blogs, social networks, wikis and any other sites. (ДИМОВ 2018:47)<sup>12</sup>

It becomes clear that the development, implementation and application of *a system for stakeholder mapping online* (SHMO) is of crucial importance for any organisation – political, business, environmental, social, etc. Having a sound and applied system for maintaining dynamic and up-to-date database with the relevant stakeholders with key data – general data, degree of collaboration among different groups, impact scope, potential scenarios for implementing engagement strategies, etc. should be regarded as competitive instrument and policy of key importance. Having a systematic tool for SHMO means that the organisation would be:

Well prepared for crisis reaction

Better aware of the possibilities for collaboration/neutralization

Best informed in any case (online & offline).

Krumay and Geyer (2016: 254; 261) argued, that “Social media has found its place in the digital economy. Social media tools offer easy, interactive and cost-efficient possibilities to interact with various stakeholders... as interactive, bi-directional and relatively cheap options, have attracted attention in research and practice.”<sup>13</sup> Social media provide a common platform where organizations

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<sup>11</sup> BRADSHAW, Samantha, Howard, Phillip N. *The Global Disinformation Order. 2019 Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation*. (Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, 2019), 1. <https://comprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/93/2019/09/CyberTroop-Report19.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> ДИМОВ, Петко, Приложение на уеб технологиите за защита на националната сигурност (София, ДиоМира, 2018 г.), 47

<sup>13</sup> KRUMAY, Barbara and Geyer, Silvia, “The Role of Social Media for Stakeholder Involvement: A Literature Review”, *BLLED Proceedings* (2016), 254; 261, <http://aisel.aisnet.org/bled2016/30>

can connect with different types of outside stakeholders, thus providing numerous sources of useful information... Social media can be used to gain insights into competitor activities, to compare public sentiment toward competing products, etc. (Burlison 2016: 27-28)<sup>14</sup>

### SHMO – brief introduction

People share and emit information, which is valuable for creating a realistic landscape of the organization's perimeter. The most valuable information arrays in the process are the *broad/specific attitudes*, as well as *activism, participation and notable online and offline interactions*. These broader arrays can be analytically covered by closely examining the following communication variables online:

- **Social circle investigation** – ties between people online reveal much about their cooperation and potential activism. Communication and engagement levels are proof of intensified social dynamics. According to Sonpuri and Wanjari (2015: 212), “As the social networks become more complex, the analytical tendencies shift from the study of static structural and location properties to the analysis of the temporal change in their structure and composition and its impact to ties among individuals and social norms. Additionally, new thinking concepts can be applied when analysing their structure as it is considered the result of a self-organization process giving rise to highly connected social clusters playing a crucial role in terms of social stability and transmission of interaction.”<sup>15</sup>

- **Group belonging** – civic organisations online are powerful mechanism for keeping people together, providing emotional support and means of organizing of offline events, protest, etc. Interactive social technologies facilitate more intensive social involvement and higher social capital and willingness for participation.

- **Political orientation** – investigating and categorizing the political orientation of the stakeholders are growing in importance in the analytical process of stakeholder groups. This is a very important part of the strategic planning

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<sup>14</sup> BURLESON, James Edward, “Organization-Stakeholder Interaction Through Social Media: A Tri-level Investigation, Categorization, and Research Agenda“ (2016), 27-28. *All Dissertations. 1666*.

[https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/all\\_dissertations/1666](https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/all_dissertations/1666)

<sup>15</sup> SONPURI, Hitesh and Wanjari, Mangesh, “Understanding Social Dynamics in Online Social Network”, *International Journal of Computer Systems*, Volume 02– Issue 05 (May, 2015): 212

process and the related institutional assessments. Policymakers and corporate managers consider the political orientation a very important factor by the development of action plans, especially the potential ‘behind the scenes’ activities. Also, both policymakers and corporate managers can use the analysis conclusions in order to develop consensus-oriented discussions and address opposing and/or hostile counteractions.

One more aspect of SHMO must be reviewed in the context of the article. The emergence of AI has its ‘natural’ relation to SHMO, as it is making the intelligence process faster, easier and most importantly – more thorough. Undoubtedly, AI is part of the *any* modern communication professional activity. Recent study by Ketchum (Waddington, 2018), dealing with technology in PR industry, identifies “... more than 100 tools that are embedded in modern PR practice... There’s a common assertion that PR is a special case because of its reliance on human characteristics such as emotional intelligence; ethics; and interpersonal skills.”<sup>16</sup> Indeed, human evaluation and final decision about analytical results remain crucial, because these two processes are closely related to the development of scenarios for stakeholder engagement, pressure groups handling, neutralizing hybrid attacks, etc.

## Conclusion

The increasing size and ever-intensifying use of social media/social networks provides organisational leaders, analysts and consultants with valuable information flow. Gathering and analyzing this information and using it for developing advanced stakeholder policies and strategies is gaining importance currently and, most probably, will raise in importance in near future. To this end, the paper can considerably contribute to the elaboration of new and advanced methods for stakeholder analysis, based on online sources.

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<sup>16</sup> WADDINGTON, Stephen, How AI is Already Impacting Communications, Ketchum (online), 12 June 2018, <https://www.ketchum.com/how-ai-is-already-impacting-communications/>

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# USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING AND INNOVATION BY BULGARIAN COMPANIES FOR THE PERIOD (2015-2018)

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*Abstract:* More and more Bulgarian companies apply digital marketing and innovative methods in the production and trade of goods and services. Drawing upon a survey of more than 500 Bulgarian companies, this study demonstrates that thanks to the use of new techniques and ways of communication with consumers and the provision of innovative goods and services for the Bulgarian and international customers, the market share is significantly expanding, the competitive advantage is improved and the corporate profits of Bulgarian companies in the last few years in constantly increasing.

The Bulgarian business as a whole is developed enough to clearly see the need to be present on social platforms, as well as the need to use digital marketing in its quest to reach more consumers and expand target audiences. "Thanks to its wide audience and good methods of segmenting its target groups, social networks are shifting companies' focus away from traditional communication channels."<sup>1</sup>

Digital marketing and innovation prove to be a winning factor and an essential necessity for the development of the Bulgarian business as well as for its better and successful presentation worldwide.

*Keywords:* digital marketing, innovation, competitive advantage, corporate profits, social platforms, market share

## Introduction

According to an international survey by the consulting organization Marakon Associates, companies realize only 63% of the financial parameters laid down in corporate policy.<sup>2</sup> The reasons are the lack of adaptability and the lack

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<sup>1</sup> VANGELOV, Nikola. Influence of social networks on the communication of organizations. In : Newmedia 21, 2013. <https://www.newmedia21.eu/analizi/vliyanie-na-sotsialnite-mre-zhi-va-rhu-komunikatsiyata-na-organizatsiite/>

<sup>2</sup> Business Wire. New Global Study by Marakon Finds Companies Deliver Only Two-Thirds of Their Strategy's Performance Potential, 2005, <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20050222005675/en/New-Global-Study-Marakon-Finds-Companies-Deliver>.

of flexibility in the changes that are required in the conditions of digitalization and globalization.

The use of digital marketing and innovation could change these parameters because in the words of Damian Ryan and Calvin Jones “Digital marketing – the fastest growth area of marketing we have ever witnessed – now competes for the lion’s share of an annual pot worth approximately one trillion dollars (according to advertising giant WPP)”.<sup>3</sup>

According to Ian Fenwick and Kent Wertime “Digital marketing is the future evolution of marketing. It happens when the majority, or totality, of a company’s marketing uses digital channels. Digital channels are addressable, enabling marketers to have a continuous, two-way, personalized dialogue with each consumer. This dialogue leverages data from every customer interaction to inform the next, much like a neural network. Additionally, marketers use real-time behavioral information and direct consumer feedback continuously to improve and optimize interactions.”<sup>4</sup>

In her article, “Why You Should Build a Digital Marketing Organization,” Christine Moorman emphasizes exactly where the company’s focus should be on improving organizational and performance.

Companies are spending more on digital marketing. The most recent CMO Survey (chief marketing officers) reports that companies will spend 13% more on digital marketing compared to an 8.9% increase in overall marketing spend in the next year. However, marketing leaders report only average or below average contributions of mobile and social investments to company performance.

One potential reason why performance is lagging is because companies remain focused on *digital strategies*, not on building a *digital marketing organization*. A digital marketing organization means embedding digital marketing activities into the very core of the organization. This means that digital marketing activities transform how the company operates, including its culture, its leaders, how it makes decisions, employee training and incentives, cross-functional cooperation, and the role of marketing capabilities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> RYAN, Damian, and Calvin Jones. *The Best Digital Marketing Campaigns in the World: Mastering the Art of Customer Engagement*. Kogan Page Publishers, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> FENWICK, Ian and Kent Wertime. *Digi Marketing: the essential guide to new media & digital marketing*. John Wiley & Sons (Asia), 2008, 30.

<sup>5</sup> MOORMAN, Christine. *Why You Should Build A Digital Marketing Organization*. In: *Forbes*, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/christinemoorman/2017/08/29/why-you-should-build-a-digital-marketing-organization/#6264177b3024>

## Research methodology

Due to the increasing importance of the use of digital marketing and innovations for business purposes, there is a need for a thorough study of the use of digital tools and the implementation of innovative approaches by Bulgarian companies for the development of organizations and for improving their overall organizational performance, related to increasing sales, expanding market share, increasing competitiveness.

In the last few years, the number of Bulgarian companies actively implementing digital marketing and innovation for business purposes has been steadily increasing. There is a clear pattern for organizations to become more prepared and competitive and to withstand various challenges in the face of continuous digital change.

What were the reasons for such a study?

The growing importance of digital marketing for business purposes;

There is an increase in the number of companies with an active presence on the Internet who have sufficient skills to handle the digital toolbox;

Awareness of the opportunities and benefits of using social platforms for business development;

The use of social networks and media by Bulgarian companies is an opportunity to improve their organizational performance;

The implementation of different innovations by the Bulgarian companies leads to significant benefits for the company;

What was the objective of the empire testing?

Over 500 Bulgarian companies operating on the Bulgarian and international markets in different fields such as: production, trade, advertising, services...

Most of the companies of this study are small and medium-sized. Very few of them are large corporation.

### TASKS OF EMPIRE STUDY:

To examine the degree of use of different types of digital communications and innovations in Bulgarian companies;

To evaluate the impact of digital communications on the organizational performance of Bulgarian enterprises;

What was the purpose of study?

To explore the opinion of marketing professionals in Bulgaria in the field of digital communications on the implementation of digital marketing and different innovations from the Bulgarian companies.

The research includes the development of a feedback form of 44 questions related to the activity, digital communication, organizational performance and the use of innovations by Bulgarian companies.

The research method was chosen for several reasons:

The use of digital marketing and innovation to improve organizational performance has not been sufficiently explored and this trend is relatively new;

The most appropriate way to track the impact of digital marketing and innovation on business development is by consulting marketing and digital communications professionals who can give an adequate and professional evaluation;

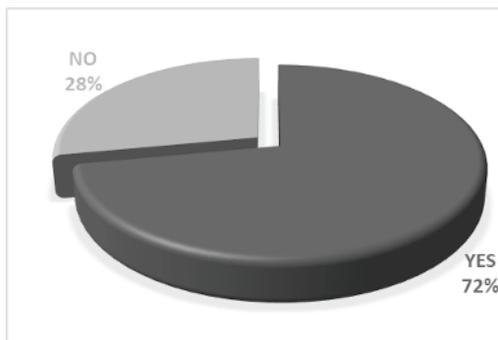
The benefits of implementing digital marketing and innovation could be outlined as success factors and set a positive example for other organizations;

The study of the impact of digital marketing and the implementation of innovations by Bulgarian companies could be the basis for further studies related to other benefits for business development organizations.

#### METHODS OF DATA PROCESSING:

The methodology for processing the data from the empirical study was performed by descriptive analysis. It includes frequency distribution and cross tables, deriving significant variables and interrelations. Descriptive analysis used relative and average values, tables and graphs with SPSS statistical package. It describes the patterns that emerged during the study. The results obtained were processed using the SPSS program. One-dimensional distributions have been analyzed and where possible average values and scattering coefficients have been calculated.

### Results of the empirical social research

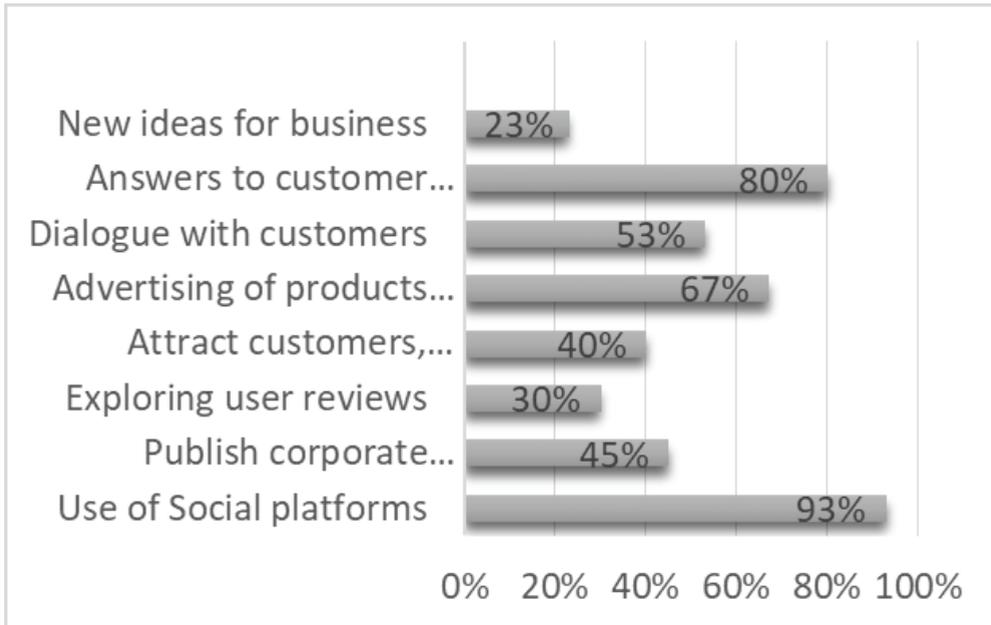


Graph 1. *Use of digital marketing*

It is noticeable that relatively high percentage of the companies stated that they are using digital marketing - 72%.

In more details they said that the benefits of digital channels are related to consumer awareness, feedback, low cost, customer engagement using informal dialogue, and better opportunity for action and decision-making to make a purchase.

The next graphic is much more detailed and shows how the companies are using the opportunities of social platforms.



Graph 2. *Using the opportunities of social platforms for the purposes of Bulgarian enterprises*

93% of the Bulgarian companies are using social platforms, which is indicative for the awareness of the advantages and effectiveness of new media for the benefit of business.

Impressive is the percentage of companies - 80% who said they most often use social platforms to respond to their customers' queries. This is a tremendous advantage for making relevant communications and feedback between the organization and its audiences. What's more - giving the necessary attention to listening and offering solutions is a guarantee for building a network of happy and loyal consumers.

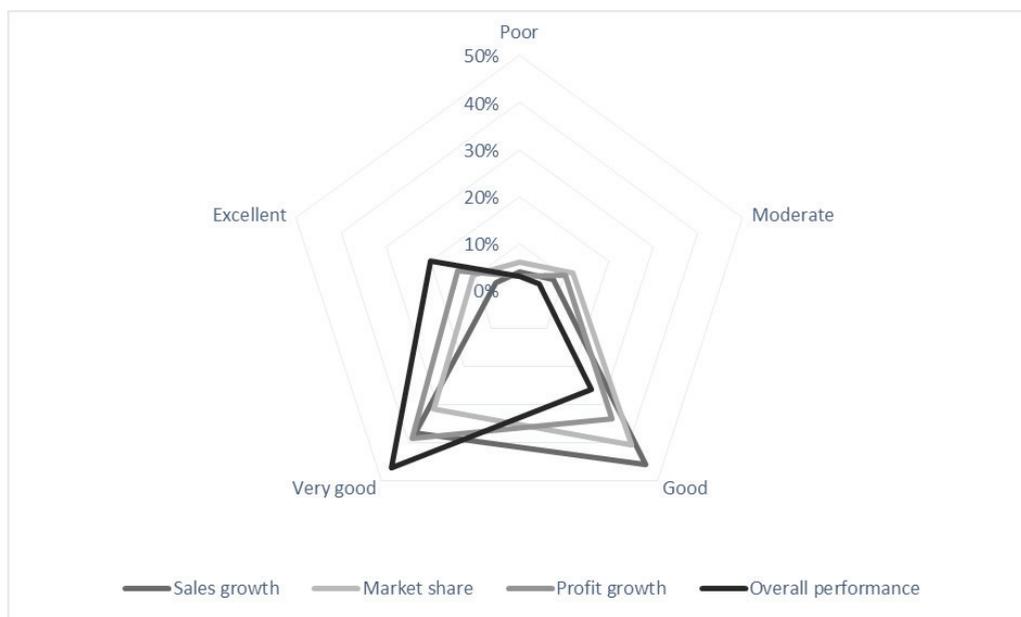
In this connection, the results related to the dialogue with consumers are quite logical.

53% of respondents said they are using social platforms for this purpose, which is the most effective way to reach more customers.

67% of companies use digital networks to advertise products and services, as it is an affordable platform for displaying product articles to a wider audience.

It is clear also the result of the answers to the attraction of new clients and the creation of contacts: 40%. This proves once again one of the benefits of social platforms as an affordable and reliable tool for expanding consumer audiences.

The “new business ideas” and “consumer opinion survey” indicators collect respectively only 23% and 30%. It turns out that business can draw new ideas and inspiration for its development through social networks and careful listening and consideration of “consumer opinion”. But it is obvious that for many of the companies there is a space for improvement in these areas.



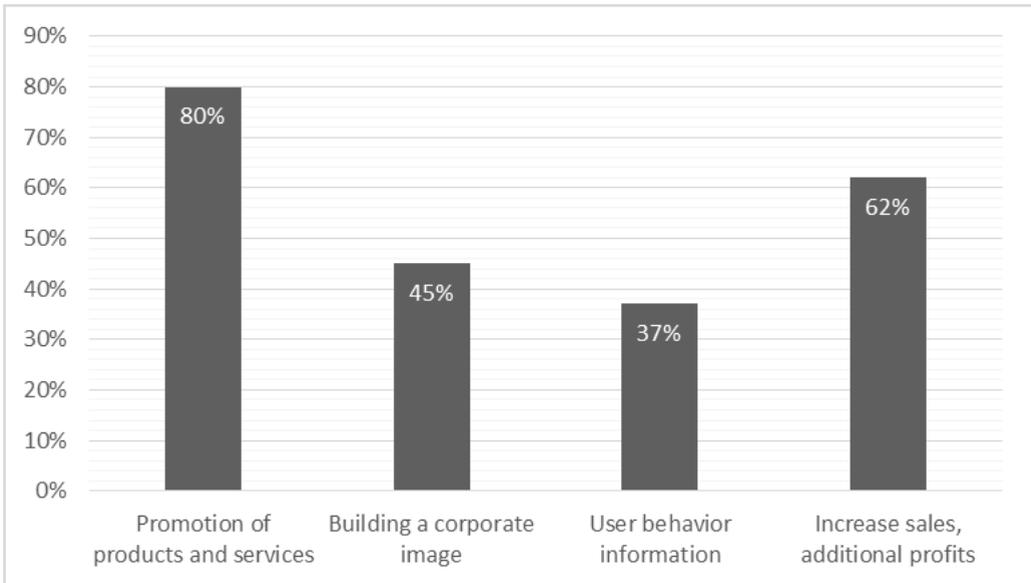
Graph 3. Organization location by pointers

This graphic represents organizational location by the following pointers: poor, moderate, good, very good and excellent.

With different pattern are presented their self-assessment in regards to: sales growth, market share, profit growth and overall performance.

Most of the companies (almost 50% positions their self's between good and very good in all four categories.

Less than 10% of the Bulgarian companies believe that their results are poor or moderate.

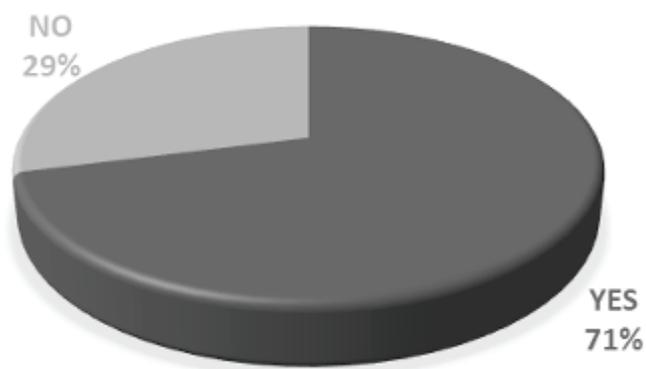


Graph 4. *Benefits for the company from presence on social networks*

The largest percentage of respondents: 80% pointed the promotion of goods and services as the main benefit for their company from the presence in the social networks.

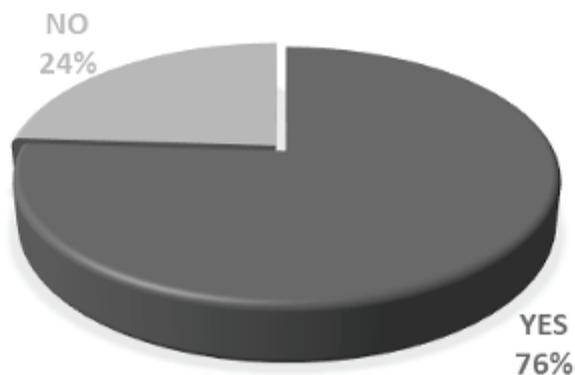
62% believe that social networks are an opportunity for the company to increase sales and lead to additional profits.

45% report that social networks are helping to build a corporate image, and 37% that the biggest benefit of company presence in social networks is the ability to track consumer behavior.



Graph 5. *Enhancing company's competitiveness*

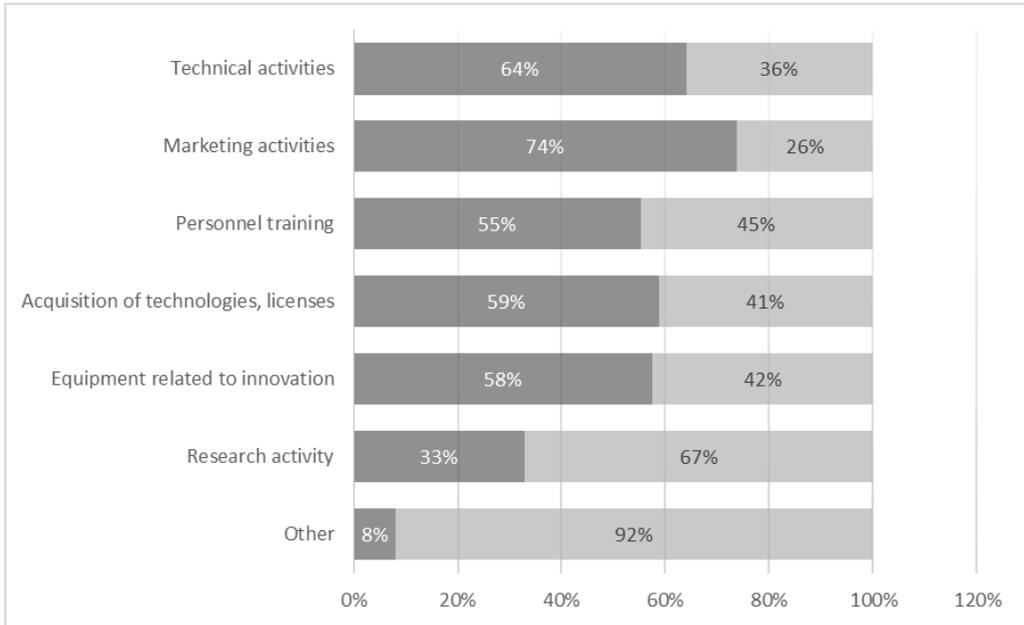
Regarding the question: “Is there a dependence between the use of digital communication and the increase of the company’s competitiveness?” Many Bulgarian companies answered positively: 71%, while only 29% said they did not observe such dependence.



Graph 6. *Dependence of the corporate profits from the use of social networks*

The percentage of companies is quite high -76 %, who said there was a dependence on the organization’s presence in social networks and the increase in corporate profits.

The percentage of enterprises with no such dependency is considerably smaller, only 24%.



Graph 7. Main aspects of innovation activity

With regard to the question “What was the innovation activity of the company in the last 3 years?” the responses are as follow:

The highest percentage of respondents: 74% have indicated that these are marketing activities for introducing innovation, including marketing, marketing research and advertising of new innovation.

64% have focused on technical activities to implement innovation including designing, constructing ...

Very close rates have companies that have highlighted the acquisition of licenses, patents, technologies, software: 59%, innovation related equipment: 58% and training for innovation staff: 55%.

The smallest is the percentage of respondents who stated that the innovation activity of the company is related to research: 33% and other innovations: 8%.

## Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the results of the empirical study:

The implementation of digital marketing is a guarantee for attracting new customers;

Social platforms provide the greatest opportunity to reach potential customers quickly;

Brand presence in the digital space is a prerequisite for building a company image, creating a consumer community and deepening the dialogue with customers and partners;

The benefits of digital channels are related to consumer awareness, feedback, low cost, customer engagement using informal dialogue, and a better opportunity for action and decision-making to make a purchase;

Bulgarian companies use social platforms mainly to communicate with their users, which shows their desire to build a strong interactive connection with the public;

The use of digital tools by Bulgarian companies enables the more effective management of relationships with customers, partners and competitors through the use of different opportunities and channels of communication;

Being on the company's social platforms helps them increase their sales and earn higher profits, expand their market share, and improve organizational performance;

Using digital communication is an opportunity for companies to gather consumer behavior information that is useful for developing successful strategies and tactics that address the needs and desires of target audiences;

Bulgarian companies are open to the use of various business innovations related to marketing, technical and research activities, as well as to the acquisition of technologies, licenses, patents, trademarks, software related to innovation;

The empirical social survey conducted reveals successful business models that could be corrective to the development of other enterprises;

The comparison with the foreign experience completely overlaps with the results of the empirical study of the author, who show eloquently that the implementation of digital marketing and innovation have a positive impact on organizations.

Authors such as Afrina Yasmin, Sadia Tasneem, Kaniz Fatema in their research highlight the effectiveness of using digital marketing in business sales and outline its benefits to consumers:

Stay updated with products or services. Digital marketing technologies allow the consumers to stay with the company information updated. Nowadays a lot of consumer can access internet any place anytime and companies are continuously updating information about their products or services;

Greater engagement. With digital marketing, consumers can engage with the company's various activities. Consumers can visit company's website, read information about the products or services and make purchases online and provide feedback;

Clear information about the products or services. Through digital marketing, consumers get clear information about the products or services. There is a little chance of misinterpretation of the information taken from sales person in a retail store. However, Internet provides comprehensive product information which customers can rely on and make purchase decision;

Easy comparison with others Since many companies are trying to promote their products or services using digital marketing, it is becoming the greatest advantage for the customer in terms that customers can make comparison among products or services by different suppliers in cost and time friendly way. Customers don't need to visit a number of different retail outlets in order to gain knowledge about the products or services;

24/7 shopping since internet is available all day long, there is no time restriction for when customer wants to buy a product online;

Share content of the products or services. Digital marketing gives viewers a chance to share the content of the product or services to others. Using digital media, one can easily transfer and get information about the characteristics of the product or services to others;

Apparent Pricing Company shows the prices of products or services through digital marketing channel and this makes prices very clear and transparent for the customers. Company may regularly changes the prices or gives special on their products or services and customers are always in advantages by getting informed instantly by just looking at any one mean of digital marketing;

Enables instant purchase. With traditional marketing, customers first watch the advertisement and then find relevant physical store to purchase the products or services. However, with digital marketing, customers can purchase the products or services instantly;<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> YASMIN, Afrina, Sadia Tasneem, Kaniz Fatema. Effectiveness of Digital Marketing in the Challenging Age: An Empirical Study. In: International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration, 2015, Vol., Issue 5, 69-80.

The results of the empirical study clearly show that the use of digital marketing and innovations by Bulgarian companies leads to indisputable benefits for organizations related to deepening communication with consumers, increasing their engagement and responding more to their needs. This increases confidence, builds an emotional connection and generates more revenue.

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# MANAGING KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR SUCCESSFUL ONLINE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

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*Abstract:* The aim of the article is to study the strategies for successful online advertising. It focuses mainly on CTR (click through rate) and conversion rate and analyzes various winning approaches. The study of CTR and conversion rate as a KPI (key performance indicator) offers new and interesting ways to interpret our marketing efforts, thus attracting new audiences while retaining the old. The structure and tasks of the article are predetermined by its aim: definition and classification of several key performance indicators; characteristics of the most used ones; analyzing various communicative aspects; opportunities how they offer companies to optimize their online marketing communications, especially advertising.

The article gives examples how companies upgrade their strategies to better communicate with their audience through measuring the performance of a campaign through KPIs by fine tuning the advertisement itself. The content of the advertisements is studied in regard to the types of evidence used. Several cases are analyzed revealing fluctuations in click-through rate and conversion rate. This way companies are able to see the potential for improvement and success in their forthcoming campaigns. Recognizing the importance of KPIs enables companies to define and set achievable online goals.

*Keywords:* digital marketing communications, online advertising, search engine advertising, marketing campaign, click-through rate, conversion rate.

## **Search engine advertising**

The swift development of the Internet and its applications has turned advertising into a successful business model. Specialists regard it as an effective advertising medium due to its capabilities of precise customer targeting transforming it into an important income resource for many companies from both sides of the digital advertising arena.

Within online advertising the search engine advertising (SEA) revenue is approximately 127 billion US dollars (www.statista.com). The biggest player is Alphabet's Google with almost 93%, followed by Bing with 2,34% and Yahoo

with 1.70% (www.statcounter.com). Ad spending is expected to show an annual growth rate of 6.2% resulting in market volume of 162, 696 m by 2023 (www.statista.com). This makes SEA one of the fastest growing advertising channels (Ghose & Yang, 2009) leading firms to choose it as an integral part of their marketing communications mix (Bucklin & Sismeiro, 2009).

Search engine advertising is defined as: “The placement of advertisements alongside organic (non-sponsored) Web search results in which advertisers pay a fee per click on the advertisements.” (Yang & Ghose, 2010, p. 602).

Search engines act as intermediaries between companies and users and have the advantage to sell new forms of advertisement without the running the risk of annoying the consumers. Sponsored search engine advertising has the unique ability to satisfy consumers who are hungry for relevant search queries, on one hand, and companies that desire high-quality traffic to their websites, on the other. The advertisements are based on the specific searches of the consumers and are considered as less intrusive than online banner or pop-up ads. The specific keywords that trigger the displaying of a certain ad are chosen by the advertiser and are based on user generated content in product reviews, social networks and blogs where users have posted their opinion on companies, their products or services (Dhar & Ghose, 2010). As a natural evolution all this has led to a shift from the so called “mass” advertising to a more targeted one.

Using sponsored search companies have to make use of various instruments and follow several steps. Basically, when they wish to advertise their products or services they submit information in the form of a specific keyword listings to search engines. The next step is assigning bid values to each ad in order to determine the position of its listing in the search results. When consumers search for a specific product or service the webpage of the advertiser may appear in the results in the form of a sponsored link next to the organic search results. It is only when a user clicks on the link (the company’s ad) that the company pays for it and this payment mechanism is the most widely used one - cost per click or CPC. Thus advertisers are able to reach a more targeted audience using a lower budget because listings appear only when the user submits a search query.

### **Contextual advertising**

Search engine advertising is also a part of the online contextual advertising which is “A dynamic placement of Internet advertising in which the advertising message is closely related to the context of the Website in which it is placed. It may take the form of banner or text advertisement.” (Yavkolev & Chuprun,

2008, p. 16). The definition speaks of that the ad is not randomly placed but in a specifically selected context stimulating the user to pay attention and eventually act on the proposal. The ad is placed in the search results depending on the specific search of each individual user.

The largest share of among the companies that use contextual advertising consists of the representatives of the small and medium businesses and it is reflected upon the budgets of the advertising campaigns. Those who wish to spend the largest advertising budgets are the representatives of the construction and automobile businesses, as well as the manufacturers and suppliers of industrial products in the so called B2B sector (Yavkolev & Chuprun, 2008). A considerable part of the contextual advertising budgets is allocated to the sellers and consumer goods and electronics, finance and insurance businesses, tourism and real estate businesses.

The principle of contextuality suggests that the advertising message would be shown only to those who are willing to receive it. So it would be possible to draw a picture of the users' behavior on the Internet that would allow for making prognosis and in most cases to determine what specific information is sought. It is thanks to this principle that contextual advertising is perceived more easily and with greater loyalty than graphical modules that sometimes obscure the contents of the page.

A study conducted by NPDGroup reveals that 55% of the Internet purchases are thanks to search results advertising and the share of banner advertising is around 9%. As discusses loyalty toward search advertisement is greater than other types of advertisement. Nearly 70% of users would agree that it is non-intrusive and they are not agitated by it (Romir, 2006).

The advantages of contextual advertising are as follows:

It allows web administrators to graphically show the regions that potential clients are in;

It allows web admins to display their website at a higher positions without using the algorithms of the search engines and without paying an SEO (Search Engine Optimization) specialist to optimize the website so that it is ranked higher by search engines;

It lets web administrators to receive instant new traffic;

It allows users to find the website even if it is incompatible with the search system or is not indexed by it;

It secures swift sales and user feedback;

It allows for a more precise ROI (Return on Investment) measurement;

More relevant landing pages are shown;

It lets companies shut down the campaign due to unexpected circumstances or special events such as New Year's sale.

Small companies with low advertising budgets for Internet marketing could find spending what little money they have in CPC advertising campaigns an efficient option. One of the most important steps is determining the key phrases for their own business. The CPC campaign may not drive enormous traffic toward their website but would secure quality target audience. The low-frequency but specific to one's business keywords would be able to bring high conversion traffic. "If the consumer clicks on the ad, he is led to the landing page of the advertiser's website. This is recorded as a click, and advertisers usually pay on a per click basis. In the event that the consumer ends up purchasing a product from the advertiser, this is recorded as a conversion." (Ghose & Yang, 2009, p. 1608).

Another advantage is that companies are able to generate the advertising message on their own – the title, the body text and the landing page that the user would see after clicking on the advertisement. The freedom to choose the right description of the product or service, as well as the right landing page that sells it is really attractive to companies.

### **The advertising statement**

It is assumed that the performance of the online advertisement is affected by its design (Rutz & Trusov, 2011). It is very important to analyze how markets design ads so that they can persuade users to click on them and eventually convert them into buyers. The texts of the online advertisement have to be written in such a way so as to convince users to act in certain manner which would lead to clicking on the ad itself. The quality of the argument used in the message plays a vital role when persuading potential customers (Hoeken & Hustinx, 2009). One of the key elements of the argument is the type of evidence used to support the claim. It is also basic to advertising or one of the key reasons for users to act (Park et al. 2007). Evidence is defined as "data (facts or opinions) presented as proof for an assertion" Reynolds & Reynolds, 2002, p. 429). In order to strengthen the persuasive role of the text admen could choose between four major evidence types of evidence: anecdotal, statistical, causal and expert evidence (Hornikx, 2005). Studies reveal that statistical evidence, expert evidence and causal evidence are more persuasive than anecdotal evidence (Hornikx, 2005). Since Google would be the search engine to be analyzed and it only lets ad-

vertisers to use up to 70 characters anecdotal evidence would not be taken into consideration for analysis.

User involvement comes to play a vital role in affecting persuasion. High involvement is connected to the so called central route and low involvement to the peripheral route (Park et al. 2007). Usually internet users who are mainly seeking information through initial search take the peripheral route and it is a low involvement process (Singh & Dalal, 1999). These internet users are less motivated to process the advertising message. They process it using their judgements, accepting or rejecting the source credibility and are hardly affected by the advertising argument. Eventually, advertisements that are based on expert or statistical evidence that increases the trustfulness of the information would receive more clicks and result in a higher CTR (click through rate). On the other hand, the central route is usually taken by Internet users who are goal-oriented and are searching for specific information. These users are highly involved, they are planning to shop and are highly motivated to process the advertising message. In this case, ads that use the causal evidence type would be regarded as having a strong argument and a valuable source of information.

A study (Haans et al. 2013) conducted in order to test the evidence types and their relation to click through rates and conversion rates. The findings show that statistical evidence and expert evidence result in higher click-through rates than causal evidence, whereas causal evidence results in more conversions. This way advertisers may choose a different approach in writing the ad text depending on the situation. Internet users who are low involved are searching for advertisements that are credible and attractive and ads with expert or statistical evidence type would result in a higher click-through rate. On the other hand, highly involved users would be looking for more specific information or would be willing to purchase a product and would be paying more attention to the strength and the quality of the argument which are the characteristics of the causal evidence type. This should lead to a higher conversion rate.

Setting a marketing or advertising goal before the beginning of the campaign is crucial to its success. If the company seeks to generate more traffic to its website it would be better to use the expert or statistical evidence. Ads that contain these types of evidence receive more clicks. If conversions are set as priority the company should use the causal evidence. The CPC bidding option would benefit from this since it would lead to lower number of clicks namely lower costs but a higher number of conversions.

## Keywords

Keywords come to play an important part in search engine advertising. They are one of the most important elements advertisers must adhere to in order to stay within the advertising budget and more importantly to attract the right target audience. A keyword may consist of one or several words. Advertisers place bids on Google in order to win the auction process. When they receive a rank for their ad the sponsored advertisements are displayed at the top three results and bottom three in the search in response to the specific query of the user. When there is a match between the query of the user and the ad the advertisement would appear. Before running it could be set to broad, exact or phase match depending on the ad strategy. The displaying of the ad in response to a specific search is called an impression.

Studies (Jansen & Spink, 2007) have analyzed the goals for the searches of internet users and classified their queries into three major categories:

Navigational: this is a query consisting of a specific firm or retailer;

Transactional: a search query consisting of a specific product;

Informational: a query that consists of longer words.

“Being cognizant of such user behavior, search engines sell not only non-branded or generic keywords as advertisements, but also well-known product or manufacturer brand names as well as keywords indicating the specific advertiser so the firm can attract consumers to its website.” (Ghose & Yang, 2009, p. 1610). The length of the keyword is also an important factor. Studies have shown that users are 1.6 times more likely to use a combination of keywords compared to those who would use a single word (Kilpatrick, 2003). The click-through rate usually is influenced by the position of the ad (the ad rank), the length of the keyword and if it contains retailer or brand information.

A study (Ghose & Yang, 2009) analyzing Google search queries and aimed at revealing the connection between keywords and click-through rates indicated that ads with retailer-specific information lead to a significantly higher CTR. However, the ads containing brand-specific information received a 56% decrease in CTR. The length of the keywords coefficient is negative which means that longer keywords receive a lower CTR.

As for conversion rate and brand (product or manufacturer) specific information the coefficient is negative suggesting that longer keywords have lower conversion rates. The presence of the retailer sees the opposite result since it increases the conversion rates by 50%. Regarding conversion rates length does not come to play an important role on the overall effect.

The relationship between rank and conversion rate is unbalanced. With lower rank, when the keyword has a higher position on the screen the conversion rate is higher. A more prominent position in the search results may be associated with a higher quality or trust for the brand in the users' minds.

### **Split testing for higher CTR**

The basics of split testing is to create several variants of the landing page with various texts, prices, headlines, reviews, graphics, etc. This is a wonderful option to check which text, price of product or headline brings more traffic and/or sales. Afterwards with the help of the web analytics software the best variant should be chosen for the landing page. The analysis could reveal which pictures work better, which headlines receive more clicks, which element composition brings more sales, which guarantee programs and terms and conditions make the users feel safer and loyal.

The technology behind split testing is that user A sees variant A of the webpage and receives A cookie. User B sees variant B of the webpage and receives B cookie and so forth for the other users. The point is to send the same number of visitors to different variants of the same webpage. An important element is to have a high website traffic so that the influence of the hour and day of the week is the same for both A and B groups. In order to be sure that the split testing reveals statistically correct results from the changed webpages and to be able to define the winner from the test a high number of webpage displays is needed. There should be at least a three times difference in the numbers in favour of one of the variants in order to.

A wise decision for the small to medium businesses is to continue the split testing for some time, to keep the observation and to inspect if the ratings of transitions are the same and of course, not to stop the testing prematurely. Split testing is an advantage for websites with huge traffic and a large number of sales. The vast number of visitors and sales is one of the reasons for the higher CTR in online retail. They have enough traffic and financial resources to fine tune their websites.

There are several elements that could be split tested:

The gifts;

The vouchers;

The messages;

The guarantees;

The illustrations at the beginning of the proposal;

The illustrations at the end of the proposal;  
The calls to action;  
The headlines;  
The various colours of the webpage;  
The composition of the webpage elements;  
The hyperlinks.

## Conclusion

The Internet medium is growing in a rapid pace and advertising spending in it is growing faster, as well. Search engine advertising is a much preferred type of advertising to specialists around the globe. The paper addressed the impact of several evidence types on click-through rates and conversion rates. Statistical and expert evidence lead to higher click-through rates, whereas causal leads to a higher conversion rates. This gives advertisers the opportunities to choose one of them according to the communicative situation. Special attention is given to the nature of keywords, their length and impact on click-through rates and conversion rates. Findings indicate that longer keywords tend to decrease click-through rates but not in conversion rates. The importance of split testing is revealed, so that companies make good use of it in fine tuning their advertisements and landing pages.

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# MEDIATISATION, MEDIATED COMMUNICATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) - SOME APPEARANCES IN TODAY'S MEDIA

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*Abstract:* Web 4.0, Fourth industrial revolution, Globalisation, Mediatisation and Computers: all of them have an impact on today's social interactions. Their reflections on the way we think, as well as the presumption there is a form of artificial intelligence that affects human communication, are matters discussed in an increasing number of scientific and practical research papers. Our everyday life becomes increasingly dependent on the media, which leads to the problem of managing the effects of the computer-mediation in the Web. Unknown variables become an important way of psychologically influencing mass perceptions and beliefs in a desired direction. Artificial intelligence interferes with our meta-communication ever more frequently. In the present paper, existing psychological concepts are applied to a wide range of practical examples from everyday life, so as to explore the nature of some of the unknown variables faced by today's media. Furthermore, featured is an, at least partial, discussion of the threats posed by overlooking computer-mediated intrusions in the mainstream and other media effects.

*Keywords:* Internet, Meta-communication, Artificial Intelligence, Mediatisation, Psychological Influence

Everyday life becomes increasingly affected by the informational overload. The public develops a specific communication stress and as a result exhibits a higher tendency to settle for a state of learned helplessness against the simulations of thought and guidance, that are so characteristic of today's complex digital devices. These simulations continue to gain popularity under the name of "Artificial intelligence". Already, there are apparent alterations in the way people react to incoming information, as well as to the way the means of mass communication present messages and the comments to them. Knowing these effects gradually attains the properties of a social tool for introducing, or blocking a deliberate psychological influence. The present paper includes an evaluation of already existing theoretical research, comparisons of concepts and presenting examples from the current media reality. This way, despite being done only partially, the consequences of the infiltration of an artificial pseudo-intelligence

are connected to the changes both in the social activity of the person and in the sharing of this activity as a collective construct in society.

### **Mediatisation and Artificial intelligence**

The term mediatisation has been part of the social life for a while now. As early as the beginning of the 1950s the Canadian scientist Harold A. Innis (1894, 1952) writes about the media having a significant impact on society, and the state it has so far reached (Innis, *Empire and Communications*, 155-66). This is true for today's reality too, given that one of the current understandings of mediatisation is: "*The relation between the media and everyday life, work, rest, social interactions, groups and identities, enterprises and institutions, politics and economics, socialisation, culture and society.*" (Kolomiec, 87)

Accepting that mediatisation is a complicated two-way influencing process - the media influence the people, and the people influence the media (Kolomiec, 87) - does not encompass all unknown variables associated with the matter of whether freedom is expanded, or limited. It does not clarify the role which computer-mediation attains ever more prominently at the fore front of today's media stage. As a result, some traits characteristic of operating complex digital devices, and characteristic to their mutual dependance on their connectivity, migrate to the inter-personal communication in a way which affects the mediatisation of everyday life. A complicated discourse is caused by the matters of the guiding factors and of the nature of that guidance, facilitated via the computer-mediated intervention. A known concept is the one about the information elite which is a small part of the information-oriented community that manages to dictate a large part of the rules that are complied with in the online communication. Another idea is that there is an emerging artificial intelligence in computers, and the network that they form, that is slowly taking over the guiding functions in the digital communication environment. The "older" the Internet gets and the more advanced digital technologies become, the more acceptable does this notion become. One of the reasons is that the mechanisms via which the information elite rules become ever less logical and ever more ambiguous to the online audience. It is unknown why such artificial intelligence communicators have such a prominent impact - they do not exhibit the usual, according to Max Weber, attributes (Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft III. Abteilung*, 126-27) - established kinship, material wealth, physical attractiveness, high professional skills, etc. This ambiguity leads to the assumption about the presence of some, almost

mysterious, construct which resembles intelligence and which belongs to and is developed solely by the modern complex intelligent devices.

The idea about conjugating the influences over society and over the person with what is happening in the online segment of reality involves intellect as a form of adequacy applied to the dynamism of the surrounding environment. This links it to the cognitive aspects of human interactions, but also causes concern. The threat is apparent when the information operating of complex intelligent devices is conjugated to specific motor activity, as seen in robots. In this context, the laws defined by Isaac Asimov back in 1964 become especially relevant:

1) A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm;

2) A robot must obey the orders given to it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law;

3) A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws (Asimov, *I, Robot*, 42-5).

The term “artificial intelligence”, i.e the idea of mimicking human thinking and of existence of intelligence, parallel to the human one, predates the emergence of the Internet by a, in this context, significant margin. This “intelligence” was not accepted uniformly: some saw it as a mystic, others - as a threat, and third - as an opportunity. This variety of contradictions and activity depends as much on the people, as it does on the laws of nature, and appears in multiple aspects of life. In psychology it is known as computing metaphor in thought. In scientific terms, the metaphor is only a mimicry of the real object (Barnden, “A. Metaphor and artificial intelligence: Why they matter to each other,” 311-338), but it is not harmless in its manifestation. A metaphorical nuance is present in the the Laws of Robotics too: they are not scientifically proven terms, and neither are they legally accepted laws, however, their nature aims to address very much real threats.

### **The media, psychology and perception after computer mediatisation**

The media are faced with computer simulations of intelligence, in regards not only to manipulating information channels, but the audience, too.

A consequence of the intensive communication is that the individual receives more information from the surrounding environment. On one side, this seems useful, but what happens when the threshold of cognitive fatigue is surpassed? Then the audience characteristics include: information wandering and

specific communication stress. Below are some of the factors which can cause such distortions:

- *Computer mediation*: Despite the strive for perfect repetition of the initial information in the end of the communication channel, computer mediation introduces error - in terms of time, space and content - which is not only not random, but it is also amenable to being directed, due to the algorithmic nature of the cybernetic logic behind the information transfer. This imposes restrictions before which the user is powerless. Deliberately, or not, the communicators start to notice that some headings are written in larger fonts, the mouse pointer moves faster towards some parts of the webpage, advertisement banners cannot be disabled, etc. All of this leads to frustration, which when considered in the context of the need for being well-informed turns into a sense of helplessness. This state is definitive of the personality, as the internalised understanding of helplessness is one of the first socially-oriented definitions of depression, formulated by Martin Seligman in the 1960s. (Seligman, 1975).

- *Memorising and the speed with which it happens*: The relationship between remembering and understanding is one of the problematic unknown variables which almost everyone faces in their student years. In the context of the present study, of interest is the question: Does the contemporary personality have the time to perceive all of the multiplied multi-fold and conveniently accessible on the Internet information about the surrounding world? According to a concept by Noam Chomsky, during the course of evolution, the human mind has retained certain common elements of linguistic components. In this context, cognitive overload and the high velocity of memorising resulting from the computer mediation point to that in these circumstances it is uncertain whether the individual has the time to learn the typical sequences of the social interaction.

- *Virtuality and communication stimuli*: Thanks to certain evolutionary factors, in contrast to all other living creatures, people are capable of, to the highest extent, initiating activity in the sub-cortical regions of the brain, without needing a direct physical trigger. This way, over the course of the communication, specific stimuli for behavioural reaction are generated. Computer mediation and the intense communication that it facilitates have the potential to interfere with exactly this perception and generation of such communication stimuli.

- *Inhibiting thought*: Peculiar is the circumstance that in some instances via simulations of intellect the audience is seemingly guided to refusal of thinking. An example is the short description published in a site marketed as a computer generator of, above all else, ideas:

“You no longer need to think yourselves! Simply press the button and the generator of ideas does it all for you!” (“Home Page: Generator of ideas.”)

### **The media and the computing metaphor in thinking**

Not only the channels, but the ways to reach the audience are changed. This is not so much due to matters related to the new media on the Internet, but due to a much more practical iteration. Electronic and printed media, as well as information sites, are nowadays in the situation where they have to compete against immediate posts on social platforms where messages appear directly from politicians, from expressers of opinion (bloggers, vloggers, etc.), and so on. There, objectivity is questionable (the right to answer is not complied with, there is no intention of exploring all aspects in the context of the matter, etc.), however, the close proximity to the happenings is there and the persuasive influence is also present.

Everyday life is already exhibiting some interesting traits: news pieces become more in number and - most probably - larger in volume, too; people look for information about their acquaintances not only from their close social circuit, but also from whatever is shared on social platforms, as they sometimes “know” more than relatives and friends do (Murad, “Facebook.”); stereotypes change; and so on. The general theme changes - the so-called mainstream - which by law of the mutual relation is imposed on the media by the audience, and presented to the audience by the media. These trends are visible from the statistical data provided by the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria (“Breakdown by type of TV broadcasts.”).

The air time dedicated to news (news, bulletins, sports coverage and weather forecasts) has increased (from 716 466 hours in 2013 to 742 841 h. in 2018), while the hours for information programmes are down (from 57 055 hours in 2013 to 38 713 h. in 2018). The focus of attention of the audience is shifted from entertainment shows (from 28 302 hours in 2013 to 23 026 h. in 2018) to sport-related ones (from 30 079 hours in 2013 to 65 522 h. in 2018) and educational programmes (from 9 121 hours in 2013 to 11 996 h. in 2018). Simultaneously, the hours in which artistic programmes are featured are reduced (from 194 826 hours in 2013 to 166 177 h. in 2018), and so is the time for art, humanitarian and natural sciences (from 19 836 hours in 2013 to 13 177 h. in 2018).

These changes support the assumption for induced confusion, i.e. for the presence of communication stress and moving towards a sense of learned helplessness. Furthermore, they partially show:

- Augmentations to the cultural models - preferences are shifted from artistic;
- Susceptibility to being guided - looking for news hints at an information deficit;
- Rejecting critical evaluation - the increased time for news and the reduced time for information programmes. It is logical to connect this confusion with communication stress and the resulting helplessness in terms of critically evaluating the surrounding environment;
- Increased tendency towards broadcastings featuring encyclopaedic data, not knowledge.

A significant reason for the presence of all of these effects is not the existence of the so-called Artificial Intelligence, but the lacking transparency in the usage of simulations of guidance which modern digital devices exhibit. In this context, a concept of Klaus Schwab's (professor of Economics and founder and life-long chairman of the World Economic Forum in Davos) outlined in "The fourth industrial revolution" (Schwab, *The fourth industrial revolution*, 31-5) draws the focus of attention. According to him and to what can be seen in everyday life, the change towards informationalisation and digitalisation attains the characteristics of a revolutionary jump. Computers are going to be executing an ever increasing number of tasks, previously done by humans, but they do not (at least for now) have the capacity to undertake the social functions of empathy, care, etc. One of the first professions which is subject to computerisation is journalism.

In regards to this vision, there is a relatively wide "blank space": On one hand computers cannot interchange the social content with simulation, on the other - the professional side of journalism itself is intrinsically related to the social interpretation of whatever is happening. Such disconnect suggests that Journalism, as a profession, albeit altered and subjected to new circumstances, will remain for the people, as its social nature is not susceptible to complete computer simulation.

Scandals, such as the one with Cambridge Analytica, show two additional aspects:

- it is not the computers' fault: they do not make that arrangement themselves, instead they follow an algorithm composed by humans, and they perform the resulting actions under human supervision;
- also, the aim of such activity clearly is not the development of the personality, but a pre-determined manipulation of society.

## Conclusion

The contemporary environment is not only information dominated, but it is also an environment of the directable communication stress.

Exploration of the AI invasion in the interactions from a behaviouristic point of view is not enough to resolve the resulting problems in mass communication. Hence, it is necessary to resort to the cognitive perspective that psychology presents.

The computing metaphor (AI) is only a tool for guiding social processes and it is meant to be entirely in the hands of the people.

The computing metaphor (AI) is a real logical judgment and its transposition over rational needs infringes some ethical rules. This is because being akin to the computing metaphor in psychology, the collective social instinct of self-preservation is probably only a metaphor too.

In the context of socially determined engineering, Journalism and PR have a primary role in the collaboration between mass communication and physical and non-physical realities in the contemporary environment.

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# DEFINING COPYWRITING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

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*Abstract:* The theoretical review, conducted for the purpose of examining the copywriting texts and their functioning in media environment, makes it possible to clarify the basic concepts and settings related to copywriting as an activity within IMC. Reviewing the existing definitions and the scientific discussions exposes the fact that most of them attempt to limit the scope of copywriting. Researchers and professionals in the marketing sphere often examine copywriting only in the context of their own work – be it in advertising, public relations, digital media etc.

Extrapolating a definition for copywriting necessitates a complex interdisciplinary approach that places the copywriting process in the context of integrated marketing communications (IMC). This paper proposes the following brief definition: Copywriting is a technique for strategic creation of written or oral texts for the purposes of IMC. The copywriting text on the other hand is a text that performs a certain function in these communications.

*Keywords:* copywriting, brand journalism, public relations, advertising, text

## 1. Copywriting as a concept in marketing

### 1.1. Literature review

A. Kover is interested in this as early as 1995. Qualitatively analyzing twenty interviews with professional copywriters, he tried to find out whether they had knowledge or at least intuitive understanding of the theory of communication. A. Kover, referring to Moscovici's arguments, speculates that the copywriters may have an implicit theories or meta-theories for the communications with the users. The results show that the copywriters really have vast general knowledge and understand well the needs of the target audience, even if they do not have special education in the sphere of marketing or mass communications (Kover 1995).

Efficient simultaneous use of multiple channels is a challenge for the marketing specialists as well as for the researchers of the mass communications. The term *integrated marketing communications* or IMC, was introduced in the early

90s. Il. Kim underlines that this is not a temporary phenomenon, but a change of the paradigm in the marketing communications. Years later, researchers can note the accuracy of this predication, as modern marketing campaigns continue to revolve around the integration of various marketing channels. (Kim, Han, Schultz 2004: 31-45).

The introduction of IMC is also of great significance for the process of creating texts for the needs of the marketing communications. Before the 1990s, authors of such texts would have to consider only one channel for the distribution of the respective message – television, printed, radio for example. However, with the advent of new technologies, copywriters needed to adjust their work, so that it could be used in multiple communication channels. T. Duncan concludes that the users are more susceptible to marketing campaigns, which include coherent text content distributed on different channels, considering them more reliable (Duncan 2002). Creating the impression of such credibility is a serious competitive advantage, which the authors of the communication campaigns cannot afford to neglect. This is the reason why modern copywriters must create their texts, considering their functions in the wider context of IMC.

While this change has already taken place, the scientific community has been rather slow to respond with a new and more precise definition for what copywriting actually is. Most authors tend to focus on their specific areas of expertise, defining copywriting within the framework of advertising, PR or brand journalism, instead of IMC in general. Considering the modern definitions reveals this flawed approach.

The Oxford English Dictionary, for example, defines copywriting as “writing of text for advertising and PR (publicity) materials” (Oxford English Dictionary 2017), omitting any reference to brand journalism, SEO copywriting etc. J. McCoy, who is a marketing specialist and a copywriter herself, provides a more detailed definition: “Copywriting is a technique for strategic text creation in the form of written or spoken messages, which aim to make the addressee undertake a certain action” (McCoy 2016). Again, while certainly not wrong, this definition falls into the same trap of overlooking important aspects of the work of modern copywriters, who create texts for various branches of IMC.

## 1.2. Areas requiring further research

By reviewing the above-mentioned sources, as well as other relevant literature a list of research objectives can be derived, based on which the following study can proceed.

Formulating a definition for the concept *copywriting*.

Identifying all activities within the IMC, which include the creation of texts and describe the role of copywriting within them.

Clarification of the copywriting function within IMC.

In order to achieve these research objectives it is necessary to explore all these branches and comment on the application of copywriting within them. While there is no consensus among researchers what activities actually constitute IMC, it is not difficult to point out at least three of them that require extensive creation of original texts. Namely - advertising, public relations and brand journalism. In the following section, this paper will attempt to explain the function of copywriting within each of these branches of IMC.

## **2. The application of the copywriting texts in the different branches of IMC**

### **2.1. Copywriting in public relations**

The PR specialists communicate with the audiences of the organizations – both external and internal. The creation of texts is an inseparable part of the work of modern PR specialists and this is the reason why it falls within the scope of present analysis. D. Roos believes that part of the duties of the professional PR include the organization of communication campaigns, the preparation of press releases, writing content for the news; contacts with media, organizing of interviews for (representatives of) their employers, speech writing, writing content for websites and social networks; management of marketing activities, event organization etc. (Roos 2008). Accepting this list is helpful as a starting point in the search for the activities of PR specialists, which require the creation of copywriting texts.

It is not always obvious which activity includes copywriting. For example, event organization may appear to have little to do with copywriting. PR specialists however know that no event is possible without special invitations, speech writing, e-mail correspondence etc. The organization of a press conference also requires PR specialists to prepare a so-called *press file* or *media kit*, which most often includes a brochure, information about the event (with a program if applicable), a press release and in most cases - a business card of the PR specialist. The creation of these texts can be called copywriting. Even when a professional copywriter is hired for the purpose, the marketing specialists are expected to give a *brief* (assignment), which points out what exactly they expect from the contractor.

In his book “PR: Technology of success” Z. Raikov outlines the main features, which have to be present when creating texts for the needs of public relations. He notes that, by definition, the PR text is not published in the media against payments, but is instead free of charge. That is why it must be relevant for the audience of the respective media and must not contain aggressive advertising messages (Raikov 2003: 54-57). According to Z. Raikov, the characteristics of the good text in public relations depend on the informational value of the message. Having said that, texts also need to be rather provocative and/or entertaining for the audience. The way to accomplish this is by using effective storytelling as means of exploring tension and conflicts, participation of celebrities and focus on the emotional reaction of the public. Academia and media experts however do not ubiquitously accept the use of provocative language. A. Eftimova, for example, defines the bombastic jargon as an instrument of the “language of lies” and qualifies it as a way “to impress the audience with abstract words and expressions without saying anything substantial” (Eftimova 2016: 243).

It is interesting to note that in many cases the PR specialists are preparing such texts. However, they can still be considered copywriting texts and the process of writing them - copywriting, as they perform the function described above within IMC. E. Podkamennaya suggests the following list of core texts, typical for the job of the PR specialist: biographical checkup, fact list (background), frequently asked questions, press kit, press release and a newsletter. She also added three other texts to this list, which are not typical for the PR specialists, but they are nevertheless seen in their practice: an article, an essay and business letters (Podkamennaya 2013). At the same time, some of the described by Podkamennaya concepts can be discussed. For example, the preparation of FAQs can be associated with the work of customer experience departments and contact centers. The press kit, in itself, is not a text but a compilation of other texts. Furthermore, some researchers define newsletters as part of the advertising communication (Endres 2013: 90-104). Writing articles for the press by PR specialists blurs the lines between PR and brand journalism.

## 2.2. Copywriting in advertising

The IMC specialists, including the advertisers, are interested in specific techniques that will improve the efficiency of the created copywriting texts for advertising. The lack of sufficient research of the problem is compensated with the opinions and recommendations of various blogs and non-scientific articles. Although in 1984, the concept IMC was still not used W. Stanton attempts to define the characteristics of advertising in the context of the other types of mar-

keting communications and to differentiate it from them (Stanton 1984). These characteristics remain valid, in their major part, for over thirty years. What is important for the quality of the advertising text is the fact that the advertiser pays for the publication of his content and in exchange, receives control over it. Of course, any media may have editorial policy and choose whether to work with certain advertiser or not. However, this does not change the fact that those, who signed an agreement for advertising, have the right to publish their message without corrections. This is directly connected with the work of the copywriters, because they take a greater responsibility to both their employers and the audience.

The idea of marketing segmentation<sup>1</sup> is well known to the specialists in IMC. A. Weinstein suggests the following way to divide the advertising according to the degree of the segmentation of the messages. (Weinstein 2004:12). In the first case, Weinstein examines a situation in which there are zero segments. This presumes an undifferentiated strategy where the advertising text is prepared for the largest possible audience. The second option is to target only one segment of the auditorium. He defines this as a focus strategy where the authors of the advertising message have to prepare their text for the needs of a specific and clearly defined audience. Such approach requires a serious preparation on the side of the authors of copywriting texts, who have to study the specific features of the targeted segment.

Again, in the context of the technological changes, V. Valkanova commented on the new methods in texts design in online environment. She points out that the web design is undertaking the hard task to personalize the visual representation in order to be relevant to the terminal: Drop-down lists, to save parameters for the leading elements, replace the so classical vertical menus and the texts are reformatted in order to be viewed on small displays (Valkanova 2016). This directly affects the work of the copywriters, who have to consider the visualization of their text not only in different media but also on different customer devices.

### 2.3. Copywriting in brand journalism

L. Light – marketing director of McDonald’s from 2002 to 2005, popularized the term brand journalism. During his work at the corporation, he examines the development of the strategies for targeting the audience. The first period he

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<sup>1</sup> The segmentation means the division of users, in the target audience, according to their different characteristics (gender, age, domicile, incomes, etc.) and the creation of specific messages for the respective groups.

examined was before the 70s of XX century, which he defines as the culture “We”, characterized by the mass taste, consumption and media. The second period, which began in the 70s, is called “Me”, and is characterized by increasing segmentation of the targeted audience involvement (Light 2015) (Bull 2013: 8). The brand history in question cannot be disclosed in its completeness only with the instruments of the advertising and press release. Stories are needed that refer to certain events and themes, but at the same time, they have their own plot and are based on certain narrative techniques and skills of the author. In addition, the story cannot be told in only one text, but is a result of the synergy of many publications. These peculiarities distinguish brand journalism from the other types of IMC.

The emergence of brand journalism, exactly in this period, has its explanation in the development of technologies and in particular the entering of Internet in the work of the organizations. The media environment is also changing and this favours the development of brand journalism. G. Dermendzhieva commented that the income earned from advertising on news sites is sometimes too low to support them. Even before the emergence of Internet technology, other factors also divided people’s attention, leading them to more but narrower media channels (Dermenszhieva 2012).

Long-time Financial Times journalist and a blogger, T. Foremski, who is interested in the sphere of marketing, explains the process with a special equation  $EC = MC$  – allusion to Einstein’s famous formula. This means, “Every company is media company” (Foremski 2010). It is clear from Foremski’s words that he does not separate brand journalism from the integrated marketing communications of the company. The traditional media are simply a channel where it can be used. According to Foremski’s logic, the media owners can also produce journalistic content, related to their own brand.

In her article “Brand journalism” I. Pavlova concludes that *brand journalism* expresses the tendency for personalization of media content in the circumstances of simultaneous running of mutually exclusive processes of globalization and localization in the modern world (Pavlova 2016). In the same text, the author discusses different views related to the problem of defining *brand journalism*. I. Pavlova refers also to the stance of R. Kipling according to whom *brand journalism* is an imperative that shakes the foundations of journalism and the marketing we know so far. The new type of practice uses the traditional journalistic techniques, but rethinks the whole idea of what the news is and how it should be announced on behalf of a brand (Pavlova 2016).

According to E. Andreeva *brand journalism* should be seen as a hybrid that unites three spheres – journalism, PR and marketing. The more active a company is in communicating with its actual and potential customers the more trust it builds and turns into a media (Andreeva 2018). This statement leads to a discussion because even in 1999 Z. Raikov attempted to define the effective public relations and the features described by him overlap with the later suggested characteristics of brand journalism. He notes that the PR are intensive and uninterrupted process, as the audience itself has a dynamic character, with changing expectations and demands (Raikov 1999: 101-102). According to him, maintaining the attachment between the brand and the audience is an integral part of the work of PR specialist. Professionals in the field of mass communications know that good press release is that published with least possible changes. However, Ch. Kaftandzhiev notes that when certain text is a paid publication it should not be called public relations but an advertising communication. Unless it is clearly marked as such, it is a hidden advertising (Kaftandzhiev 2006: 24-29).

While it is not exaggerated to say that the copywriting texts in *brand journalism* have the characteristics of both public relations and hidden advertising, it can still be concluded that *brand journalism* is a separate branch of IMC. Overlaps between the characteristics of advertising, public relations and brand journalism, according to the descriptions of Ch. Kaftandzhiev, Z. Raikov and I. Pavlova, are based namely on the fact that in the three cases are created copywriting texts, although in different spheres of IMC.

### 3. Conclusions

Based on this research can be outlined answers to the points requiring further research, described in the introductory section of this paper:

1. Formulating a definition for the process of *copywriting*:

Copywriting is a technique for strategic creation of written or oral texts for IMC. Copywriting texts are all texts that serve a specific function in these communications.

2. Identifying all activities within IMC, which include the creation of texts.

There are three main activities within IMC, which include the creation of copywriting texts: *advertising, public relations and brand journalism*.

3. Clarification of the copywriting function within IMC, as well as its interdependence with all activities in IMC.

The *copywriting* itself is not a separate branch of IMC, as are the *public relations, advertising and brand journalism*.

The *copywriting* is a technique for strategic creation of texts for the needs of these communications and therefore it can be applied in different spheres as long as they fall within IMC.

The *copywriting* does not exhaust all activities carried out in public relations, brand journalism and advertising.

The authors of the individual texts in *brand journalism*, *public relations* and *advertising* can be called *copywriters*, the process of creating these texts – *copywriting*, and the texts themselves – *copywriting texts*.

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# THE FLOW OF ATTENTION AND THE EMOTIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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*Abstract:* As a result of the emergence of new media and due to the interplay of techniques, their twisting through photo, audio, and video elements was added to another feature of performance. The element of getting sensations is attracting audiences towards their content and stories. These everyday items are increasing their post count and are attracting many audiences and earn as much value in a virtual space. The Facebook platform currently is the most popular and this performance is deepening and therefore this study will address some main issues related to Facebook and its audiences. How the audience is oriented from online from online portals for information and what features this kind of performance contains? How is this audience measured through the portals and is carefully watched by media managers?

This study aims to address this kind of attention-and-back problem of online portals, especially social media such as Facebook.

*Keywords:* new media, communication, internet, audiences, social media, online platforms

## Introduction

The Internet, as a new media, redesigned the way information was delivered and received, and at the same time information, in addition to specific new features thanks to digitalisation, convergence and a number of elements of the function of its audiences and distributors became old. The Albanian space has a large influx of information outlets, new media portals like classic media extension, and forums like social media.

This paper aims to study the Albanian media online thanks to the constant monitoring of a new media monitoring website on the online platform called fax. al and consequently continues to monitor the disclosure of this information. First of all it aims to study traditional media embedded in online platform.

The hypothesis of this paper: Mass online audiences are gearing up for new forms of online communication with interest primarily information.

In order to study the information, over 114 types of media (textual and visual) have been studied in the media flow of space between the three countries that convey Albanian information: Albania, Kosovo and Northern Macedonia.

Analyzing the information of these different online media from this point of view will give some insight into the way and function of providing information across the Albanian area and the role that new media play in this information. The way these media try to provide different forms of information will become clearer during this paperwork.

### **Online communication of new media**

There are several patterns of the interaction in modes of communication in social networks. According to Shehl Holtz there are four communication models:

-Network-driven communication: from few to many and from many to many

-Receiver-driven communications before the Internet

-Expandable communications (from device)

-Planning template: network-driven recipient-driven communications<sup>1</sup>

In the first communication, in group-to-group communication as an interactive model. The second model does not offer much interactivity except it pushes the information to the receiver. Whereas in the third model the information depends on the device or technology approaching the individual. The fourth model is the template model that according to the author does not fit the new ways of giving information but gives the classic model of information, that of propagating the information he wants, just like the model of television or newspapers.

In this line of communication we have a placement of information through the news media as the basic unit of information. This information undergoes under the democratization and a change of consumption from the ways of the classical media.

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<sup>1</sup> TARTARI, Alban, *Marrëdhëniet me Publikun*, botimet Toena, Tiranë, 2017, F. 263 in: Holtz, Shel 2002. *Public Relation on the Net: Winning strategies to inform and influence the media, the investment community, the government, the public, and more!* -2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Njy York: American Management Association AMMACOM. pp. 29-43

Santa Bentivenga has thus summarized the democratic potentials of the Internet, such as ‘interaction’, ‘partnership’, ‘brokering’, reduced costs, ‘speed’ and lack of boundaries.<sup>2</sup>

According to researchers Masey and Levy another characteristic of the information is the “immediacy of the news cast” is characteristic of online news.

“This dimension measures the frequency of breaking news. The higher the update frequency life, the higher is the level of instantaneous dimension.”<sup>3</sup>

In journalism reporting models, Bill Kovatch and Tom Rosenstiel view the online information model in ‘affirmative journalism’ as a partisan and as a partisan model, where commercialism often shifts to banal information<sup>4</sup>. According to them, “politically distinct” stakeholder websites do not have profit as their primary motive. One consequence of this is that the more commercial affirmation media often has a fun dimension, even a kind of extravagance or bounce in its presentations.”<sup>5</sup>

According to Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, the inclusion of some basic information in fulfilling media interaction with consumers should include:

“Economic needs, ethnic needs, political needs, recognition needs (related but distinct from ethnic and political needs), needs of faith, social and resting needs.”<sup>6</sup> These needs according to them are indispensable to be culturally fulfilled in the daily processes of obtaining information.

### **An overview of the information in the Albanian space**

The internet has had a growth curve in Albania, but also in Kosovo and Macedonia. A monitoring conducted in 2015 shows that the biggest interest is in the forms of political and entertainment information, or the sensational one that

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<sup>2</sup> COLUDRY, Nick, *Media, shoqëria, bota, Teori sociale dhe praktika e medias dixhitale*, ISHM, 2004, pp.154

<sup>3</sup> ZGURI, Rrapo, *Gazetaria Shqiptare në Internet*, Tiranë, Albas, 2016, pp. 69 28 *ibid* pp. 68: Massey, B. L., & Levy, M. R. Interactivity, online journalism and English-language web newspapers in Asia. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 76(1), f. 138-151, 1999

<sup>4</sup> KOVATCH, Bill, Rosenstiel Tom, *Si të njohësh të vërtetën në epokën e mbingarkesës së informacionit*, ISHM, Tiranë, pp. 134

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> COLUDRY, Ncik, *Media, shoqëria, bota, Teori sociale dhe praktika e medias dixhitale*, ISHM, 2004, pp. 225

reaches 45% of the audience that uses Facebook as an important social media network.<sup>7</sup>

“It results that most consumers are interested in the genre of opinion and columns more than factual genres”<sup>8</sup>. “Online media is usually filled with headlines that are intended to draw readers attention, making them to click and read articles, as a valuable tactic for both online media and their social media profiles.”<sup>9</sup>

Albania has a prosperous Internet access situation for information. How does it extend?

“While access to urban centers is close to 74%, in rural areas it reaches 48%. Population education seems to be another factor influencing internet access: 100% of postgraduate individuals have internet access, while only 33.87% of people with primary education have such access.”<sup>10</sup> A study done in 2014 provides an overview of how Albania looks at information use. “89% of Albanians said they watch television daily, compared to the 42% that use the internet and 25% the press.”<sup>11</sup>

In Kosovo according to the studies 3 months internet access was high, 93.2% for 2018<sup>12</sup>.

The overview of the use of information acquisition in Albania seems clearer with some other data, such as:

“67% of respondents aged 18-35 tend to use the internet as a source of information, compared to 30% using television, while the press and radio were 1.6% and 1.4% . However, the total time the population spends watching TV remains quite high: 37% watch one to two hours a day, 29% watch more than two hours, and 25% watch more than four hours, although the data over programs during this time are not available.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Mediat sociale dhe përdorimi i tyre nga mediat shqiptare*, ISHM, 2015, pp. 46-48

<sup>8</sup> *Teknologjia e lajmit, Zylyftar Bregu, botimet Pegi, Tiranë, 2017. pp. 80*

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizash\\_i\\_medias\\_online.pdf](http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizash_i_medias_online.pdf) pp. 22

<sup>10</sup> Departamenti i Gazetarisë, “Dixhitalizimi i televizionit tokësor: sfidat, paradokset, shpresat,” 2015

<sup>11</sup> Pejiszahi i Medias në Shqipëri, ISHM, pp. 13 në [http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizas-h\\_i\\_medias\\_online.pdf](http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizas-h_i_medias_online.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Shiko <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4544/tik-2018.pdf> pp. 4

<sup>13</sup> MEMA, Briseida. “Dilema për informacionin në erën dixhitale – rasti i Shqipërisë,” cituar në Instituti Shqiptar i Medias, “Media online në Shqipëri: legjislacioni, vetërregullimi, zhvillimi dhe prirjet kryesore.” 2016: Departamenti i Gazetarisë, “Dixhitalizimi i televizionit tokësor: sfidat, paradokset, shpresat,” 2015. Shiko në [http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizash\\_i\\_medias\\_online.pdf](http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizash_i_medias_online.pdf) pp. 14

The Media Literacy Index 2018 ranks Albania among the last countries in Europe in terms of readiness to face the fake news era, just ahead of Turkey and Macedonia, which rank last. At a time when online media is getting more and more accessible every day, it seems that even preparing the population to properly filter and critique these media is quite low.”<sup>14</sup>

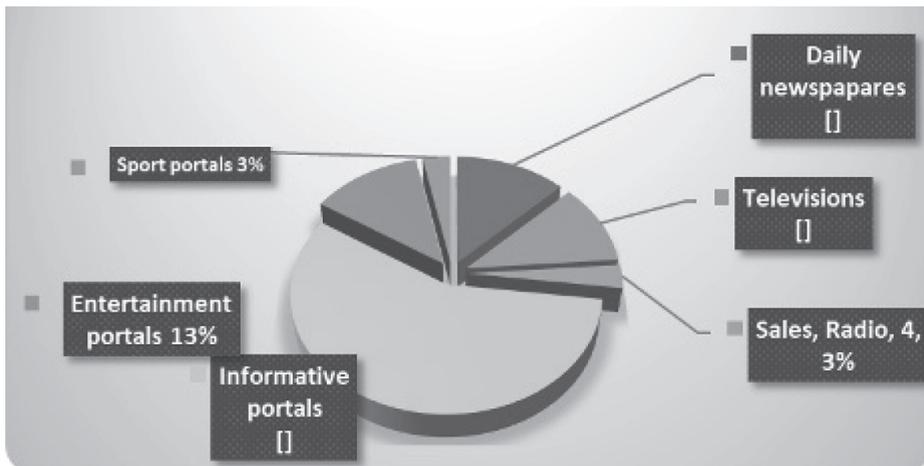
How does the media orientate in the online space, commentators or audiences according to the media, how does it relate to the media?

### Overview of information on fax.al portal

The overview of the online media activity on facebook page for August 2019 in the whole Albanian space seems to have some special specifications. The following are some of the specifics that characterize them.

#### 1. Media distribution on fax.al

The number of media monitored by the fax.al site is 126, where the highest number of 73% is that of news portals and the lowest number is that of radios of 3%, the coverage is shown in chart 1



Graph 1. Distribution of the media according to the type in Fax.al

<sup>14</sup> European Policies Initiative, “Common sense èanted: Resilience to ‘post-truth’ and its predictors in the neë Media Literacy Index 2018,” [http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2018/MediaLiteracyIndex2018\\_publishENG.pdf](http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2018/MediaLiteracyIndex2018_publishENG.pdf): shiko në [http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizash\\_i\\_medias\\_online.pdf](http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizash_i_medias_online.pdf) pp. 15

Table 1. *The distribution of the articles, photos and videos*

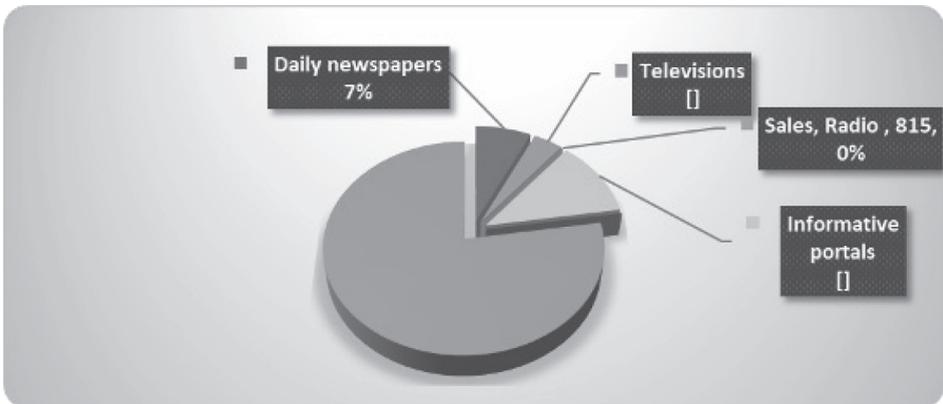
Media	News	Entertainment	Sport
Articles	166567	22615	22030
Percentage	79%	10%	11%

It results that the media is more inclined to transmit the news of different sexes with 79% where 21% occupy different entertainments and sports, whereas the videos are served with 67%. Videos are very important in daily information especially daily information through media report.

1. Distribution by media / unit ratio

a) Articles by media

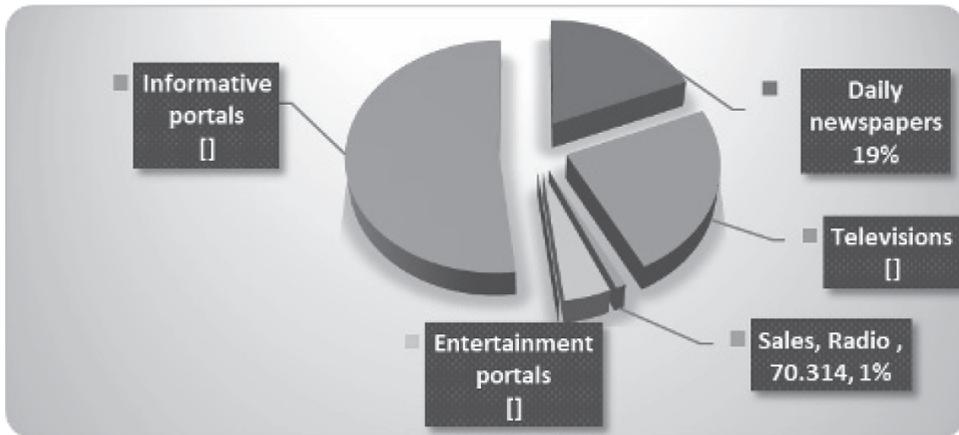
According to the table, most of the articles are distributed by the news media which occupies the largest information space, while the Radio category has the lowest number of 815 articles.



Graph 2: *Quantity of 'Distributions' according to the media*

b) Likes by media

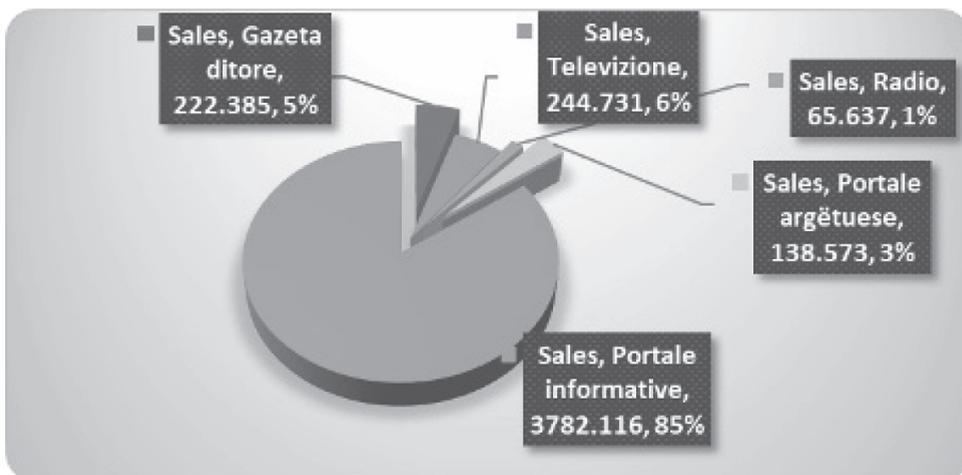
It results that the largest distribution of likes goes to the news media as the most important voice of the information space on Facebook. Radio has the lowest with 1% and the highest of the news portals with 52%, it shows the interest of the audience.



Graph 3: *Number of likes by media*

c) Distribution of articles by media

According to the media it is evident that news sites have 85% of all media space and Radio has the lowest with 1% and 85% of articles are of interest to information portals.



Graph 4: *Quantity of Shares by Media*

d) Comments of the audiences by media

Certainly more for the best reviews to give more info for more great info, but there is an audiences' eagerness for 5% for the radios

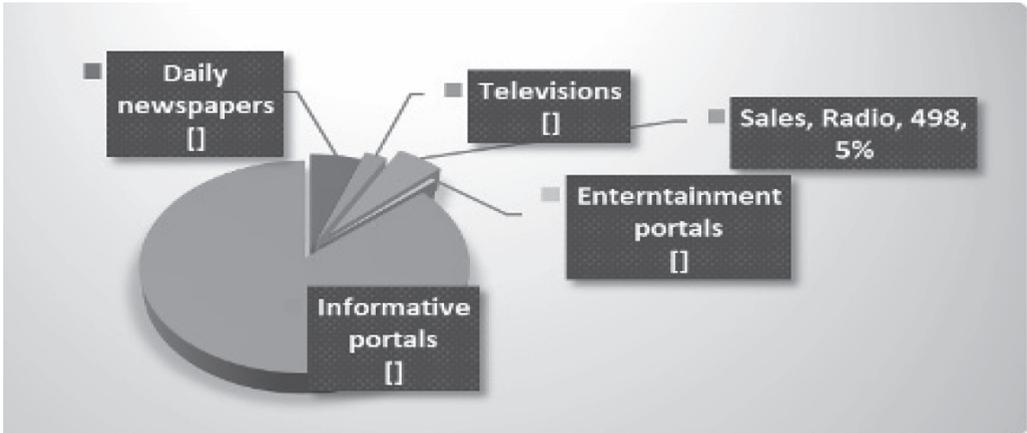


Chart 5: *Quantity of comments by media*

Most of the fan activity is in the news media and it is seen that the classic media integrated into the online platform occupies only 15% which should have been much more due to the fact that they are the most reliable media.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, we can see that in the Albanian space the news media are the most important and occupy 57%, entertainment occupies about 10% of all information but it is understood that the most important for different media audiences are the news that occupy 79% of the information. general interest. The interest in the visual and listening media is less than the fast and up-to-date information. Audiences respond more to the news media with 52% of likes on the facebook platform. Whereas in the space dedicated to radio on facebook platforms it is seen that there is an increase of 5% on radio commentary, while on television it is 3%, the largest amount certainly goes to the interest of the news media mainly consisting of portals such as information agencies, or classic media incorporated into information portals. In the online space, the classical media occupy a much smaller place than the new media. Audiences are comfortable with time and technique, the dynamics of new media are gaining a lot of momentum in the pursuit and tastes of audiences. Television has the biggest following, followed by entertainment information. It is important to say that audiences are gearing up for new information media, and they are following these media more, reducing interest in other classical tech media. This also confirms our hypothesis that

mass online audiences are gearing up for new forms of online communication with interest primarily information.

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- [http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizash\\_i\\_medias\\_online.pdf](http://www.osfa.al/sites/default/files/peizash_i_medias_online.pdf)
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# DATA-DRIVEN CONTENT IN INTEGRATED DIGITAL MEDIA

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*Abstract:* While media is struggling monetizing content and legislators lacking a fitting solution to maintain a credible information environment, technology is thriving and progressing faster than ever. Synthetic media is already realistic, and we effortlessly recreate virtually all that we do in the physical world through immersive experiences.

What is the success strategy to constant stream of engaging content that complies with the core principles of journalism? Can data scientists and content strategists preserve and guide new media towards its promising digital future? How AI influences new media content?

As opportunities for content creation and distribution become more creative, risks and possibilities cloud over our understanding of mass media credibility and undisputed authority.

The multi-disciplinary approach to new media technologies might resolve the recent issues related to fake news, content curation and distribution, as well as audience engagement. If data is fundamental to an adequate content strategy and new technology is the substance, then storytelling might provide news content with new and improved appearance.

In the following study, observing 6 major media outlets in the United States (CNBC, the AP, the WSJ, BuzzFeed, Bloomberg and WNYC), the connections between gaming, UX, neuroscience and journalism are being examined in order to foresee the endless possibilities to media professionals now and in the near future.

*Keywords:* data science, content strategy, storytelling, robo-journalism, AI, immersive media.

## **Data science and media analytics**

For the past century media content analysis has been a reliable research method for strategic insight, media evaluation and trend identification. The need for more diverse set of tools aroused with the technology development in the beginning of the new millennium, as information literacy became a foundational skill in a world increasingly dominated by data<sup>1</sup>. The shorter spans of audience

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<sup>1</sup> Building trust in human-centric AI. European Commission, (June 2018)<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/ai-alliance-consultation/guidelines#Top>

attention and the implementation of AI-powered technologies in journalism created new and exciting opportunities in the newsroom.

Data science and machine learning are already broadly implemented in various marketing and content creation efforts, now progressively in the media field. The personalized approach is already applied to media products in all developed countries around the world, but there is still room for improvement, especially in the smaller newsrooms, and in the developing parts of the globe. Moreover, the intelligent technology solutions that lead to immersive media experiences impact both sides of the communication chain and affect content creation, as well as its distribution and reception. The evolution of these accelerating processes results in a dynamic update of the media quintessence, transforming it from a communication medium to an immersive information environment, where the lines between the consumer and the contributor are smeared, if not completely dissolved. Data, AI and machine learning enhance audience targeting and segmentation, content personalization and user experience, but the use of computational tools needs to be smart, with a human-centric approach and without compromising ethical standards. All data usage must be transparent but secured with additional encryption and advanced protection programs. It is therefore understandable that the EU (through the High-Level Expert Group of the European Commission) is now committed to regulate the core of AI by setting guidelines to avoid erroneous outcomes and guarantee justice, fairness and accountability<sup>2</sup>.

The current specifics of the media landscape naturally initiate a great concern about the role of the journalist and the media as a whole. If data and technology can provide the tools for effective media management, then AI could take over the human role of writers, editors, photographers, operators, and reporters in the near future. Additionally, data scientists have mostly technical and quantitative skills, facing serious challenges in understanding the nature of media production, trading and circulation. Adjunct concerns are data privacy, content accuracy and complying with the high ethical standards that quality journalism depends on.

Scholars and researchers worldwide address these concerns with a balanced, multidisciplinary approach. They all agree that technology changes the mindset around content creation and improves the human effort without claiming to be its alternative. In the latest Machines + Media Conference in New York, hosted by Bloomberg, data scientists, journalists, analysts and engineers were

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

discussing the new media trends, powered by AI and machine learning. Global newsrooms are now focusing on intelligent content, offering personalization and recommendation based on preferences. News stories can be automatically generated, but people are integrated in the process of content curation and verification to guarantee media integrity. Ultimately, technology is there to support the work of the journalist, enhance user experience and augment the production process to address the variety of platforms, available to the audience<sup>3</sup>.

Regardless of all solicitudes, technology is advancing the future of journalism and is steadily reforming media consumption. The Google News Initiative is the latest effort “to help journalism thrive in the digital age”<sup>4</sup>. Implementing data science into a profitable business strategy for engaging media content is the key to the success of the new media identification. Big data should be translated into useful knowledge that creates impact and gives insight to all communication stakeholders. Therefore, visual and data storytelling, as well as data journalism are observed as an increasing trend. Narrative science transforms data into stories, the computer-generated video production (synthetic video<sup>5</sup>) is replacing the camera, journalism is experimenting with the multimodal approach, scientists are exploring the humanistic and emotional side of AI, and all these efforts are put towards a better communication environment.

### **Multimodal digital journalism**

The proliferation of artificial intelligence tools in the newsroom is intensifying the journalistic process with faster data systematization, automated writing, effective audience engagement and comprehensible workflow organization, but it still generates confusion and speculations about the equitable balance between humans and machines. The answer to these apprehensions lies in the collaboration and the multiple testing of the new technology smart solutions to achieve a credible and ubiquitous longform multimodal digital journalism. The large American newsrooms are already pertaining to this approach and applying storytelling, gamification and visuality to achieve functional user experience, and interactivity to reach an immersive information environment.

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<sup>3</sup> ABOUT MACHINES + MEDIA, NYC Media Lab, (2019). <https://nycmedialab.org/machines-media-2019>

<sup>4</sup> Building a stronger future for journalism, Google News Initiative. (2018). <https://newsinitiative.withgoogle.com/>

<sup>5</sup> Express Your Ideas In High Quality Video, Hour One. (2019). <https://www.hourone.ai/>

The following study comprises of 6 diverse U.S. media enterprises - a global news and entertainment television network (CNBC), a public radio (WNYC), a news cooperative (AP), a daily newspaper (WSJ), a media group (Bloomberg) and the Internet media BuzzFeed. The selection is based on site visits and media type variety, but these media organizations were also picked for their creative effort in producing objective multimodal digital content, both on international and local level. The Associated Press and the Wall Street Journal are known as the epitome of journalistic integrity and a credible news source not only for the global audience, but also for local media outlets, such as the New York Public Radio. CNBC offers a vast variety of digital products, including apps, tools, resources and desktop/mobile services. BuzzFeed is a viral digital news media outlet with a creative approach to audience engagement. Bloomberg media is a premium provider for print, radio, TV and digital content, software solutions, data and business analysis. While these news sources are very different in terms of business model, format, distribution and continuance (the AP is 173 years old, while BuzzFeed is only 13), they apply common strategies in news production that keep them current, trustworthy and in-demand to the neoteric public. All these media outlets incorporate cross-format storytelling, multiformat content solutions, data journalism, AI, and machine learning, while maintaining highest ethical standards and producing engaging news stories with a manifold perspective.

### **Diversity of Skillset**

The Associated Press, the Wall Street Journal and New York Public Radio were named some of the least biased news outlets in a Gallup survey last year (2018)<sup>6</sup>. These results are still valid in 2019<sup>7</sup> because of their influence, adjustability and smart adoption of new technology. BuzzFeed is synonymous with media innovation for its experimental approach to content strategy and brand affiliation, engaging the audience with more than compelling stories – they rely on interactions, contributors and other artifice, such as branded merchandize.

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<sup>6</sup> RELMAN, Eliza and Ralph, Pat. “These are the most and least biased news outlets in the US, according to Americans” in *Business Insider*. (Sept 2, 2018). <https://www.businessinsider.com/most-biased-news-outlets-in-america-cnn-fox-nytimes-2018-8>

<sup>7</sup> DUBE, Ryan. “Top 5 Unbiased World News Sources Free From Censorship” in *MUO*. (Jan 28, 2019). <https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/top-5-world-news-websites-guaranteed-free-censorship/>

Attaining such impressive result involves content, editorial and digital strategists, graphic designers, data scientists, web analysts, researchers, developers, information officers, IT, communication and marketing experts, in addition to the familiar reporters, producers, editors, photographers, and videographers<sup>8</sup>. It might be possible for a large newsroom to provide opportunities for all these professionals in-house, but it is harder, narrower and more expensive than outsourcing services. Therefore, even these media giants rely on elaborate partnerships and apply the startup mentality in their newsrooms. The AP, for example, uses cross-functional collaboration for its software solutions and research to apply the scientific method to news; BuzzFeed partners with social media platforms, department stores and on-demand services (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Macy's and Netflix), while the Wall Street Journal joins forces with Apple, Bloomberg and CNBC. The management team of the television has settled for the talent pipeline approach to improve workforce skillset. Journalists are working on a 4-month rotation through the different departments to prevail over the skills gap. In addition, the WSJ has launched the Idea Portal, represented mainly by engineers and product designers to engage the newsroom staff with innovation. WNYC uses third party vendors that provide services for their digital platforms<sup>9</sup>. Bloomberg is a multi-platform brand with probably the largest and most diverse team of all examined media organizations in this study. With over 5000 employees, diversity, talent and idea exchange are core company values.

Furthermore, each media outlet is brainstorming on future strategic decisions and news innovations with academia, PR agencies, advertising, tech and startup companies, nonprofit news organizations, independent research labs and retailers. This adamant range of skillset indemnifies a myriad of revenue streams, department consolidations, news gamification for innovative user interaction (BuzzFeed quizzes) and more accurate news content, which paves the way to an omnipresent media environment, creating compulsive brands.

### **Personal Mass Communication**

In the third decade of media transformation, media is data. Data is personalizing media consumption and transforms the way content reaches its intended

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<sup>8</sup> MOLLA, Rani. "Chart: How the definition of "journalist" is changing" in *VOX*. (Feb 25, 2019). <https://www.vox.com/2019/2/25/18224696/chart-transition-journalism-public-relations-content-social-media-jobs>

<sup>9</sup> "NYPR and Third Party Services" in *WNYC*. (2019).<https://www.wnyc.org/privacy-third-parties/>

audience. Consequently, one of the biggest trends of 2018 was data analytics. In addition to data collection, preparation, preservation and visualization, media is communicating data through storytelling, while at the same time trading it for predictive analysis, enterprise reporting and business optimization. A perfect example of such profitable media-generated data monetization is the Bloomberg terminal. The fully integrated software solution provides a subscription data service for access and analysis to media and news agencies, financial companies and government organizations, according to their specific needs. The data is aggregated, analyzed and distributed in real time through Bloomberg's Enterprise Access Point, powered by its Hypermedia API that can be integrated to the client's environment with custom desktop applications, market alerts and analyst-driven research tools. Launched more than 35 years ago (in 1981), it provides premium access to breaking news, messaging and financial data from desktop and mobile devices with exceptional customer service.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, not only the newsfeed at Bloomberg news is customizable, but media distribution at the company is tailored to meet the information needs of global audiences with their corresponding interests<sup>11</sup>.

Currently, the main purpose of data analysis, however, is audience engagement through quality content, curated strategically and displayed properly to the online media users. Deploying structured data for human narratives is a basic principle at the WSJ and curated content, based on audience preferences is key to data journalism at the Associated Press. The custom native ad articles are a common practice at BuzzFeed, where journalists rely on data monitoring for audience response patterns. The WNYC daily newsletter is famous for its user-centric approach – a successful effort in community building through distinctive personal attitude, motivating conversation and social media sharing with user-friendly design<sup>12</sup>.

User adaptability determines the strategic decisions at CNBC. In 2017, the media redesigned their mobile app to fit the needs of their viewers, who were migrating towards mobile devices and video content. In addition to improved func-

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<sup>10</sup> Bloomberg Professional Services. (2019). <https://www.bloomberg.com/professional/solution/bloomberg-terminal/>

<sup>11</sup> Bloomberg Media Distribution. (2019). <https://www.bloomberg.com/distribution/products/news/>

<sup>12</sup> LEONARDI, Lauren. "The Email Newsletter I Always Open" in *Blaze*. (Sept 16, 2016). <https://www.braze.com/blog/best-email-newsletter-wnyc/>

tionality and resolution, a video playlist was added to the updated application with the option to add video content and build customized streaming on-demand.

Subscription strategies and annual content licensing are central to audience understanding for all of the above discussed media organizations. A lot of the creative efforts at these successful media enterprises are supported by user feedback at live events. The Wall Street Journal organizes The Future Of<sup>13</sup>: - discussion and networking events with leading business and academia executives, held often on a monthly basis; the Associated Press supports the NewsTrain workshops for shared knowledge among journalists and communication professionals across the United States since 2003<sup>14</sup>; CNBC offers live experiences such as ALPHA (annual investment event), EVOLVE, NET/NET, CAPITAL EXCHANGE (converging business and politics) and the @WORK franchise.<sup>15</sup> The New York Public Radio connects with its audience live through signature New York partner events, such as The Moth (live storytelling performances), Shakespeare in the Park, Tribeca Film Festival, etc. The numerous Bloomberg Live events discuss business, finance, media and technology across continents – they take place in Europe, Asia and the Americas<sup>16</sup>. BuzzFeed just hosted their first live event – Internet Live – in July, but it was evaluated as an unsuccessful experiment to bring Internet to the physical world<sup>17</sup>. However, the first attempt is likely to lead to more experiential efforts for diversified revenue streams and increased audience engagement for the digital-native publisher.

## Robo Journalism

AI and machine learning play an important role in the future of computational journalism. Data scientists help editorial strategists to optimize content algorithms and storytelling formats, maximizing media scale, and impact. The Research and Development teams at the WSJ, the AP and Bloomberg are already expanding to experiment with the tremendous possibilities of automated content

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<sup>13</sup> “Leaders Shaping the Future” in *The Future Of*. (Oct 6, 2019). <https://futureof.wsj.com/>

<sup>14</sup> “About News Train” in *APME*. (2019). <https://www.apme.com/page/AboutNewsTrain>

<sup>15</sup> Events. CNBC. (2019). <https://www.cnbc.com/events/>

<sup>16</sup> “Exchange Ideas, Share Expertise” in *Bloomberg Live*. (2019). <https://www.bloomberglive.com/>

<sup>17</sup> MILLER, Caire. “I went to BuzzFeed’s first-ever live event. Here were the highs—and many, many lows” in *Fast Company*. (July 27, 2019). <https://www.fastcompany.com/90381724/i-went-to-buzzfeeds-first-ever-live-event-here-were-the-highs-and-many-many-lows>

and immersive journalism with the implementation of next level data analytics. Bloomberg's automated content tool Cyborg produces news stories by analyzing financial reports; financial news coverage is also automated at the AP. This allows journalists to work on more complex news stories that require creativity and critical thinking.

Analyzing user data helps not only in relevant content offering, but also in determining the most profitable revenue streams. AI helps detect deep fakes, aids automated production and dissemination of news content, increases audience interaction with effective newsbot communication, and enhances investigative journalism while improving the overall news efficiency. The increasing role of algorithms for scraping and crowdsourcing data to generate reliable and impactful stories presents a number of ethical challenges in the newsroom, related to the objectivity of human influence and the algorithmic accountability.

### **Ethical Safeguards**

In his new book, "Automating The News", Nick Daikopoulos introduces the idea of hybridization and states that "human values are embedded throughout algorithms, automation and AI". He warns that "if the journalistic values and ideology don't translate into the automated intelligent software solutions and to the code that they implement into these systems, then alternative values from noneditorial stakeholders would fill that void". This turns journalists into AI designers, while AI augments the journalistic efforts and simultaneously creates new roles in the newsroom. AI plays an important role in shaping audience attention - orienting or diverting it, according to the information that it analyzes and that poses a threat to news credibility.

Comment moderation, fact checking, misinterpretations, spam tracing and content management systems (CMS) are useful, but they can be erroneous, so journalists can't rely solely on technology tools if they want to avoid undesirable outcomes. The data used to train the system needs to be accurate and objective to prevent biased content.

There are at least three core principles to follow in the new media production, in order to preserve quality journalism:

- Transparency in the process of newsworthy content determination;
- Human control over the systems;
- Human-centered approach to algorithmic media.

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## MEDIA LITERACY STUDY-GUIDE

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*Abstract:* The proposed study-guide discusses the systematic efforts of Sofia University to boost the development of media literacy in Bulgaria. It presents an ambitious initiative, undertaken by three faculties of Sofia University, which jointly prepared a training program in the field. The program, resulting from a project-based cooperation, called European Media Coach Initiative, is based on the Dutch experience in the field, and is aimed at boosting media literacy level in the country, and at guaranteeing its future sustainability.

*Keywords:* media literacy, education, training, qualification program, sustainability

On 3rd of May, 2018 the European Parliament voted a Resolution related to pluralism of opinion and media freedom in Europe stressing the fact that “in today’s context media literacy is a key democratic competence which empowers citizens to critically assess, create and use media content”. The Resolution asks the European Commission and all member-states to come up with concrete measures boosting media literacy development and making it an indispensable part of their educational policies. Trying to comply with the Resolution and fully aware of the fact that Bulgaria is among the least developed EU countries in the field of media literacy, the University of Sofia St. Kl. Ohridski pays strong efforts to improve the situation in this area. Over the last few years the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts (FESA) offers BA, MA and PhD programs on Media Pedagogy and Artistic Communication with a strong focus on media literacy, the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication (FJMC) has included few subjects related to that area; the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology (FCMP) runs courses focused on the ways media and digital technologies can be used for teaching and learning purposes.

Since the end of 2017 these three faculties have joined an international project entitled European Media Coach Initiative, and consequently effectively cooperate in regard to media literacy development, together with six other organizations from Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal and Romania. Subsequent to this project participation FESA launched a post-graduate

program on Media Literacy, aimed at students, teachers, journalists and other professionals, all interested in media coaching. The program allows the participants to deepen their knowledge on the media, and on digital-media technologies, as well as to transform this knowledge into practical skills, which allow their tailor-made usage in various working environments.

As a result of the above-mentioned cooperation media literacy training got also included in some of the under-graduate and post-graduate programs, taught at Sofia University: Media Pedagogy and Artistic Communication, BA and MA; Preschool and Primary School Education, MA; Intercultural Education and Intercultural Communication, MA (FESA); Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching, MA, and Language, Communication and Media, MA (FCNP); Media Management, BA (FJMC). The program curricula and syllabi are prepared by Sofia University professors, experienced in the field of the media, digital technologies, and educational studies, and are fully in accordance with the national educational standards, as well as in compliance with the practice of the European Media Coach Initiative. The students who successfully graduate from those programs are eligible to receive three credits in accordance with the Bulgarian national educational framework, as well as get certificated which allows them to practice media literacy training in all Bulgarian institutions for high education, or in other organizations that require in-depth competences in the digital-media field.

Along with that a new post-graduate program on Media Literacy has been launched, which involves the capacity of the three faculties mentioned above. The program, conducted by Sofia University professors comprises 60 hours and includes 28 hours for self-training (offline, online and interactive) by using different files, as well as 32 hours for face-to face training. It can also be offered upon request to other organizations, and curriculum and syllabus could be adapted according to the needs of the respective target groups. After successful completion of the training program, subsequent to a successfully passed final exam all participants receive a Certificate for Media Literacy Competence and Media Coaching, issued by Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski”. Holders of such certificate receive also two credits in accordance with the Bulgarian educational framework requirements.

The overall dynamics of media and media technology development brings about constant changes in the very contexts media literacy is used. This calls for constant needs for updating of the program, and hence, its designers offer opportunities for refreshment of knowledge, skills and competences already acquired. This is made possible through participation in an Up-Grade Course offered at

Sofia University at the start of each winter and summer term. The course is face-to-face, with a duration of eight academic hours, and a short course assignment, which preparation takes up to additional eight hours. The course gives participants one credit and a renewed certificate for media coaching, valid for another three years.

Students in the post-graduate program on Media Literacy need average seven hours per week for reading of learning materials and for preparation of their current assignments. Each topic is handled in a work package, called dossier, and is prepared in advance. Participants work with the dossiers by reading, writing, doing hands-on activities, online, offline and in class, during the face-to-face sessions. They also use the so called method “flipped classroom” focused on individual work at home which allows the smooth transfer of theoretical knowledge acquired online prior to face to face sessions. Then, during the face-to-face sessions they can more effectively carry out the practical tasks and concentrate mainly on issues which they find more difficult to do alone by themselves. The method encourages motivation and allows for a better acquisition of knowledge, skills and positive attitudes related to the respective topics of the program curriculum. During the program participants work actively on the preparation of their own plan for usage of digital media literacy tools in their own working practices. This plan allows them to start the direct application of the acquired digital media competences and media coaching skills right after the successful completion of the program.

Upon successful completion of the program each participant (Media-Coach) is equipped with a large spectrum of competences, based on knowledge, skills and better vision and positive attitudes vis-à-vis application of digital media. During the course the focus is on transferring the competences acquired into measurable pedagogic and didactic skills, which allows each participant to see the benefits of the training in his/her own working environment. The graduates from the program may themselves become examples not only for proper usage of digital media tools but also for fair and objective assessment of others’ digital media competences.

**1. Knowledge:** Participants to the program who complete it successfully acquire in-depth due knowledge about media, digital media platforms and tools and would be able to use them for upward development as project experience, based on leading practice in the field has shown. Trainees will know a lot about key media topics that get often public attention, moreover they could use creatively this knowledge in their own professional field. At the end of the program

participants will be quite familiar with the very essence and aims of media literacy, i.e. they will:

- Understand the dynamics of the relations between media, media technology, communication and education

- Understand the essence and goals of planning in education

- Comprehend the essence and structure of the news and the technology of their production

- Understand the characteristics of the main social networks and digital platforms

- See the advantages and disadvantages of working in a digital environment

- Understand the technology of media content production

- Assess critically the media from the view point of quality and content

**2. Skills:** Participants to the program will get important skills that allow them to more effectively integrate themselves in their own working environment. The course content has a strong focus on formation and development of pedagogical and didactical skills that helps the impartial assessment of utilization, and practical application of learning materials and activities. Due attention is paid on working with digital platforms and tools which facilitates their everyday usage not only for the purposes of the current program but also for specialized personal needs, participation in projects etc. At the end of the course participants will be able to:

- 2.1. Work focused and analytically

- 2.2. Formulate learning goals and achieve objectives

- 2.3. Communicate effectively with different target groups

- 2.4. Prepare focused and catchy didactic presentations

- 2.5. Use digital media tools and platforms for personal and professional usage

- 2.6. Work safely with digital media tools and technologies

**3. Attitudes:** The post graduate program on media literacy pays strong attention to the development of positive attitudes, own vision and overall mentality related to digital media usage. The designers of the program consider the ability to forecast future developments in the digital media field as crucial for participants' future personal and professional advance. Acquisition of such vision helps the smooth transition from academic to field work, as well as helps bridging the gap between academia and industry. At the end of the program course participants will possess clear and positive attitudes about:

3.1. The essence and dynamics of development and application of digital media content, tools and environment

3.2. Using digital media content, tools and environment for training, educational and personal needs

3.3. The inter-relations between media, technology and education

3.4. The need of constant self-development which requires updating and refreshing of knowledge, skills and competences related to digital media

3.5. The necessity to understand digital media content, tools and environment

In regard to its content, the post-graduate program on Media Literacy requires the observation of the following principles:

1. The course content has to be presented in positive and constructive manner. Content should not focus mainly on the risks and dangers of digital media technologies but rather stress actively on their advantages, and on the opportunities their usage would offer.

2. The leading point is not that much on preventing digital media users from possible dangerous effects but mainly on raising their awareness about the essence of digital media, and the opportunities and challenges related to digital media application..

The program curriculum comprises seven dossiers which are worked with by all participants in the course. Working with these dossiers helps the easier acquisition of knowledge, formation of skills, and appropriate positive attitudes. Participants handle the dossiers independently, or in face-to-face fashion, individually or in groups, reading, writing, analyzing, or doing hands-on-exercises. A proper balance between theory and practice, offline and online work has been sought for. Participants have access to learning materials in print and/online version using either mail or Moodle. Thus, they can work alone or in groups both online and offline with the various parts of the curriculum. The topics, included in the dossiers, are the following:

Media, education and communication. Media pedagogy and media literacy.

Learning domains, learning acquisition and transfer - experiential learning cycle and teaching cycle.

Media and Journalism: News and fake news. Media standards and media ethics.

Teaching media literacy. Key questions and problems to address.

Digital platforms, social networks and how students can use them in everyday life and for professional improvement

Online privacy and how to guarantee “we are on the safe side”;

Online bullying and coping with it. Identification and prevention.

The topics given above are being worked with during a period of 15 weeks at seven face-to-face sessions and independently (online, offline). The eighth face-to-face session is for the exam. The face-to-face sessions last for eight academic hours, scheduled from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Each session (exam excepted) consists of two modules, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, separated by a one-hour break. All modules start with a discussion related to the forthcoming and/or past assignment, and include presentations and practical work. During the whole course participants work independently seven hours a week average, which allows them to better acquire the learning material. During the exam (lasting again 8 academic hours) participants present their individual plan-program for application of digital media tools in their own practice and according to their own needs, and offer feedback to their colleagues when the latter do their presentations.

The program philosophy considers media literacy as a set of competences developed on four levels, each part of the training curriculum. Those levels are the following:

a) Media awareness: knowledge related to the different types of media and their classification (traditional and online, commercial and public), the opportunities and challenges consumers face when using them, especially in regards to the very philosophy and didactics of media application for education, training and individual and professional development;

b) Media understanding: knowledge and skills needed for the critical analysis of the media tools and content;

c) Media attitude: the appropriate attitudes related to the media, digital technologies and the opportunities they offer;

d) Media behavior: critical media usage and application for the needs of upward personal and professional development.

The post graduate program on Media Literacy is in its last phase of approbation and will be launched at the start of the academic year 2019-2020.

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# DIGITAL TELEVISION – THE NEAR ERA OF BUNDLED STREAMERS

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*Abstract:* Global television corporations approach ongoing transformation from traditional broadcasters into leading global digital entertainers and it is a natural evolution as consumer behaviors change. Demand for content is what drives consumption on all platforms – linear and OTT alike. Online video consumption rises every year and is soon set to be 50% mobile, as well as 50% on-demand. The key battle between leading global digital entertainers and streaming dominators, as usual, will be well-observed on US market.

On a global scale for an industry worth, first there was Netflix, then we had Amazon Prime Video, later appeared Hulu and over the coming few months several big new streaming services will drop from Apple, Disney, NBC Universal and Warner Media. Despite its obvious leadership in terms of original content production, Netflix is already feeling the pressure from the upcoming new players.

Streaming services will have achieved its unstated goal of becoming a “replacement” for traditional, cable and satellite television. It is a matter of precise prediction, based on price policy and business establishment, how serious consumers will get about bundling. In dynamic digital societies bundling has already started as consumers will not want to subscribe to dozens of “Video on Demand” services separately. Digital streaming platforms will seek to bundle and sell a package of internet-delivered content.

Media convergence also reveals potential for bundling streaming services and gains a deeper and broader understanding of what makes audiences tick.

*Keywords:* traditional broadcasters, streaming services, OTT (Over the Top) Services, SVOD (Video on Demand services), bundled streaming

This paper aims to follow and analyze several mature trends on global media market that in particular influence future development of audiovisual production, media environment and a paradigm-shifting thesis what is television nowadays as an evolving notion. Streaming services will further strengthen marketplace positions in competitive interaction with traditional, cable and satellite television. Across international markets it is observed an unprecedented number

of content creation sources, distribution platforms, and consumption channels, and as a result, more video viewing time in total. Over the past three years “Over the top” services (OTT), known for the new streaming services, have initiated rapid acceleration. 2019 OTT will continue to flourish as it has demonstrated an impressive growth and expecting new offerings from technological giants. While “Video on Demand” Services (SVOD) channels and OTT platforms were seen as the enemy to international cable and satellite providers just a year ago, there has been a new-found friendship between them now. For both mention sides – traditional television and streaming dominators, bundle service technology approach is intended to be matured into a profitable and sustainable business partnership that allowed viewers broaden audiovisual experience.

### **Methodology Framework:**

Reviewing and compiling variety of academic publications, theoretical theses and existing industry research reports and studies on media and viewership measurements.

Here are some emerging trends on Global Media Environment that empower new challenges and supposed to be discussed within academic community: challenges across traditional TV – still dominates, but changing; video consumption – digital video-especially mobile video is fastest-growing video type by consumption; emergence of new technologies due to digital video platforms; audience fragmentation; cross-platform measurement; key trend – convergence between audiovisual and telecommunications industries.

Global media industry is facing now new challenges amid the ongoing market consolidation and the upcoming domination of the streaming players. It seems like rationale and deep process of change in many aspects - television corporations and especially those operating within corporate structure of telecommunication giants approach ongoing transformation from traditional broadcasters into leading global digital entertainment providers and gearing up as big media empires, independent content creators and distributors need production possibilities, because the new players like the streamers( leading streaming services companies) buy productions and full shows and are not interested in formats research and development. This era of abundance of digital genres choices has happened as a result of consumers’ behaviors change – new consumer generations immerse in so-called multi-tasking experience – watching the content often in combination with other entertainment.

Rapid proliferation of content is based on best storytelling - global addressed themes that resonate with audiences or country specific and carefully curated local creation of engaging and valuable content. Coincidentally or not, subscribers of streaming services frankly declared that the movie library is the most attractive aspect of free or paid provided original content. In collaboration with the Harris Poll, Open X survey conducted American nationwide study at consumer behavior around OTT video. The study highlights how OTT has moved from a niche category into the main way consumers of nearly all ages interact with video content today. To clarify original content consumption in details at one of the most dynamic and competitive markets around the world, the similar behavior model we can see as a reflection to digital European societies- American average OTT user prefers at least three different OTT services, streams across three devices and for more than two hours of content every day. Average OTT consumers use basically their mobile devices<sup>1</sup>. On this complemented media market with the effect of digital and streaming dominant actions, on one side, there will still be the audience that switches the television on to see the programming that somebody else chooses for them, and on the other side of the argument, consumer would like to get on demand with streaming and, as a whole, fierce competition among more and more platforms in which television will always have a place and logically the content will win.

In correlated tendencies of new media production and consumption one very important and necessary allegation for predicted content change deserves academic consideration. Traditional television transformation into various digital audiovisual services does not change the significance of journalism and information and does not mean prevalence of entertainment more than social scrutiny for news values and current affairs programs. In the relevant array of original programming, three key pillars immerse and become crucial in competition for segmented audiences' attention – information journalism or so called news content, original sport events and entertainment. These three distinguished facets of content production encompass unprecedented levels of audiences ratings and audience involvement. In other words, television ratings still stand for and guarantee public values like democracy, media freedom, commercial pluralism and pluralistic audience measurement researches, relevant to the television industry, maintain the success in the long term.

The basic statement of the following exposure concerns new notion for current television transformation in terms of rapidly evolving video ecosys-

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<sup>1</sup> Consumer Report OTT Report 2019, accessed September 17, 2019. <https://www.openx.com/resources/thought-leadership/2019-consumer-ott-report/>

tem and mobile video as primary driver of digital video. IAB Video Landscape Report 2018<sup>2</sup> illustrated myriad perspectives of the eluding term “video” to be prompt coined in dynamic nature of media: in a process of constant change, the video has a state: What does video mean? What will it become? How is video used to reach, engage and drive attention and action? Looking across the video platforms and channels – traditional and new – in this rapidly evolving video ecosystem, as consumers are spending more and more time on their mobile phones, the more likely to see a big focus on live streaming video that is going to be the expanding mainstream.

### The Term “Video”-IAB

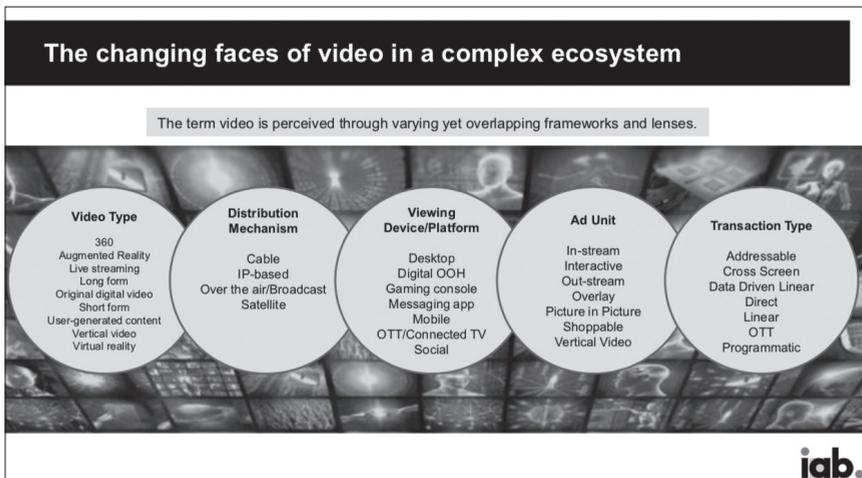


Fig. 1

Changing market realities, as aforementioned key point, would conceive and assemble certain provision for the impact of audiovisual media services. Updated legal framework of Audiovisual Media Services Directive have achieved inflammatory use of a “provider of video-sharing platform services”. This should be theoretically implied term used in academically issued discussions, but in the sphere of professional media practice it is often uttered as consistent with the indicated digital platform, streaming services, entertainment platforms, provider of platform services, distribution platforms.

<sup>2</sup> IAB Video Landscape Report 2018, Dec. 2018, 5th Edition. Accessed on May, 17, 2019. <https://www.iab.com/insights/videolandscap/>

Since the last substantive amendment of Audiovisual Media Services Directive, media services market has evolved significantly and rapidly due to the ongoing convergence of television and internet services. Younger generations have changed viewing habits. The Directive consider media realities in some relations: main TV screen remains and important device for sharing audiovisual experiences, but many viewers have moved to other, portable devices to watch audiovisual content<sup>3</sup>. While traditional TV content still prevails in daily viewing time, new players like providers of video-on-demand services and video-sharing platforms have gained an increasing importance of new types of content such as video clips or user-generated content. One step forward in regulation is 35 Article in the Directive that impose providers of on-demand audiovisual media services to promote the production and distribution of European works by ensuring their catalogues contain minimum share of European works and that they are given sufficient prominence. Prominence involves promoting European works through facilitating access to such works.

The Year Book 2017/2018 of European Audiovisual Observatory laid out “the media convergence” theoretical term to market reality with the exact explanation of different kinds of partnerships between companies, entered in the competition for content creativity – “so-called convergence between audiovisual and telecommunications industries” Convergence reflects two globally remarkable deals – takeover of NBC Universal by cable company Comcast and proposed acquisition of media conglomerate Time Warner by US Telco giant AT&T. For some networks, international deals like these not only provide an opportunity to spread programming across a more global portfolio and to use some international markets to test new OTT offerings. We also indicate the rumored mega deals of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox and Disney, Sky and Comcast, and Liberty Global and ITV. Another similar examples in cluttered marketplaces could also be pointed out as convergence deals – in 2014 Viacom bought the UK’s Channel 5, Discovery’s purchase of Eurosport and CBS Corp’s recent acquisition of Network Ten in Australia.

As Henry Jenkins stated in his notable book the essence of his concept of media environment is a complementary reflection of the idea of convergence as a result of content flow across multimedia platforms, the interaction between multimedia industries and migrating behavior of audiences that have technological capability to look for the appropriate media experience. As an evolving notion,

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<sup>3</sup> Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and the Council, Official Journal of the European Union, Nov.14, 2018 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018L1808&from=EN>

convergence is shaping a new culture that unfolds as a process between the top corporate actions of conglomerates and consumer choices and decisions about where, what and when to look through accessible media platforms <sup>4</sup> In a deeper understanding, media convergence processes shape, interrelate and breach norms of consumers' behavior:

*" Media convergence is more than simply a technological shift. Convergence alters the relationship between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences. Convergence refers to a process, but not an endpoint. Thanks to the proliferation of channels and the portability of new computing and telecommunications technologies, we are entering an era where media will be everywhere and we will use all kinds of media in relation to each other (Henry Jenkins, 2004) ".<sup>5</sup>*

The European Green Paper on Convergence implicit admission of three possible levels of integration and interaction between technologies and network platforms, alliances and mergers in the industry, as well as markets and services<sup>6</sup>. The cited document is based on the promise that convergence is a change and powerful motor for job creation, growth, increased consumer choice and cultural diversity. To the extent to which media convergence will transform markets, to that technological level all distinctions between audiovisual services will blur increasingly. People are consuming more media than ever, but how they engage with content continues to evolve. Consumption has become more fragmented across devices, platforms and content services. For broadcasters, the inconvenient truth is that while linear TV viewership remains large, the changing behaviors can be worrisome, especially among young digital natives.

One of the first studies that came out about the growth of OTT is The Diffusion Group Research, carried out in December, 2017. The results of this study were widely reported and dominated the news in the television industry trades. Accordingly, on a global scale, SNL Kagan reports show that over 1,200 OTT services are now in operation worldwide, up from 978 reported in 2016<sup>7</sup>. Parrot Analytics has carried out audience measurement in ten profiled territories and announced detailed results in "The Global Television Demand Report 2018".

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<sup>4</sup> Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old Media and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Henry Jenkins, "The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence", *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, (2004), Volume 7(1): 33-43, Available from: <http://eng1131adaptations.pbworks.com/f/Jenkins,+Henry++-+The+Cultural+Logic+of+Media+Convergence.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Green Paper on the Convergence of the Telecommunications, Media and Information Technology Sectors and the Implications for Regulation – European Commissions, Brussels, 03.12.1997, p.17.

<sup>7</sup> SNL Kagan's OTT Services and Devices by Service Name, 2017

This report demonstrates that platform content investments are certainly leading to growth: in 2018 SVOD platforms have released a combined 300+ new digital originals, over 130 of these premiered on Netflix alone. Having committed USD 12 billion in 2018 alone, Netflix now commands 71% of the global SVOD market with its digital originals. And Digital TV Research<sup>4</sup> estimates global OTT revenues will hit the \$65 billion mark by 2021<sup>8</sup>. Genres that attracts the most demand is drama and action/adventure digital originals. As a whole, OTT market share trend analysis reveals that the launch of new services have started to impact the platform demand share of the existing players. 2019 will once again be a year of change with new offerings from Apple and Disney delighting consumers with more entertainment choices than ever.

Bundled TV service is a new technological advance that makes OTT's formidable growth path. On March 01, 2018 Sky and Netflix announced a new partnership to bundle the full Netflix service into a brand new Sky TV subscription pack. This pioneering partnership is the first of its kind and expected to give millions of Sky customers seamless access to Netflix through the Sky Q platform<sup>9</sup>. Sky will make available the extensive Netflix service to new and existing customers by creating a brand-new and attractively priced entertainment TV pack, combining Sky and Netflix content side-by-side for the first time. Netflix's service includes over a thousand hours of Ultra HD content, complementing Sky Q's extensive UHD programming. With the Netflix app integrated into Sky Q, and Netflix programs promoted alongside Sky content, customers should have technological opportunity to reach most popular entertainment all over the world delivered, as well as free-to-air TV, and over the Sky platform. Concerning pricing policy, it is estimated that customers will be issued with one monthly bill for the combination of both services, as well as an easy to use, integrated user interface. This agreement will give customers an even broader and better range of content, therefore adding more value into a Sky subscription. In short, the new partnership is another example for media convergence services – customers will bundle the full Netflix service into a brand new Sky TV subscription pack available to Sky customers. The new partnership between broadcaster conglomerate and streaming service giant gives more power in the content-making machine in a new perspective. By placing Sky and Netflix content side-by-side, along with programs from the likes of HBO, Showtime, Fox and Disney, the entertainment

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<sup>8</sup> Digital TV Research, July 2017. <https://www.digitaltvresearch.com/ugc/press/204.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Sean Keach, "Dream Stream Sky and Netflix team up for "ultimate" TV package- here's how much it costs", the SUN, Sep. 19, 2018, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/tech/7290232/sky-netflix-app-subscription-ultimate-on-demand-q/>

experience for customers become easier and simpler. The same dominant streaming giant initiated two years earlier similar partnership with another company on a large leading market. On April 13, 2018 Comcast media giant announced an expand parentship with Netflix following successful Xfinity X1 Integration. In 2016, Comcast launched Netflix on the X1 platform offering a fully integrated entertainment experience featuring voice control and seamless access to the Netflix service<sup>10</sup>. This partnership is also a kind of bundled TV services that provide audiences with more choice, value and flexibility. It means open access to broaden array of original programming. The era of bundled streamers gains also momentum on how close the relationship is between watching more TV sports and gambling frequency. This tendency is arising soon and it is very interesting to predict in which countries the “gambling effect” on TV sports watching might be stronger than in the others. Live TV sports watching motivated by gambling may boost overall TV-watching statistics among younger demographics, either slowing the decline somewhat<sup>11</sup>.

### **Conclusion:**

This exciting new digital technological approach of media convergence environment is perfectly emerged trend to meet the growing content demand of customers. Bundled streaming is a new stage for commercial pluralism – fulfilled system that many media people around the world can be involved in. Media consumption and new arrays of original programming will increase companies’ investments and give professional opportunities for whole creative community - for both individual creators and big independent producers, also local leading teams, in developing production across all genres.

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<sup>10</sup> Sam Schwartz, “Comcast and Netflix Expand Partnership Following Successful Xfinity X1 Integration”, Apr. 13, 2018. <https://corporate.comcast.com/press/releases/comcast-and-netflix-expand-partnership-following-successful-xfinity-x1-integration>

<sup>11</sup> DELOITTE. Telecommunications Predictions 2019. Technology, Media, and Telecommunications Predictions 2019. London: Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, 2019. <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/at/Documents/technology-media-telecommunications/Deloitte-TMT-predictions-2019.pdf>

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# E-BOOKS VERSUS PRINT BOOKS: DIGITAL DISRUPTION OR INTERMEDIA RELATIONS

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*Abstract:* The significant impact of technology on book publishing has often been interpreted as digital disruption, that could eventually make print books obsolete. The proposed article examines the intermedia relations between print books and e-books as two media formats aiming to verify whether the digital technologies have a disruptive or an evolutionary effect on the industry. The research covers the key book markets in the United States and selected European countries in the period of 2007 - 2018. Audiobooks remain out of its thematic scope. The theoretical base includes three conceptual areas: media functions, media ecosystem, and innovations in media. Placed in this theoretical context, the transformations of print books and e-books are defined as a process of adaptation to the digitalized media environment. This concept is supported by empirical evidence sourced from reading attitudes and book markets studies, which indicate sustainable preferences for the print book format. The research concludes that not all technological innovations in book publishing could be perceived as disruption, although they lead to considerable changes in the industry structure and in reading practices. The theoretical and empirical arguments confirm the hypothesis that print books and e-books co-exist and complement each other as two media formats in a joint evolutionary transformation. Finally, the research suggests a Model of intermedia relations between print and e-books, defined as antagonism, alternativity and complementarity.

*Keywords:* print book, e-book, book publishing, intermedia relations, disruption, media

## **Introduction**

The remarkable market success of e-books triggered by the launch of Amazon's Kindle in 2007 has built the expectations for radical changes in reading practices. However, print books have still remained the dominant book media format. The dynamic transformations of the book industry in the digital era exceed the pace of their scholarly interpretation. Both academic and professional circles face the dilemma whether the media industry digitalization would lead to substitution of the traditional paper books by digital ones.

The suggested research on this subject is based on the theoretical interpretation of print and electronic books consumption and on the empirical data concerning book markets and reading attitudes.

The main purpose of the research is to identify the intermedia relations between print books and e-books as two media formats.<sup>1</sup>

The following tasks had to be completed in order to achieve this purpose:

Examining the disruption concept as regards book publishing.

Outlining the book publishing industry context.

Identifying the reading attitudes tendencies.

Analyzing the media functions of print books and e-books.

The research process had to verify two hypotheses:

1. The e-book is a disruptive innovation which could substitute the print book format and eventually make it obsolete.

2. Print books and e-books co-exist and complement each other as two media formats in a joint evolutionary transformation.

The territorial coverage of the research includes the biggest English-speaking book markets – the United States and the United Kingdom, and the key European book markets – Germany, France and Spain.

The time span is the period between 2007 and 2018. The beginning of the period is marked by the market introduction of the Kindle e-reading device, which had a strong acceleration effect on the e-book consumption.

The research examines the media functions of the two book formats to satisfy the consumers' needs. The readers' subjective perception of books functions is considered as a mandatory condition for the establishment of intermedia relations between print and electronic book formats. The intermedia relations between the print books and the e-books are manifested only when the readers make the media choice between their specific functions.

The theoretical base includes three conceptual areas: functional, which defines the common and specific media functions; ecological, which reflects the conception of the media environment as an ecosystem; and technological, which examines the media formats as traditional and new technologies. The Bulgarian theoretical contribution has also been taken into consideration, especially in the field of media functions, media ecology and the media identity of books. (Lozanov, 2001; Mihailov, 2009; Varbanova-Dencheva, 2009; Benbassat, 2012 and 2013; Tsvetkova, 2012; Psycheva, 2018; Raycheva, 2015)

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<sup>1</sup> The research is focused on the book consumption by reading only. Therefore, the audiobooks remain beyond its the thematic frames.

The theories of media functions focus on the consumer, who makes their media choice at the consumption phase of the communication process. The Everett Rogers' theory of diffusion of innovations reveals the adoption stages of new products and services. (Rogers, 2003) The research refers to modern interpretations of Paul Saffo's "30-year rule" and examines the media environment through the theoretical perspectives of researchers, who point out the link between the life cycle of media and their unique functions (Moore, 2001; Goorville, 2006; Anderson, 2008; Adoni and Nimrod, 2015).

The theory of media ecology compares media formats to biological species and treats them as entities which have to adapt in order to survive in a fast-changing communication environment. The Rodger Fidler's concept of mediamorphosis is the base for further research on the transformations of media, including print and electronic book formats (Lehman-Wilzig and Cohen-Advigor, 2004; Nguen and Mark, 2006; Scolari, 2013; Zhang and Kudva, 2014)

The technological conceptual area includes theories which interpret the media environment mainly as a competition between new and old technologies. The conflict between traditional and innovative technologies has continuously provoked strong scholarly interest. Digitalization made this issue even more relevant for most industries. In such context the digital disruption concept formulated and developed by the American researcher Clayton Christensen became very popular and seemed to be relevant for all industrial transformations due to digitalization. The market expansion of e-books in the beginning of the twenty first century has also been often interpreted as a digital disruption of the book-publishing industry.

### **Digital disruption concept**

According to the initial definition of disruption, formulated by Christensen and his co-author Josef Bower in 1995, the technological innovations challenge the established products and services by lower prices and new functionalities.<sup>2</sup> Two years later Christensen publishes his book *Innovator's Dilemma*, which turns out to be one of the most influential works in the academic interpretations of the technological innovations. The notions of disruption, disruptive technolo-

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph L. Bower and Clayton M. Christensen. "Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave". *Harvard Business Review*. January-February 1995. <https://hbr.org/1995/01/disruptive-technologies-catching-the-wave>

gy and disruptive innovation introduced by Christensen became very frequently used and applied in huge variety of theoretical and practical contexts.

Christensen' theory has got not only large popularity in academic circles, but has had an impact on the business activities in various industries. A 2017 survey of PricewaterhouseCoopers discovered that 23% of business leaders an industry disruption, but this concern is twice bigger (56%) among CEOs of entertainment and media companies.<sup>3</sup>

Numerous publications reflect the fast implementation of Christensen's terminology into the field of media, including book publishing. Most frequently e-books are perceived as a *digital disruption*, which has interrupted the sustainable development of the traditional book publishing.<sup>4</sup>

The broad sense interpretations of disruption refer to radical technological change and threat of displacement of the traditional "too fancy" offerings by new functionalities at lower price. The interpretations concerning book publishing had two main aspects: 1) e -books could substitute and even displace print books; 2) self-publishing has disrupted the traditional value chain.

The disruption concept has also provoked criticism, especially concerning the attempts to make it universally applicable. Two examples could be the publications of Joshua Gras, and James Utterback and Happy J. Acee.

Gras challenges the interpretation of the technological disruption only as a source of failures for the established companies. He focuses on the possibility that the disruptive innovations might be handled by adequate organizational and investment measures, including an eventual implementation of new products

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<sup>3</sup> "Perspectives from the Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2017 – 2021". PricewaterhouseCoopers. 2017. <https://www.pwc.com/gx/entertainment-media/pdf/outlook-2017-curtain-up.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Richard J. Gilbert, "E-books: A Tale of Digital Disruption". *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. V. 29, no. 3, Summer, 2015. pp. 165-184.; James M. Utterback and Happy J. Acee. "Disruptive Technologies: an Expanded View". *International Journal of Innovation Management*. March 2005. Vol. 9, no.1, 1-17. [Forbes. 3 May 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesproductgroup/2018/05/03/blockchain-in-publishing-innovation-or-disruption>; ROSS, Michael. \*Dealing with Disruption. Lessons from the Publishing Industry\*. Routledge, 2016; SHATZKIN, Mike. "Disruption at the Publishing Horizon". \*LOGOS. The Journal of the World Book Community\*. March 2009. \[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270694438\\\_Disruptions\\\_at\\\_the\\\_Publishing\\\_Horizon\]\(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270694438\_Disruptions\_at\_the\_Publishing\_Horizon\)](https://www.worldscientific.comdoi/abs/10.1142/VAARA, Matias. The Digital Disruption Faced by the Book Publishing Industry. PhD diss., University of Tampere. 2010, p.17-18.; ZALATIMO, Salah. )

and processes.<sup>5</sup> Utterback and Acee find the real significance of the disruptive technologies not in the tendency to displace established products, but rather in the opportunity for further enlargement of existing markets.<sup>6</sup>

Christensen indicated four major features of disruptive innovations:

- They are cheaper, less complicated and have got lower quality;
- Their profit margins are low
- Usually they are firstly introduced on insignificant markets
- They are initially rejected by the most profitable business partners

Although the e-book consumption is often determined as digital disruption of the book industry, the analysis of Christensen's theory shows that e-books have not got all typical features of the disruptive innovations. E-books are usually less expensive than print books, but they are not less complicated, because they require at least elementary IT skills. They were not first introduced on insignificant markets, just the opposite – their market success began on the largest book market in the world. Their profit margins are not necessarily low, but depend on the market success of the respective title.

In terms of distribution, e-books have even required additional investment by the business partners, who had to build the respective digital sales platforms.

### **Book publishing industry context**

Soon after the fast e-books success in the United States in the late 2000s their growth reached two- and three digit rates in some of the European countries. For example, it peaked at 191% in Germany and 134% in Great Britain in 2012. In the same time print books experienced sales crisis. Experts and professional have voiced radical prognoses about an unavoidable dominance of the electronic book format. PricewaterhouseCooper made a forecast in 2014 that e-books will surpass print books in sales as early as in 2017 in the United States and in 2018 in the United Kingdom. The trend of fast e-books sales growth, triggered by e-readers implementation in the end of the first decade, has not remained sustainable.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Joshua Gras. *The Disruptive Dilemma*. The MIT Press. Cambridge. Massachusetts. London, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Utterback and Acee, "Disruptive Technologies: an Expanded View", 1-17.

<sup>7</sup> Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2014-2018. PricewaterhouseCoopers. 2014. Available from: [https://press.pwc.com/News-releases/pwc-issues-global-entertainment-and-media-outlook-2014-2018/sfirst decade turns to be unsustainable](https://press.pwc.com/News-releases/pwc-issues-global-entertainment-and-media-outlook-2014-2018/sfirst%20decade%20turns%20to%20be%20unsustainable).

In the middle of the second decade of our century – firstly in the United States and soon after in the United Kingdom - e-books sales started dropping while print books were recovering their growth. The new trend on the US market began in 2014 and has not changed yet. In the first half of 2019 publishers' revenue on the trade book market increased by 2.5% in the print books segment, but decreased by 4% in the e-book segment compared to the same period in 2018.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the sales data from the British market in the period 2014 – 2018 indicated a physical books growth of 16% and a digital books (e-books and audiobooks) drop by 5%.<sup>9</sup>

The most recent data from the examined book markets show significant difference in the market shares of the two book formats. In 2018 the e-books market share was 13% in the United States and 5% in Germany and Spain. The book sales data in the United Kingdom considers both digital formats - e-books and audio books – as one category whose share for 2018 is 18% of the whole book publishing industry (home sales, export sales and rights deals). In France the market share of the two digital formats jointly is 8.4% in 2018.

Despite the considerable changes triggered by the digitalization of the book industry in the last ten years, print books have retained their dominant position in the market structure. The print books market share, measured in net revenue, remains considerably larger than the shares of the other formats: – 75% in the United States (trade market), 81% in the United Kingdom (home trade market), 89% in Germany, 92% in France, and 95% in Spain.

The book market data from the examined territories do not confirm the expectations for digital disruption of the book industry. The print books market performance rather proves their sustainable dominance. The vast penetration of e-books in the reading practices reflects the book industry adaptation to the dynamic media environment. Print books and e-books complement each other in the satisfaction of the large spectrum of readers' needs in a huge variety of situational contexts.

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<sup>8</sup> AAP StatShot: “Publisher Revenue at \$6 Billion for First Six Months of 2019”. Association of American Publishers. 28 August 2019. <https://newsroom.publishers.org/aap-statshot-publisher-revenue-at-6-billion-for-first-six-months-of-2019>

<sup>9</sup> Yearbook 2018. The Publishers Association. <https://www.publishers.org.uk/news/releases/2019/pa-publishing-yearbook-2018>.

## Reading attitude context

The market positions of print and electronic book formats are determined by the dynamics of the reading attitudes. Surveys from the United States and the examined European markets illustrate the readers' preferences.

The annual surveys of Pew Research Center examines the dynamics of book consumption among adult Americans. In the period of 2011 – 2015 print book consumption decreased from 71% to 63%, and then it grew to 65% and to 67% in 2017 and 2018 respectively. The e-books consumption witnesses the opposite trend: after an increase from 17% in 2011 to 28% in 2014, it remained flat until 2016 but decreased to 26% in 2018. Both formats faced the audiobooks competition and decreased their rate in 2019 down to 65% for print books and 25% for e-books.<sup>10</sup>

The international book publishing company Scholastic conducts periodical surveys on the reading attitudes of children in the age interval 6 – 17 in several English-speaking countries. The question whether they would still prefer print books even if e-books are available received predominantly confirmative responses by the American children: 60% in 2012, 65% in 2014 and 2016, and 67% in 2018. Asked about their preferred format, children who have already read e-books answered as follows: 45% would still prefer print books, 38% have no clear opinion, and 16% confirm preference to e-books.<sup>11</sup>

Recent survey on the examined territories show the big difference in the share of the “radical” readers who only use one of the two formats. Those who only read print books are 39% in the United States, 36% in the United Kingdom, 32% in Germany, 39% in Spain. The people from the same countries who only read e-books represent much smaller share: 7% in the United States, 5% in the United Kingdom, 2% in Germany, and 6% in Spain.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew Perrin. “One-in-five Americans now listen to audiobooks”. Pew Research Center. 26 September 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/25/one-in-five-americans-now-listen-to-audiobooks>.

<sup>11</sup> Kids and Family Reading Report. 6th edition. Scholastic US. [https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/KFRR/PastReports/KFRR2017\\_6th.pdf](https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/KFRR/PastReports/KFRR2017_6th.pdf); Kids and Family Reading Report. 7th edition. Scholastic US. [https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/KFRR/Downloads/KFRRReport\\_Finding\\_Their\\_Story.pdf](https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/KFRR/Downloads/KFRRReport_Finding_Their_Story.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> “Reading Habits in the U.S.” Pew Research Center. Statista. 2018. [www.statista.com/statistics/reading-habits-in-the-U.S.](http://www.statista.com/statistics/reading-habits-in-the-U.S.); “Do you read more print books or e-books”. Statista survey. 2017. <https://www.statista.com>; E-books in Germany. Statista. 2019. [http://www.statista.com/study\\_28632id.e-books-in-germany-statista-dossier](http://www.statista.com/study_28632id.e-books-in-germany-statista-dossier); “Habitos de lectura y Compra de Libros en Espana 2018”. <https://www.federacioneditores.org/lectura-y-compra-de-libros-2018>

According to the regular surveys commissioned by the Intellectual Property Office of the British Government, e-book consumption has drastically dropped from 28 million units in 2016 to 18 million units in 2018.<sup>13</sup>

The British National Literacy Trust carried out two large surveys among children ages 9 – 18 in 2017/18 and in 2019. The findings indicated that “print remains the dominant reading format across all age groups”. The format preferences between print and e-book had the following ratio: 55% to 20% for fiction, 45% to 15% in non-fiction, 27% to 15% in comics, and 22% to 11% in poetry. The 2019 survey discovered that children who read exclusively in print format are about four times more than those who read e-books only.<sup>14</sup>

In 2018 the market research company GfK conducted a survey on the reading attitudes in Germany and found that the e-book consumption is lowest among the eldest population (70+) and the teenagers (14 - 19), respectively 2% and 4%. The largest shares of e-book readers belong to the middle age groups: 7.5% (40-45) and 7.2% (50-59). The e-book readers among the adult population (14+) was 5.4% only. The total number of readers in e-book format dropped from 3,9 million in 2015 to 3,5 million in 2017, but rose again in 2018 to 3,6 million.<sup>15</sup>

Since 2012 the National Publishers’ Syndicate and two other publishing organizations have conducted annual surveys on reading practices in France among the adult population (15+) named *Barometer of the e-book consumption*. The first edition of the *Barometer* found that 14% of the French people read e-books. Their share has steadily increased over the following years: 15% in 2013 and 2014, 18% in 2015, 20% in 2016 and 21% in 2017. The growth curve marks a little drop to 20% in 2018, but reached its peak of 22% in 2019.<sup>16</sup>

Every year the French Ministry of Culture and Communication issues a comprehensive report on the book market. The latest reports indicate that e-book consumption has not hurt the appeal of print books. The share of people who

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<sup>13</sup> “Online Copyright Infringement Tracker. 8th Wave”. (March 2018). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-copyright-infringement-tracker-survey-8th-wave>

<sup>14</sup> Christina Clark, and Irene Picton. “Children, young people and digital reading”. (April 2019). National Literacy Trust. 2019. <https://www.literarytryst.org.uk/documents>

<sup>15</sup> Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2019. MVB GmbH. Frankfurt am Main. 2019, 31.

<sup>16</sup> 9e Baromètre sur les usages du livre numérique. Syndicat national de l’édition. 2019. <https://www.sne.fr/document/barometre-sur-les-usages-du-livre-numerique-sofiasnesgdl-2019>

have read at least one book in print format has sustainably grown: 69% in 2014, 89% in 2017 and 91% in 2019.<sup>17</sup>

In Spain the regular surveys carried out by the Ministry of Culture and Sport in partnership with the Spanish Publishers' Federation proved continuous preference for the print book format. The ratio between the two formats of all books read in 2018 was 74% to 26% in favour of the print.<sup>18</sup> Almost two thirds of Spanish people (62%) read for leisure, allocated as follows: 39% read only print books, 17% read in both formats, and 6% read only e-books.<sup>19</sup>

### Media functions of print books and e-books

Print books and e-books co-exist and evolve in the media environment as two separate media formats. They manifest their common media identity as both a communication medium and a communicated content.

The media identity of print books and e-books determines their common functions, which could be differentiated as follows:

Medium based: informative, communicative and preservative

Content based: aesthetic, educative and entertaining

The main distinction between print books and e-books is their different material nature: physical for print books and digital for e-books. The different material nature of these book formats determines their specific functions in readers' needs satisfaction. Examples of specific functions of the two formats could be:

- possession feeling, integrity, gift value, tactile sensibility, visibility, tangibility, art value, bibliographic value, durability – for print books;
- immediate delivery, instant access, interactivity, audio and visual effects, easy storage, mobility, selective reading, font resizing, connectivity – for e-books.

The specific functions of print books and e-books satisfy different consumer needs. Print books and e-books enter into intermedia relations only when readers make a media choice between their specific functions. Therefore, the

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<sup>17</sup> Chiffres-clés du secteur de livre. Ministère de la Culture et la Communication. <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Thematiques/Livre-et-Lecture/Documentation/Publications/Chiffres-clés-du-secteur-du-livre>

<sup>18</sup> “Hábitos de Lectura y Compra de Libros en España”. 2018. (January 2019). Conecta. <https://www.federacioneditores.org/lectura-y-compra-de-libros-2018.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> “El sector del libro en España”. (April 2018). Ministerio de cultura y deporte. <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/cultura/areas/libro/mc/observatoriolect/estudios-e-informes/elaborados-por-el-observatoriolect.htmls>

subjective readers' perception is a mandatory condition for the emergence of intermedia relations between print books and e-books.

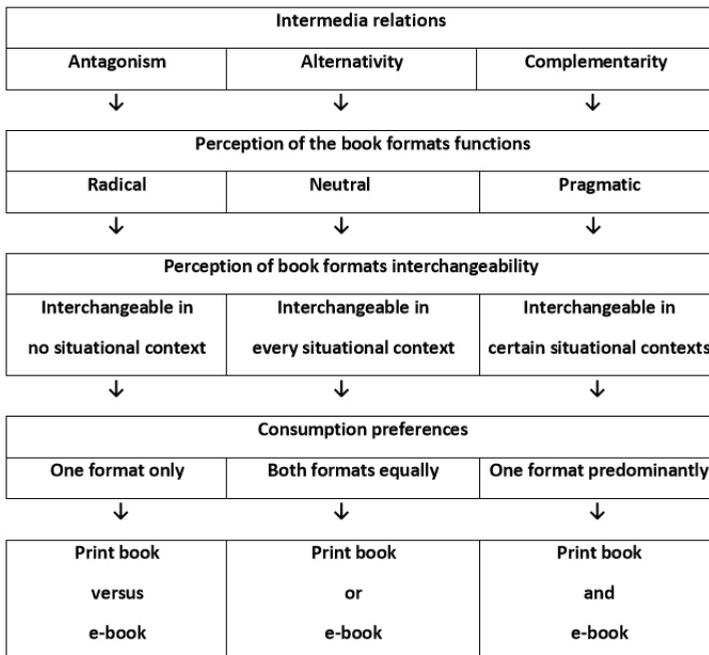
### Intermedia relations between print books and e-books

Print books and e-books fulfil their media functions – both as a communication medium and a communicated content, only when consumed by readers. Making their media choice, readers decide which of the two formats would better satisfy their consumer needs. Print books and e-books exist objectively in the media environment, but they enter into relations of mutual dependence only in the readers' subjective perception of their media functions.

The concept of fulfilment of the book media functions only at the consumption phase of the book communication process leads to the formulation of the following definition:

**An intermedia relation between print books and e-books emerges when they are consumed by the reader, who makes a media choice based on subjective perception of their specific functions as media formats.**

The dependence of the reading practices on the reader's subjective perception of the book media formats could be illustrated by the suggested Model of the intermedia relations between print books and e-books.



The quoted and analyzed empirical reading attitudes studies define three main types of readers' perception of print books and e-books as media formats:

- **Radical**, when readers consume books in one media format only
- **Neutral**, when readers are ready to consume books equally in both media formats
- **Pragmatic**, when readers consume books predominately in one of the media formats.

These three readers' practices correspond respectively to three types of perception of interchangeability between print books and e-books: interchangeable in no situational context, interchangeable in every situational context, and interchangeable in certain situational context.

Each of the intermedia relations is determined by a different readers' subjective perception of books as a media format and is manifested in a different situational context.

The intermedia relation of **antagonism** is determined by a radical readers' perception of the book media format. The print books and the e-books are not interchangeable in any situational context. Therefore, the readers use one preferred format only. Antagonism is manifested when the readers make a media choice opposing **print books versus e-books** deciding which of them would better satisfy their needs of a concrete book media format, regardless of the book content.

The intermedia relation of **alternativity** is determined by a neutral readers' perception of the book media format. The print books and the e-books could be interchangeable in every situational context. Therefore, the readers are ready to use both formats equally. Alternativity is manifested when the readers make a media choice deciding whether **print books or e-books** would better satisfy their needs of a concrete book content, regardless of the book media format.

The intermedia relation of **complementarity** is determined by a pragmatic readers' perception of the book media formats. The print books and the e-books could be interchangeable in certain situational context only. Therefore, the readers use predominantly one of the book formats. Complementarity is manifested when the readers make a media choice deciding between **print books and e-books**, being ready to substitute their preferred format if the other format could better satisfy their needs of a concrete book content in a concrete situational context.

## Conclusion

The theoretical interpretations of book media identity, the empirical studies on markets and reading attitudes, and the concept of intermedia relations between the two book formats lead to the following conclusions:

- Print and e-books fulfil two types of functions: common, which are determined by their media identity, and specific, which are determined by their different material nature.

- Print books and e-books co-exist in and adapt to the dynamic media ecosystem in a permanent transformation process.

- E-book consumption enriches and enlarges the reading practices without threatening with displacement the traditional print books.

- The subjective readers' perception of print books and e-books provoke three types of intermedia relations between them: antagonism, alternativity, and complementarity.

The research has not identified either theoretical or empirical evidence to support the first hypothesis that the e-book is a disruptive innovation which could substitute the print book format.

The specific functions of print books and e-books are determined by their different material nature. It is an objective sustainable distinction, which guarantees that each of the two formats will fulfil unique and irreplaceable functions.

The analysis of the empirical data in addition to the theoretical interpretation of the intermedia relations between print and e-books confirms the second hypothesis: the two book formats complement each other in a joint evolutionary transformation by fulfilling their specific functions to satisfy the readers' needs.

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# TRENDS IN CULTURAL TELEVISION SHOWS

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*Abstract:* Technological development offers a huge amount of opportunities for communication with the audience and interest following. To attract a large audience, the media put additional effort to develop and start to act as mass production and forget about important functions - to educate through culture. Over the last decade, media organizations have gradually begun to support the trend of uniting cultural and entertainment functions to attract more audiences.

This article presents the current state of cultural journalism in Bulgarian cultural TV broadcasts and the analyzed representative of this type of formats is one of the few remaining. The process of development that is ahead of television formats devoted to this area is to evolve by updating of the content presented to meet the new prerequisites for uplift and audience requirements while still retaining its original concept. More specifically, the study analyzes the developments and trends in one of the few broadcasts on Bulgarian television – the morning block dedicated to culture on Bulgarian national television – “Culture.bg” reflected to the current problems and the significant cultural events from the country and abroad. The observation is carried out according to different criteria, such as broadcasting themes, genres, news breakdowns geographically and others. To outline the development of cultural journalism and the changes that take place in it also “how to” changing communication with the audience and the way of perceived culture.

*Keywords:* culture, cultural journalism, art journalism, television broadcast, culture program, cultural news.

The understanding of culture and, respectively, of cultural journalism that reflects and spreads it to the audience continues to be comprehensive, as each person has a different value system, philosophy and visions of the world around him. Accordingly, the sense of aesthetics and taste development is strictly individual, leading to controversial perceptions.

Culture is a set of factors and disciplines that are part of it through broad public consensus and asserts certain ideas, values, and works that are continuously supplemented by historical, philosophical, religious and scientific knowledge by seeking new artistic and literary forms (according to the Peruvian writer and Nobel laureate Mario Vargas Llosa). The culture determines the rank in the

society of its creators who have enriched it with achievements and contributed to development as well as to those who disregarded it.<sup>1</sup>

Among its functions is the preservation of values and their transfer over time, thereby enriching the audience, and at the same time showing a sense of anticipation for the future of dominating it in public life. Penetrating and imposing in traditional societies through its specific nature to become part of other types of activities. According to the British literary critic Eagleton, culture “includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morality, law, customs and all other abilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”<sup>2</sup>, while the German philosopher, literary and critic Walter Benjamin views it as an artistic work, because of the absolute weight placed on its cultural value. Originally, it was perceived as a magic and later as a work of art, so that it can be realized today as an artistic work with the absolute weight of its exhibiting value, which makes it a creation with completely new features, including the essential, artistic.<sup>3</sup>

The rich palette and varieties of culture can be reflected and popularized through a variety of broadcasts in one of the media's preferred by audiences - television. To examine the research problems and trends in cultural TV shows is traced the function of cultural TV formats, which is of great importance for the development of the whole TV market. As a preferred media from the audience, television offers a great opportunity for quality coverage of cultural events and themes. Becoming the main activity of the public in her free time watching TV presume offering a variety of broadcasts by enhancing horizons of spectators (according to Barwise and Ehrenberg).<sup>4</sup>

Over the last decade, media organizations have gradually begun to support the trend of uniting cultural and entertainment functions to attract more audiences. The current state of culture undergoes a transformation in the focus of the emerging mass culture in the contemporary society, realized with the help of the dynamic development and the media market. Respectively the reflecting cultural journalism also undergoes changes as a result of numerous criteria, including globalization, digitization, commercialization and changing the way of communication with its audience. The relationships between television with the world of the arts and the creation of their own artistic content are essential to enriching the perceptions of the audience. Focusing public attention on truly

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<sup>1</sup> Mario Vargas Llosa, *Civilization of the Spectacle*. (Sofia: Colibri, 2013), 53. тогава, както и сега, се е считало, че французите имат монопол върху цивилизоваността -

<sup>2</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Sofia: Criticism and humanism, 2003), 45 – 51.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Art thought and cultural awareness* (Sofia: Science and art, 1989), 341-347.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Barwise and Andrew Ehrenberg, *Television and its audience*, (London: SAGE, 1988).

relevant topics, issues and trends through the presentation of quality audiovisual products are of paramount importance for the development of enlightenment and perceptions.

In the analysis of European Parliamentary Research service about “Access to culture in European union” from 2017 year is shown the important role in the lives of Europeans that culture plays, regardless of its precise meaning. Part of respondents (31 %) consider it very important for their life, personal development and progress. The percentage of the uninterested and unconscious of its important function is really small only 1 % of Europeans think culture is elitist, while 5 % claim culture is unimportant. The majority of the audience - 77 % of respondents acknowledge the importance of culture as a broad concept covering both its personal and socio-economic dimensions. (Fig. 1)<sup>5</sup>

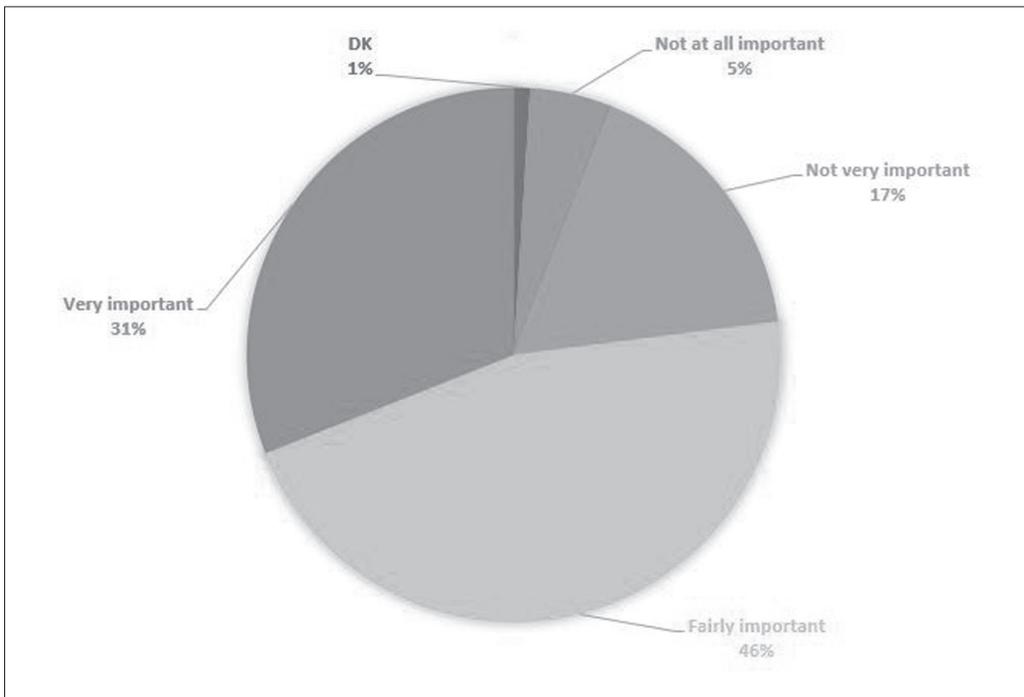


Fig. 1. *The important role of the culture in the lives of Europeans*

<sup>5</sup> Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, European Parliamentary Research service, “Access to culture in European union”, accessed May 7, 2019 [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/608631/EPRS\\_IDA\(2017\)608631\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/608631/EPRS_IDA(2017)608631_EN.pdf)

Messages sent over the TV can serve as a “mirror” of the current state of culture. The world of television and the processes that are developing are seen by media researchers John Fiske and John Hartley according which “television discourse presents us daily with a constantly up-dated version of social relations and cultural perceptions. Its own messages, respond to changes in these relations and perceptions, so that its audience is made of the multiple and contradictory choices available, from day to day which have the potential to be selected for future ways of seeing. Of course, the picture doesn’t appear to be so fluid as we watch: there are “preferre” meanings inherent in every message. But even preferred meanings, which usually coincide with the perceptions of the dominant sections of society, must compete with and be seen in the context of other possible ways of seeing.”<sup>6</sup> The reason why any media should entrust with the important task to reflect the structure of values and attitudes beneath the surface.

The transition and the connection between the world of cultural art and the culture of journalists are expressed in expanding the approach of cultural media to everyday problems by developing and maintaining the functions of journalists and thus attracting the attention of the general public. Changes are being made to the proposed objective of discussing and sharing professional and creative policies and standards relating to the production, distribution and content of cultural products. They differentiate and popularize creative artifacts and the extent to which they are modified and disseminated to develop, adapt society and change cultural news.

Visual media are the main funds, distributions of spreading culture and this is confirmed in the study from the European Parliamentary Research service which indicate that television cultural programmes are by the most popular means of accessing culture without specifying the cultural domain – performing or visual arts, literary programmes, etc. Over a period of six years, the lack of interest in cultural programs increased from 21% to 27%, and the percentage of those who are heavily interested and more than 5 times watching such programs has dropped from 46% to 41%. During the period under the monitoring there was a decrease in all categories of cultural participation and consumption is noted, even in activities such as following a cultural programme on the radio or on television. Reasons for this situation can be viewed in different directions, such as accessibility of culture, economic crisis in the EU and other specific barriers

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<sup>6</sup> John Fiske and John Hartley, *Reading Television*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 5.

to cultural consumption, such as lack of time, uncertainties, especially the middle and lower social classes. (Fig.2)<sup>7</sup>

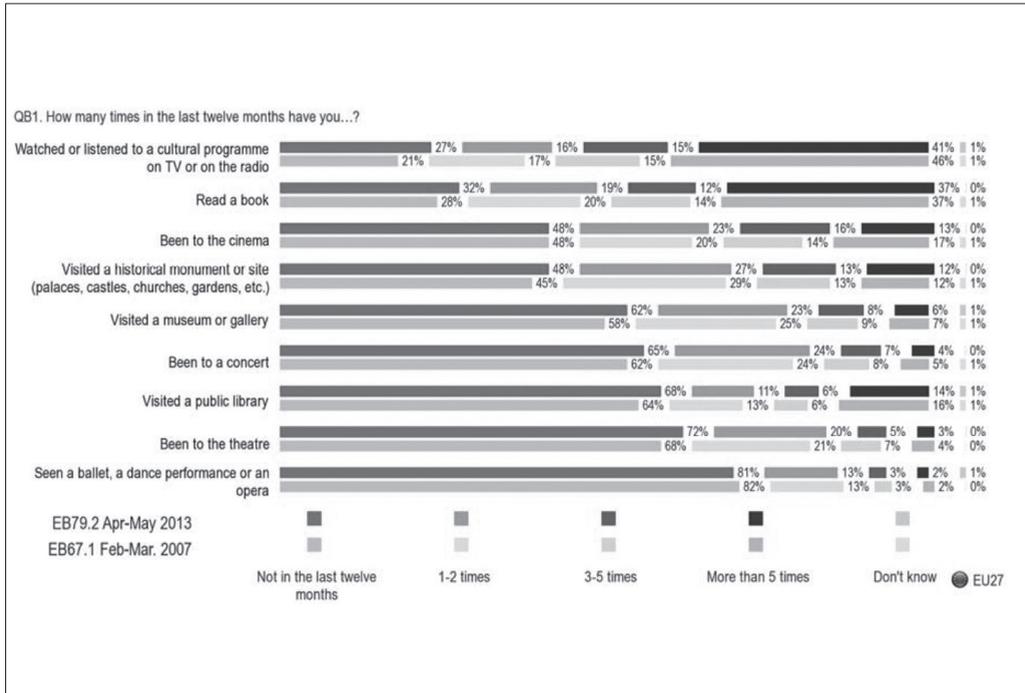


Figure 2. – Cultural participation across cultural activities, 2007 vs 2013

The media researcher David Morley describes the process as “differential interpretations back to the socio-economic structure of society, showing how members of different groups and classes, sharing different ‘cultural codes’, will interpret a given message differently, not just at the personal, idiosyncratic level, but in a way systematically related to their socio-economic position. In short terms we need to see how the different sub-cultural structures and formations within the audience, and the sharing of different cultural codes and competences among different groups and classes, determine the decoding of the message for different segments of the audience.”<sup>8</sup> The perception of the transmitted TV

<sup>7</sup> Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, European Parliamentary Research service, “Access to culture in European union”, accessed May 7, 2019 [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/608631/EPRS\\_IDA\(2017\)608631\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/608631/EPRS_IDA(2017)608631_EN.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> David Morley, *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2005), 49.

messages is dependent on the personal worldview and the individual set of cultural codes that each spectator has according to his social and cultural situation.

The changes that are observed in the evolution of the Bulgarian media environment, create prerequisites for the overall development of society. With a brief overview of the television programs, the disproportionate amount of political and economic broadcasts compared to those devoted to education and culture is easily noticed. The different cultural atmosphere affects the public view, space for reflection, discussion, ethics, values, etc. The changes that cultural journalism undergoes and its focus on lifestyle journalism are observed with the wider introduction of more general themes that are entertaining in the news to attract a larger audience. There are a predominant number of unloading programs on Bulgarian television, which impose a permanent presence of lifestyle journalism, whose themes rank among the leading interests of the audience. Presenting basic messages that are part of mass culture, in addition to lifestyle advice and guidance, they take the lead in the information flow. Frequency is observed by ignoring quality and value leads to the emergence of journalism where “gossip”, scandal, and invasion of privacy are a major focus in the presentation of a cultural event, bringing to the fore the personal life of well-known public figures, and the essence of the event barely presented. Serious media, in their audience struggle, are also forced to partially follow that direction.

The tracking of the dynamic processes in the development of cultural TV shows, presents the latest trends in cultural journalism, which evolves in order to meet the new prerequisites and requirements. Impacting the audience by presenting significant cultural themes in TV broadcasting would focus on true value and quality content that will be part of the public agenda. The observed provide that entertainment is becoming one of the main values in the audience’s understanding, which is also an essential prerequisite for the orientation of cultural journalism towards lifestyle journalism. It is precisely because of the listed processes that the current study is relevant and outlines an up-to-date media landscape in the field of cultural broadcasts devoted to the cultural themes. For the purpose of the survey and the possibility of realization of a comparison, observation of the current dynamics in one of the few television shows – “Culture.bg”, broadcast by the Bulgarian National Television, reflected in the current problems as significant cultural events from the country and abroad. Broadcasting aims to empathize the audience with stories and happenings in cultural life. It presents discussions on the most recent issues and the most interesting events in the cultural poster, following a variety of events from the day in reports and direct inclusions. The show is the successor to “The Day begins with Culture,”

which has a long history in TV, and has begun since the end of 2010. With a renewed concept, a new modern name, and a slogan – “your place for culture”, the team that works in it, remains the same and continues to be interested in the current issues in the field. The important role of cultural broadcasting, besides providing the right news in the vast field of information, is also to build the necessary trust of the audience through ethical work, qualified and professionally competent journalists.

In a period of three months, from 28 January till end of April – 30<sup>th</sup> 2019, observation of the program “Culture.bg”, which is broadcast every morning from Monday to Friday is carried out according to the following criteria – theme, styles, information source, area, lifestyle and entertainment, presence of news reflecting cultural policy in the state, presence of news about Plovdiv – European Capital of Culture and others. During the period under the monitoring, the presenters of the television broadcast were divided into two screen pairs, which were alternated one week by Anna Angelova and Dimitar Stojanovic, and next week - Alexandra Gyuzeleva and Mihail Zaimov.

The TV show serves as a bridge for cultural upheaval and for the realization of quality reports and news for which time is needed for research, preparation and realization. Located in the TV program right after the standard morning block, Culture.bg introduces a variety of themes including different genres. Highlighting the timeliness of the information provided and the topics discussed, which can lead to public debate and reactions. The TV show is made up of separate columns where the choice of topics and participants has a specific current occasion. Every single issue traditionally starts with the rubric “Cultural Posters“, which is close to a brief news feed and presents interesting upcoming cultural events. Typically in the rubric daily includes news mainly from Bulgaria, and once in a week it is devoted to events that are placed in different cultural locations - museums, galleries and art spaces around the world. Typically for the specific format is the presentation of various topics, which are discussed through a number of interlocutors, through discussion, as well as the informative publicistic interviews - types of conversation in the TV studio in short block forms, with the alternation of different guests.

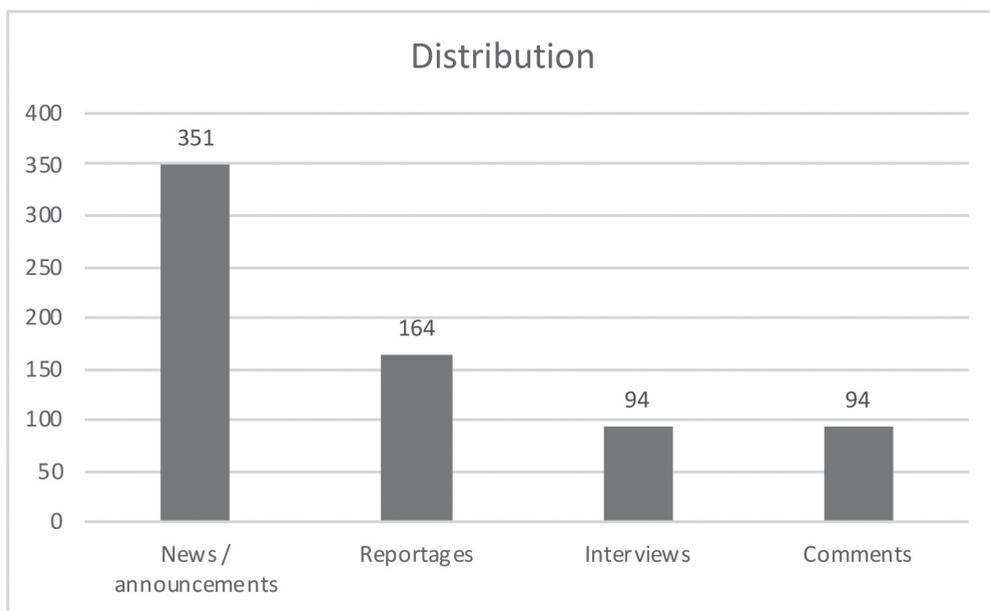


Figure 3. *Distribution in the broadcast "Culture.bg"*<sup>9</sup>

The overwhelming amount of news announcements in the broadcast (351) are highly anticipated in view of their shortness of time at the air, with most of them appearing in the rubric "Cultural Posters". In the second place are the reports (164), with the standard in each broadcast being presented between 2 and 3.(Fig.3) Their realization is on current news from both Sofia and other Bulgarian cities, the majority of them being on record but there are fewer inclusions live venue. The reason for the small number of live links can be seen on the one hand because of the broadcasting time of the show itself - in the morning when a few of the cultural events are actually held, and the small team working in the production.

An interesting statistic is that the number of broadcast interviews and comments during the period considered is absolutely equal (94).(Fig.3) The positive tendency that is observed is their presence, as they are not very common in the television broadcasts. On the one hand, the process of finding representative and erudite individuals to act as analysts and commentators is complex. From

<sup>9</sup> Ekaterina Titova Stankovski, The data was realized by a monitoring of the broadcast by the author, period Jan 28, 2019 – Apr 30, 2019.

the other hand, the reasons for their absence are the interest of the audience towards more entertaining and unladen opinions. The TV interviews made by the presenters are available in each broadcast, presenting them to the audience for different artists and commenting on current topics and issues. The presence of more up-to-date, interesting and young artists has the potential to create prerequisites for creating more modern content for the television, which, in addition to attract more attention from the audience, will be able to build a successful model for producing original contemporary content.

In addition to the previous criteria, the participants in the broadcast, who in the analyzed period discussed a total of 94 topics from 154 commentators, were also examined. This practice, a topic to be explored by several different personified, people helps for more comprehensive and representative deployment. (Fig. 4)<sup>10</sup>

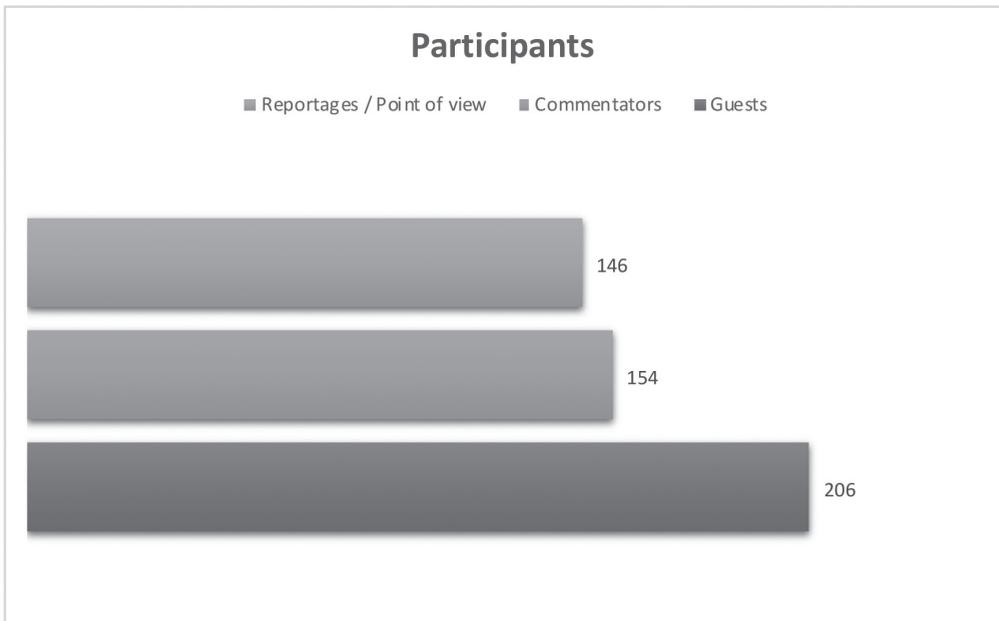


Figure 4. *Participants in the broadcast "Culture.bg"*

<sup>10</sup> Ekaterina Titova Stankovski, The data was realized by a monitoring of the broadcast by the author, period Jan 28, 2019 – Apr 30, 2019

An increasingly inclusive concept of cultural journalism, which is observed in the media, includes the definition of culture as a “way of life” that brings together, besides different kinds of ethics, values, creativity, and many thematic areas such as architecture, art, humanities, literature, dance, theater, music, cinema, fashion and more. The availability of more and more media sources helps to provide timely information, not just about what is happening around, but also in the world through the news, which also serves as a contact with different types of art and culture. The technology for selecting topics to be broadcasted, their quantity and quality, significance, way of presenting them to the audience is observed in the specific cultural presentation. The first places in this statistic are almost equal for the themes of art and design, music and performances. The subject art and design combine both current exhibitions, presentation of museums, galleries and various events in the area. It is interesting to order a second position of the music - much of the presentation of this theme is in the direction of classical music. In this way, the TV show tries to educate the audience in the spirit of the high culture and to promote it. The third place is logical for the performances, and it should be noted that out of a total of 145 announced stage performances, the majority are theatrical productions - 109 feedbacks, which shows the dynamic and rich theatrical life. The rest is divided between ballet, opera and musical performances. Another interesting aspect of the data reviewed is that the subject of photography is more often than the literature, which gives an indication besides the realization of numerous photographic exhibitions, but also the fact that this subject is up to date and modern, while the literature is still perceived by the audience as more classical, although the broadcast is mainly announced by Bulgarian contemporary authors. In the other category, different themes are devoted to education, history, social life and problems, religion, fashion, architecture, ecology, etc. (Fig. 5)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ekaterina Titova Stankovski, The data was realized by a monitoring of the broadcast by the author, period Jan 28, 2019 – Apr 30, 2019.

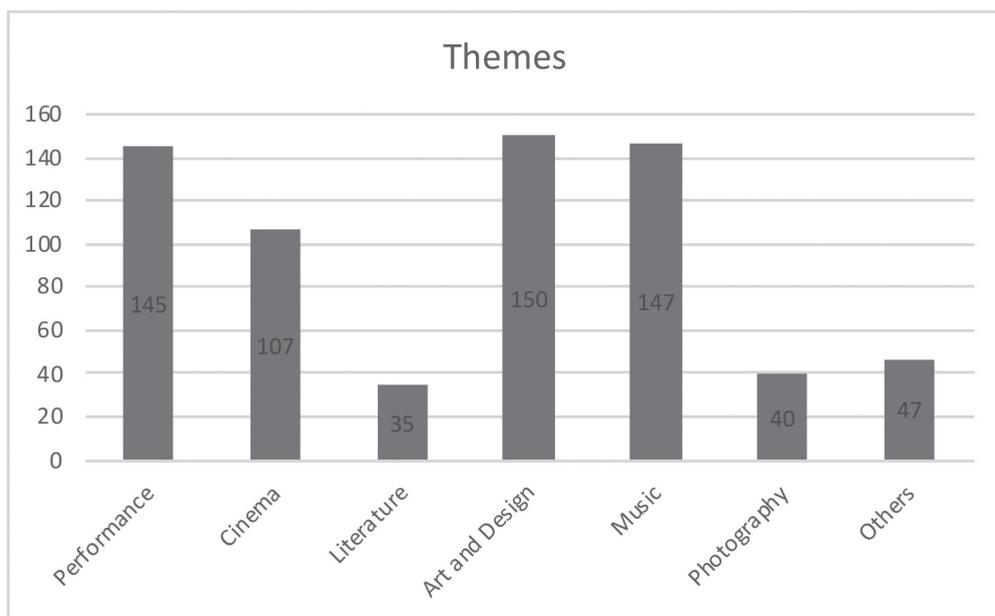


Figure 5. *Themes presented in the broadcast “Culture.bg”*

The next criterion, on which the broadcast “Culture.bg” is observed and analyzed, is the news according to whether it is local, national or global. An interesting aspect is that the amount of content from Sofia and the country is almost equal. The amount of events taking place in the different geographic areas is varied and the attitude of the users who visit them and are interested in being informed about them. The Capital provides a diverse and dynamic cultural life filled with many events, while in many areas, due to lack of cultural events, they are attributed to similar ones that do not represent a culture accurately. (Fig. 6)<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ekaterina Titova Stankovski, The data was realized by a monitoring of the broadcast by the author, period Jan 28, 2019 – Apr 30, 2019.

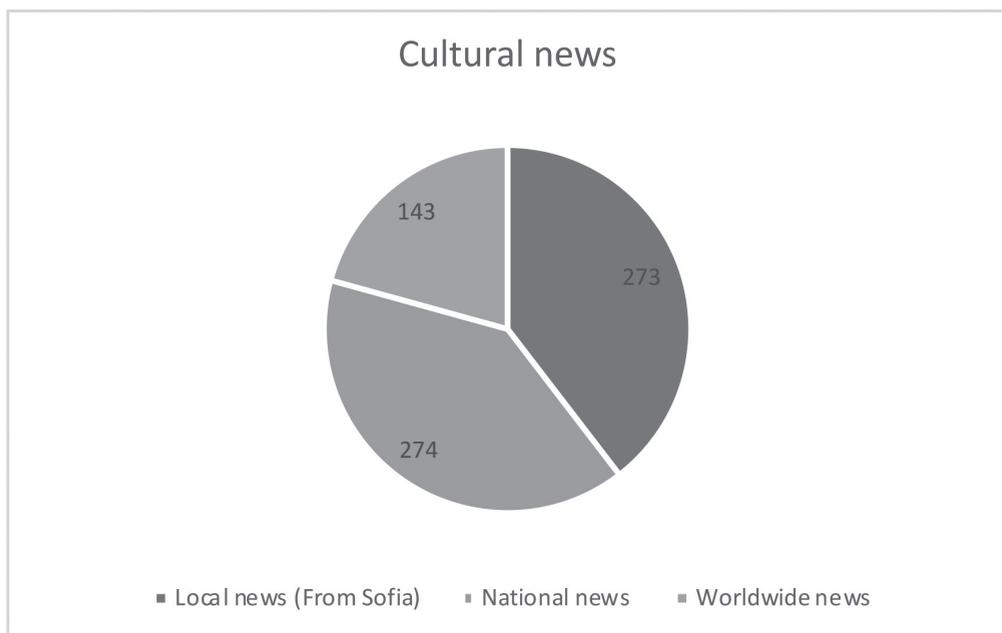


Figure 6. *Cultural news*

The observation took place during one of the significant events on a global scale realized on the Bulgarian soil – “Plovdiv - European Capital of Culture 2019”, through whom the audience has the opportunity to get in touch to different kinds of culture and works of art. During the period under the monitoring, 13 different events from the initiative were presented, with two of broadcasts being transferred from the city of Plovdiv itself.

During the observed quarterly period, the availability of news coverage of cultural policy in the country is almost entirely absent. They have commented on the changes to the Bulgarian cinema law, the upcoming European elections in the context of the way European intellectuals defend European values, and the third theme is dedicated to the future of Europe without Britain in terms of the impact of processes on cultural transfer. Deliberate avoidance of cultural policy depriving the audience of information about the latest news and processes that are essential to the development of this sector.

The study tracks the trends in the field of cultural journalism, the transformation it undergoes in view of its orientation towards lifestyle journalism through the prism of television broadcasts. The observation shows that one of the few broadcasts on Bulgarian television, which has preserved complete cultural

line, is “Culture.bg”. In the period of monitoring there are only a few presented lifestyle news, dedicated to premier series, most of which are productions of the Bulgarian National Television, which explains their presentation. The television format is fully able to present events and themes in their cultural aspect.

The television continues to be a major factor in the development of social and cultural life, with new digital technologies changing traditional ideas for television communication. In an effort to attract a larger audience, the media began to produce more mass production and forgot the important functions to educate. The monitoring of “Culture.bg” shows one of the few TV shows on the Bulgarian air that successfully preserve their concept and continue to follow it, presenting a maximum range of topics from cultural life through various announcements, reports, interviews and interlocutors. Thus, the TV format fulfills its public mission to promote the development and popularization of culture among Bulgarian audiences. The development process that is ahead of the television format to evolve by updating the content presented to respond to the new prerequisites for uplift and audience requirements while still retaining its original concept.

An important and inseparable part of the structure of public opinion is the cultural atmosphere, which is a space for reflection, discussion, ethics, values, etc. The role of cultural journalism is particularly necessary in the debates on freedom of expression, public criticism and journalistic autonomy, as well as specialization in media organizations. Its public function consists not only in communicating information to society but also in the creating canons and help education the audience through art.

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TITOVA Stankovski, Ekaterina, The data was realized by a monitoring of the broadcast by the author, during period January 28 2019 – April 30 2019

# RETHINKING EMERGENT READER'S POLICIES: THE MEDIATING ROLES OF THE PARENTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE THEORY OF "FIRST THOUSAND DAYS"

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*Abstract:* This paper revises the category of the emergent reader in the light of the media theory of reading. The *purpose* is to find a solution to the long-occurring problems of the readers from the age of the television and the digital age, among which are easier reading refusal, reading incomprehension and susceptibility to manipulation when reading. *Methods:* Systematic and critical analysis was applied to the studies of the new theory of the First Thousand Days of Life, as well as to the effects of the pre-literacy and emergent literacy programs. We also took into account the findings and the recommendations for future research on the developing readers, formulated in the "Stavanger Declaration Concerning the Future of Reading" published in January 2019. The *results* show that reading foundations are laid much earlier before it was ever thought – a circumstance that is underestimated by parents, politicians, educators and even researchers. Taking into account the increasing risks in the global reading medium, we *propose* the development of policies for expert trainings on "future image" of the child, professional mentors on home and family reading and personal tutors for reading culture.

*Keywords:* media theory of reading, reading studies, pre-literacy, family reading culture, reading environment

## Introduction

“*Those who can read see twice as well.*”, said 2300 years ago the Greek dramatist Menander (342–291 B.C.). In the alarming times of disinformation and viral content we can easily be convinced that the aphorism by Menander obtains the status of an axiom. Only the intelligently reading person can resist the manipulative messages. And only the completed, directed and step-by-step mastered reading allows the individual to stand out of the crowd and change the environment, in which he lives.<sup>1</sup> But even the most eager reading researchers and educators are still looking for a solution to the deepening problems of the readers from the age of the television and the digital age, among which are easier reading refusal, reading incomprehension and susceptibility to manipulation when reading.

## Methodology

Systematic and critical analysis was applied to the studies of the new theory of the First Thousand Days of Life, legitimized and promoted by the United Nations, UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO), National Academies of Sciences (USA), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (Harvard University), National Childbirth Trust (UK), National Health Service (NHS England), New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine, Analysis & Policy Observatory (Australia), Australian

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<sup>1</sup> Milena Tsvetkova, *The Reading – antimanipulated filter* (Sofia: Gaberoff, 2000): 108-113

Research Alliance for Children & Youth, et al.<sup>2,3,4,5,6</sup>, as well as to the effects of the common pre-literacy and emergent literacy programs. We also took into account the findings and the recommendations for future research on the developing readers, formulated in the “Stavanger Declaration Concerning the Future of Reading” published in January 2019<sup>7</sup>.

For the purposes of this research we use the theoretical construct of the reading as a 6-step communication algorithm<sup>8</sup> which includes: perception, reception, understanding the significance, realizing of the meaning, interpreting, self-transforming and influence on external behavior (Figure 1).

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<sup>2</sup> Thousand Days, *Why 1000 days?* 2016. Accessed June 15, 2019, <http://thousanddays.org/the-issue/why-1000-days>

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Cusick, and Michael K. Georgieff, *The first 1,000 days of life: The brain's window of opportunity* (Florence: UNICEF Office of Research, 2017). Accessed June 7, 2019, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/958-the-first-1000-days-of-life-the-brains-window-of-opportunity.html>

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Cusick, and Michael K. Georgieff, *The first 1,000 days of life: The brain's window of opportunity* (Florence: UNICEF Office of Research, 2017). Accessed June 7, 2019, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/958-the-first-1000-days-of-life-the-brains-window-of-opportunity.html>

<sup>5</sup> Suzanne Brundage, “The First 1,000 Days on Medicaid.” In *Applying Neurobiological and Socio-behavioral Sciences from Prenatal through Early Childhood Development: A Health Equity Approach*. National Academies of Sciences, USA, 2018. Accessed June 7, 2019, <http://nationalacademies.org/hmd/Activities/Children/ApplyingNeurobiologicalAndSocioBehavioralSciencesFromPrenatalThroughEarlyChildhoodDevelopment/2018-AUG-06.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> NCT, *First 1,000 Days: New parent support* (London: National Childbirth Trust, 2019), <https://www.nct.org.uk/about-us/first-1000-days>

<sup>7</sup> COST E-READ, *Stavanger Declaration Concerning the Future of Reading*. Accessed February 17, 2019, <http://ereadcost.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/StavangerDeclaration.pdf>; Milena Tsvetkova, “In Respect of Future of Reading: Stavanger Declaration.” *BBA online: The Journal of the Bulgarian Library and Information Association* 9, no. 4 (2019): 9-11. Accessed June 17, 2019, [https://www.lib.bg/publish/Списание/Избрани-статии/534-Относно-бъдещето-на-четенето-\(Декларацията-от-Ставангер\)](https://www.lib.bg/publish/Списание/Избрани-статии/534-Относно-бъдещето-на-четенето-(Декларацията-от-Ставангер))

<sup>8</sup> Milena Tsvetkova, *The Reading – antimanipulated filter*. (Sofia: Gaberoff, 2000): 58-64.

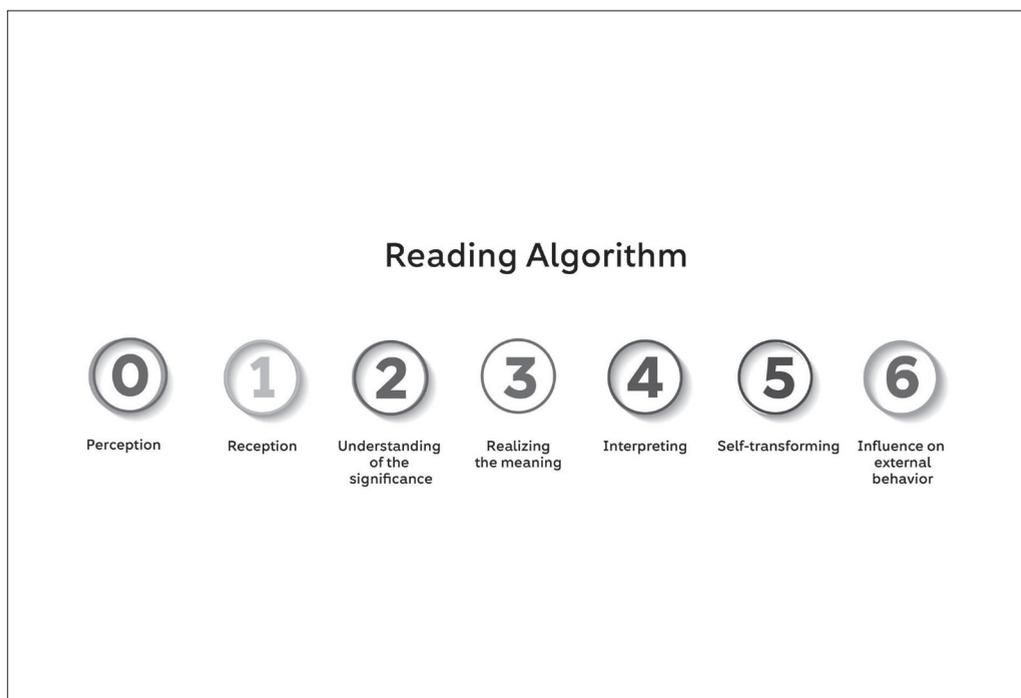


Figure. 1. *Lineal reading algorithm*<sup>9</sup>

According to the information communication theory of reading, its structure is progressive (step-by-step), and not a holistic one – it is not done “en bloc”, even because reading is an unnatural activity for the human nature – it is not inherent, but acquired cultural practice, as Maryanne Wolf already proved<sup>10</sup>. Many neurophysiological studies support our thesis, that *the roots of the reading problems are on the input of the reading algorithm* – on the phases (1) reception and (2) understanding. When reading is not mastered progressively and structurally, it becomes analogous to a “broken production process”. The ineffective transition through phases 1 and 2 inevitably leads to initially deformed reading – to *anti-reading*.

Reading maturity can be sought after, only when the individual practices in full capacity and fluently the first two phases of the reading algorithm – re-

<sup>9</sup> Milena Tsvetkova, “Reading and viewing screen version: Methodic of parallel autoreflection.” *Annual of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“*. Faculty of journalism and mass communication 15 (2009): 75.

<sup>10</sup> Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2010): 222.

ception and understanding. They allow easier flow through the next, more complicated stages of reading – realizing of the meaning, interpretation, formation of knowledge and culture, and influence on external behavior of the individual, - which guarantee the acquisition of reading maturity (Figure 2).

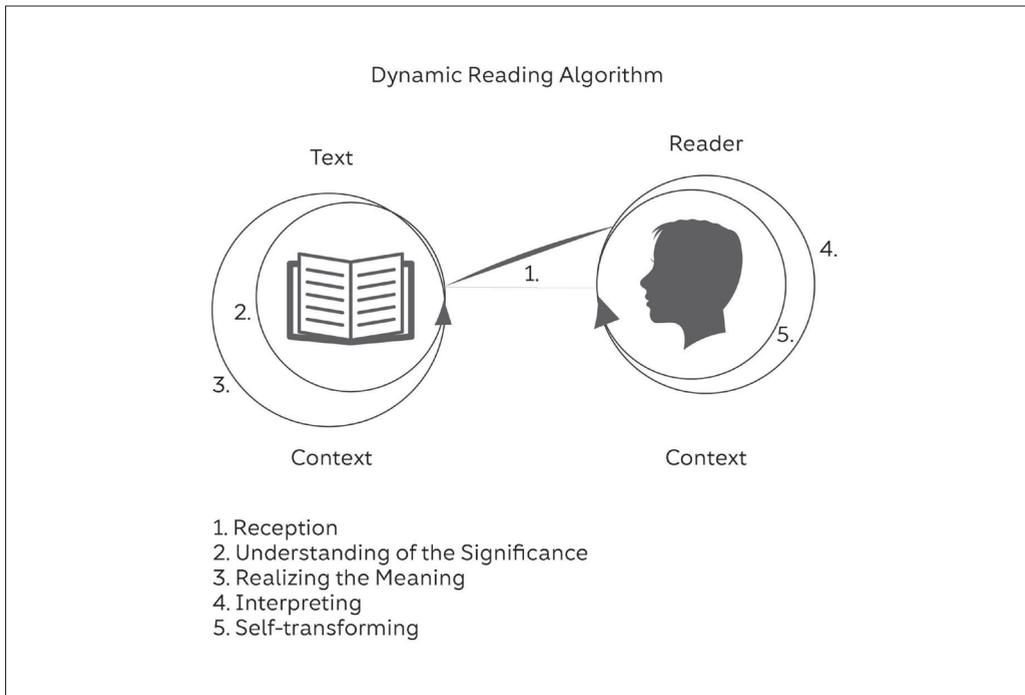


Figure.2. *Dynamic reading algorithm*

The more complex stages of the reading intelligence require the acquisition of great quantity of knowledge for the world around us and the development of skills for their objective selection, organization and application with the purpose of conscious impact over the environment. Basic reading stages, on the other hand, are affected to an extent by the formation of basic reading intelligence, which depends on the skills acquired by the future reader even during the development of the brain in the utero to recognize the main linguistic systems, and by the later actions for the proper development of the child in the preliteracy and emergent literacy periods (the period of the first 1000 days and below – to the sixth/seventh year of age).

Rethinking the policies regarding the emergent readers requires the rethinking of the ability of a child to perceive and understand what is heard or seen

in books. This is the reason to combine the information-communication theory of reading with the media theory and to admit as relevant the following definition of reading: a complex mediated process, in the basis of which is the readiness of the individual to percept visual, tactile or hearing stimuli from written messages and which is fundamental to the formation of intellectual, social and emotional experience of the recipient of those messages<sup>11</sup>. We accept as reading not only the alphabet-based reading, but also the “acoustic reading” or reading aloud, and the “tactile reading”.

This definition of reading is the most relevant to our aim to rethink the role of the parents and the family in raising future readers in the light of the theory of the First Thousand Days of Life of the future reader.

## Results

According to the World Health Organisation, health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”<sup>12</sup>. To accomplish to full extent health and well-being over the life course, the most important period of human development turns out to be from conception to the end of the second year after birth.

The exact number “1000 days” is obtained by the sum of three numbers: 270 is the average amount of days during the pregnancy of the human beings, 365 days from birth to the end of the first year and 365 days from year 1 to the end of year 2 (Figure 3).

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<sup>11</sup> Milena Tsvetkova, “Lies of the reader: Disadvantages of the sociological research methods for the study of the reading.” *European Journal of Contemporary Education* 7, no. 1 (2018): 191-192, DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2018.1.190.

<sup>12</sup> WHO, “Constitution of the World Health Organization. Adopted by the International Health Conference held in New York from 19 June to 22 July 1946, signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Off. Rec. Wld Hlth Org., No, 2, p. 100), and entered into force on 7 April 1948.” In *World Health Organization: Basic Documents*, Supplement 2006. Accessed June 7, 2019, [https://www.who.int/governance/eb/who\\_constitution\\_en.pdf](https://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf)

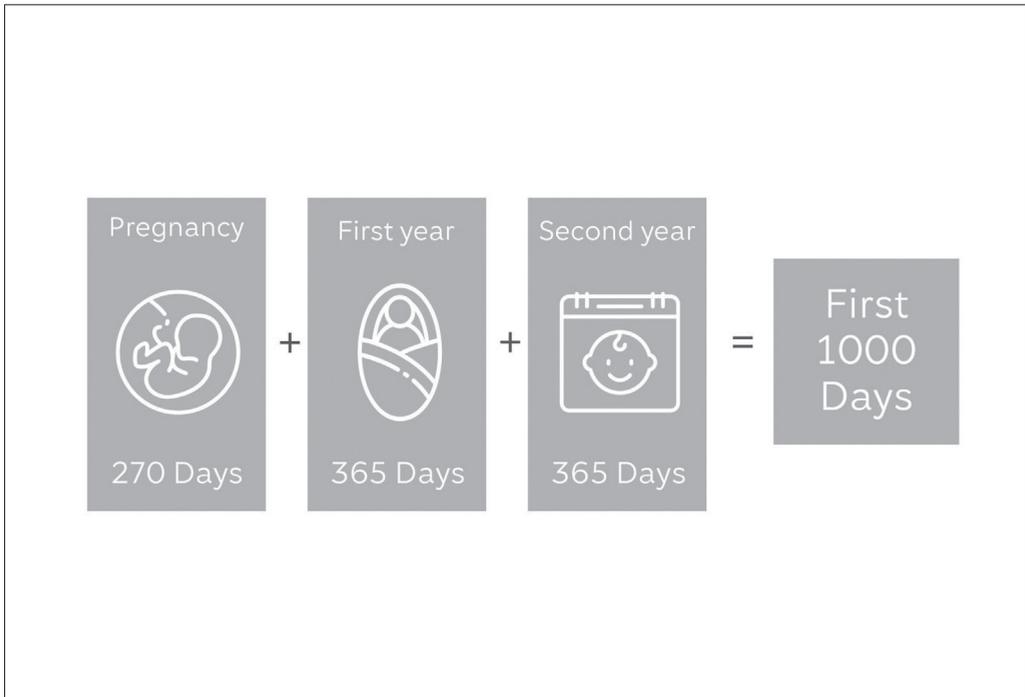


Figure 3. *The first 1000 Days of Life – how to count*<sup>13</sup>

Research over the early childhood from the last 5-7 years<sup>14,15,16</sup> unambiguously show that what happens during the first 1000 days of human`s life has

<sup>13</sup> Danone Nutricia, “The first 1000 days of life, a unique window of opportunity for lifelong health.” *Nutricia MMP*, 2019. Accessed June 2, 2019, <http://www.nutricia-mmp.com/en/1000-days>

<sup>14</sup> T.G. Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*. (Parkville: Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, 2017). Accessed June 2, 2019, <https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/CCCH-The-First-Thousand-Days-An-Evidence-Paper-September-2017.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Social Research Unit at Dartington, *The ‘science within’: What matters for child outcomes in the early years*. (Dartington, Totnes, UK: The Social Research Unit at Dartington, 2013), <http://betterstart.dartington.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/The-Science-Within1.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, *Establishing a Level Foundation for Life: Mental Health Begins in Early Childhood: Working Paper 6*. (Harvard University, 2012). Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/establishing-a-level-foundation-for-life-mental-health-begins-in-early-childhood>

lifelong consequences over human's health and well-being.<sup>17,18,19</sup> Moreover, new evidence identified and published periodically shows that in this specific period negative effects lead to worst damages, whether the beneficial interventions lead to the best possible effect<sup>20,21</sup> and the global consensus hardens into the political actions need of urgent and intensive support of families for the optimal life start of every child<sup>22</sup>.

In this very period the *plasticity of the developing human being (developmental plasticity*<sup>23</sup>) - the ability of the human to adapt to social and physical environments - is at its greatest<sup>24,25</sup>. The neuroplasticity, greatest during the sensitive periods<sup>26,27</sup> of development, allows the baby brain to build and develop neuronal circuits, which allow the brain to develop and adapt constantly to the environment and exposures. This ability of the brain to adapt can lead to positive, as well as negative changes, if the developing organism is exposed to

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<sup>17</sup> Center on the Developing Child, *The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood*. (Cambridge: Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2010), [http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/reports\\_and\\_working\\_papers/foundations-of-lifelong-health](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/reports_and_working_papers/foundations-of-lifelong-health)

<sup>18</sup> S.E. Fox, P. Levitt, and C.A. Nelson, "How the timing and quality of early experiences influence the development of brain architecture." *Child Development* 81, no. 1 (February 2010): 28-40, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01380.x.

<sup>19</sup> T.G. Moore, "Understanding the nature and significance of early childhood: New evidence and its implications." *Investing in Early Childhood – the future of early childhood education and care in Australia*, (Melbourne: The Royal Children's Hospital, 25th July 2014), DOI: 10.4225/50/5578DA99168A5

<sup>20</sup> L.M. Richter et al., "Investing in the foundation of sustainable development: pathways to scale up for early childhood development." *Lancet* 389, no. 10064 (2017 Jan 7): 103–118, DOI: 10.1016/S0140-67.

<sup>21</sup> A. Lake, *The first 1,000 days: a singular window of opportunity*. (New York: United Nations Children's Fund, 2017 Jan 18), <https://blogs.unicef.org/blog/first-1000-days-singular-opportunity>

<sup>22</sup> Thousand Days, *The first 1000 days: Nourishing American's future*. (Washington, D.C.: 1000 Days, 2016), <https://thousanddays.org/wp-content/uploads/1000Days-NourishingAmericasFuture-Report-FINAL-WEBVERSION-SINGLES.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

<sup>24</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

<sup>25</sup> P. D. Gluckman, M. A. Hanson, and F. M. Low, "The role of developmental plasticity and epigenetics in human health." *Birth Defects Research Part C: Embryo Today: Reviews* 93, no. 1 (March 2011): 12–18, DOI: 10.1002/bdrc.20198.

<sup>26</sup> F.Y. Ismail, A. Fatemi, and M.V. Johnston, "Cerebral plasticity: windows of opportunity in the developing brain." *European Journal of Paediatric Neurology* 21, no. 1 (2017): 23-48, DOI: 10.1016/j.ejpn.2016.07.007.

<sup>27</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

malignant impact factors (severe stress during pregnancy, toxic substances exposure etc.).<sup>28,29</sup>

The baby is born with billions of neurons, but the synapses, which allow the information flow between brain cells, are relatively few<sup>30</sup>. The initial switch of the synaptic connections starts from birth, when the child goes through a process of rapid learning. The more one neuronal circuit is used, the stronger it becomes. On the opposite, the others which are not used, become weak and fade away through the process of *synaptic pruning*.<sup>31,32,33</sup>

Well developed neuronal circuits track the pathway to the activities, connected to gross and fine motor skills, emotions, language, memory. And opposite, if a neuronal circuit is not well developed, it can undermine the ability of a person to achieve perfection in the acquisition of a skill, if this skill is built on weak foundation.<sup>34,35</sup> The initial development and strengthening of the neuronal circuits in the brain of a small child is through the interaction between the child and his parents, on first place<sup>36</sup>; later on this circle widens to include the family, the caregivers and kindergarten teachers, as well as to be influenced by the social environment (Figure 4).

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<sup>28</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

<sup>29</sup> C. Blair, and C. C. Raver, "Child development in the context of adversity: Experiential canalization of brain and behaviour." *American Psychologist* 67, no. 4 (May-June 2012): 309-318, DOI: 10.1037/a0027493.

<sup>30</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

<sup>31</sup> E. Santos, and C.A. Noggle, "Synaptic Pruning." In *Encyclopedia of Child Behavior and Development*. Ed. by S. Goldstein, J.A. Naglieri. (Boston: Springer, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9>, [https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-0-387-79061-9\\_2856](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-0-387-79061-9_2856)

<sup>32</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

<sup>33</sup> Center on the Developing Child, *Applying the Science of Child Development in Child Welfare Systems*. (Cambridge: Centre on the Developing Child, 2016), <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/child-welfare-systems>

<sup>34</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

<sup>35</sup> Center on the Developing Child, *Applying the Science of Child Development in Child Welfare Systems*.

<sup>36</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

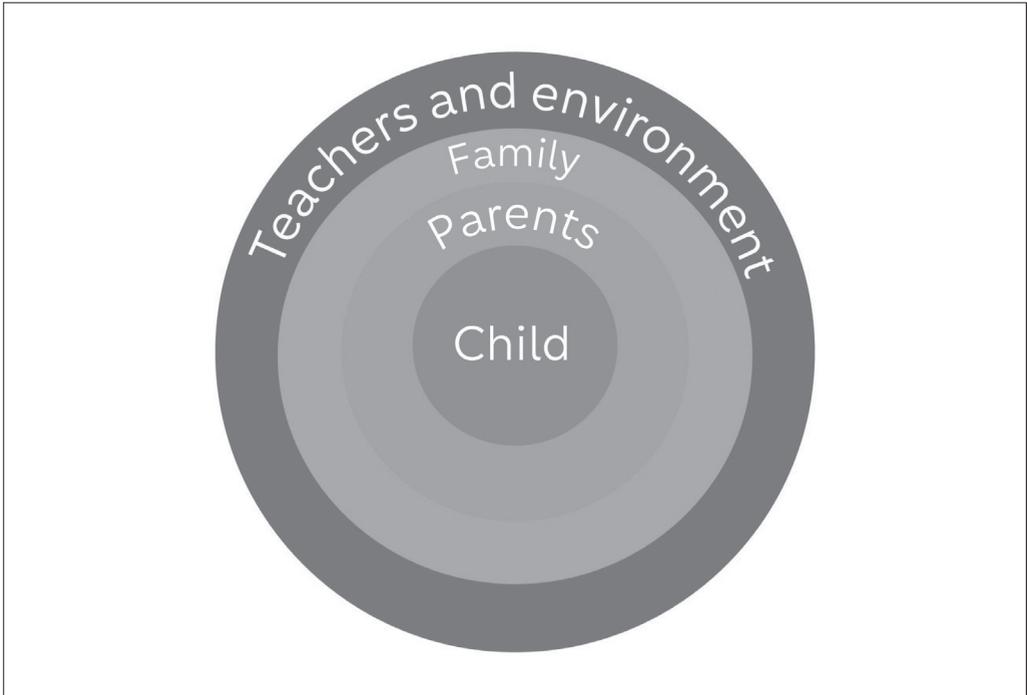


Figure. 4. *Concentric circles of impact over the child as “emergent reader”*

The child interacts with the environment through facial expressions, gestures, sounds, and expects the adults to reply with similar engagement. If the parents/caregivers do not react adequately through gestures, vocalization or appropriate emotional reactions, the baby brain’s architecture development can be disrupted because of the under-stimulation.<sup>37</sup>

„*We were never born to read*“. With this sentence the famous neuropsychologist Maryanne Wolf starts her thorough research on the amazing ability of the human brain, developed over the course of the evolution of the human species – to develop neuronal circuits, responsible for the acquisition of the skill to decode symbols and connect them to words and to find meaning beyond that.<sup>38</sup> Taking into account how complex is the process of reading and that it requires individual tuning in the brain of every person, the ability to read for yourself

<sup>37</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

<sup>38</sup> Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2010), 3.

requires great efforts and assumes the development of an individualized educational system, which takes into account the specific features of every child.

Recent research approve the crucial effect of the first 1000 days on the life course of the humans and reinforce the conviction, that it is necessary to lay down stable foundation in helping the child to develop skills to become future reader through the accumulation of rich lexical reservoir, to understand the concepts laid down in the text, to follow the plot and to connect it to the illustrations, and to understand the idea behind the decoding of symbols and their transition into words and sentences. The development of those skills should start even before birth, when the unborn child recognizes the mother's voice; to continue after birth, when parents develop the child's senses through appropriate books and answer to the child's reactions through appropriate facial expressions and vocalization.

This is how we come to the question through which media should the described parent-baby interaction be executed to perform fully competent care for the "emergent reader", regardless of the concentric circles level in which this "emergent reader" is positioned. We are convinced this should be executed through the two oldest communication media – the voice as medium and the book as medium. Summarized features of the human voice as medium prove it has irreplaceable energetics for the parent-baby environment – it subtilizes it with non-verbal rhetoric, and the reading aloud upholds it in mode of attention and transfers the information in an "*affectionate sound air*". The methodological framework of audio-reading as physiologized and submedial communication is applicable to contemporary methodologies of family literacy and early home-based pedagogy. Proving the implications of the reading voice as medium supports the rethinking of family communication and the maintaining of nourishing home cognitive environment for the emergent reader.<sup>39</sup> Regarding the second indispensable medium – the book, we support the conviction of the German Professor of Media Economics Dietrich Kerlen: "The book, in the role of a media, has a specific content and an important function. In a world where signals are distracted, and there is an accelerated, massive informational overload, it influences the building of a stable personality structure. We can affirm ourselves against the multiplied stimulus of the multimedia world only if we develop the

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<sup>39</sup> Milena Tsvetkova, and Darina Pahova, "Multidisciplinary Explanation of the Reading Voice as a Medium: Challenge to Family Media Literacy." *Media Literacy and Academic Research* 2, no.1 (2019): 86.

ability to appraise, imagine, have patience and spiritual calm, be articulate and have intellectual sensitivity. The book facilitates all this – as no other media.”<sup>40</sup>

One of the strongest developmental stimulations before birth and afterwards is the voice of the mother - even in the utero the baby recognizes the voice of the mother<sup>41</sup>, as well as the mother tongue. Studies in the field of the emotional and social development of the child prove that the human brain, and especially that of a baby is wired to feel security through touch and human voice. The use of the voice as medium for the parent-baby interaction and the shared time, in which the parent reads a book to the child, is not only a generator of message of security and positive emotions; this approach lays down the foundations of the *family media literacy* and prepares the child to return to a reader<sup>42</sup>. While listening how the parent reads, the child acquires primary knowledge for the script: the child starts to understand, that the pictures are sometimes letters, grasps a notion about the text direction (left to right in Bulgarian and English), receives a tactile feeling of the book as object etc. the understanding of these concepts favors the future development of the true literacy.

It is important to take note of the digital-visual medium in which adults live actively from 2000 until now and which inevitably impacts the development and growth of the children and the ability of every human being to read. The ability to recognize images and icons is developed in children much earlier than their ability to read. This leads to enriched basic visual literacy, required by some of the new professions. This visual literacy, acquired through the new technology (computers, television, video games, internet) does not compensate the weaknesses in other important cognitive processes like the abstract vocabulary, reflection, inductive problem solving, critical thinking and imagination.<sup>43</sup> Brain regions, activated during computer and smart technology use, are responsible for the fast decision making and multitasking, but they also stimulate surface reading, skimming, hyperlink following and therefore do not develop the deep reading, which means they don't help the child to reach to the more complex stages of the reading algorithm. Moreover, small children, who receive sensitive stimuli through screen instead of through live contact with beloved adult, can

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<sup>40</sup> Dietrich Kerlen, *Lehrbuch der Buchverlagswirtschaft* (Stuttgart: Hauswedell, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Maryanne Wolf, and Stephanie Gottwald. *Tales of literacy for the 21st century: the literary agenda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 16.

<sup>42</sup> Hildegunn Støle, “Why digital natives need books: The myth of the digital native.” *First Monday* 23, no. 10 (September 2018), DOI: 10.5210/fm.v23i10.9422.

<sup>43</sup> P. Greenfield, “Technology and Informal Education: What Is Taught, What Is Learned.” *Science* 323, no. 2 (January 2009), DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01380.x.

suffer under-stimulation, which can have a negative impact over future periods of development, learning, behavior and health.<sup>44</sup>

These scientific findings we synthesize in the admonition that the *visual culture should not precede the reading culture*, even because, as Julia Kristeva convinced, *the image puts an end to the imagination and the screening puts an end to the interpretation*.

## Conclusions

Critical analysis was applied to the national programs for the promotion of reading in Bulgaria and it shows that they are mainly focused on the ability of the student (from 7 years of age and up) to read by himself, and moreover – to read fiction. Pedagogical practices in school and in preschool age are mainly focused on the ability of the children to symbols decoding and phonemic awareness, to understand and comprehend. The development of a stable foundation for the understanding of the concept of the text, the ability to follow the plot, to suggest the next word according to the rich vocabulary is not of interest of the educational programs and therefore it does not pay great attention to the important role of the future parents.

The studies on the reading practices are also interested in the mature reader and the challenges before him in the digital age, but they do not seek the roots to the changes of the reading habits of the adults in the first 1000 days of life and explore much later period, when the window of opportunities is already closed.

After the rethinking of the 6-phase communication algorithm in the light of the new “theory of the first 1000 days”, we suppose that the key reasons for the unsuccessful reading in children, as well as in adults, is hidden in the pre-reading phase, prior to the stages of the reading algorithm. We call them *barriers in the pre-communication reading phase*. Their presence leads us to the conclusion that the preparatory approach for transition of the children from listening of read aloud words to independent reading is often incompetent and is too late applied.

## Implications

In Bulgaria, an ecosystem of innovators is timidly emerging, but we are still far away from reaching the “critical mass”, capable of moving the change from its dead-point. It is obligatory scientists, who possess and validate the re-

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<sup>44</sup> Moore et al., *The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper*.

cent science facts and theories to become a “driver” of re-intellectualization of the policies for the development of reading reneration. Aggressively communicated education policy, based on science, will stimulate and encourage families to think about the responsibility to form their own incredible child, adequate to the age of superiority of the human kind over the artificial intelligence.

In the light of the theory of the first thousand days and the recommendations of the “Stavanger Declaration Concerning the Future of Reading”, we propose the development of national policies for *expert* trainings on the importance of the early childhood development not only on literacy, but on the intelligence.

Taking into account the increasing risks in the global reading medium, we propose the development of policies for expert trainings on “future image” of the child, professional mentors on home and family reading and personal tutors for reading culture.

We put an accent over the important role of the parents and the family and the need of development of *educational policies for family media literacy*, which include the following actions:

Reading in the family to be considered as vital and important as the other health and cognitive activities;

Reading out loud to be levelled to breast feeding;

Youth in school (as future parents) to pass an education course on family communication literacy;

Families to receive early support and education on development of the domestic reading culture even before conception;

Families of infants to receive book packs (home reading material) with instructions for correct stimulation of the infants’ senses, in order to build the foundation for the development of a personality that is able to communicate in a stable manner and have media intelligence.

The *ecology of reading* is responsible for the correction of all mistakes during the preparation of the future reader, for removal of the “contaminations”, as well as the maintaining of “cleanliness” in all reading phases. This is new area whose potential is still not widespread among educational interventions in the phase of pre-reading. On this hypothesis our future research will be focused.

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# COMMUNICATING SCIENCE: REFORM MODEL OF THE GATES OPEN RESEARCH PLATFORM

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*Abstract:* The EU’s scientific potential is increasingly flowing into the world of new scientific knowledge. The object of this paper is the communication interpretation of the Open Science policy, covering not only access and storage of scientific information and preservation of scientific information, but communication aspects also. *Purpose of the study:* Establish modern trends in the scientific ecosystem oriented towards facilitating the publication and communication of scientific results. *Tasks of the study:* Compare new solutions in science communication models in the most popular platforms, and explore what is the alternative to traditional scientific journals. *Methodology/approach:* The qualitative systematic review (qualitative evidence synthesis), scientific criticism of sociological surveys, methods of analytic and synthetic processing of primary and secondary resources, secondary data analysis and overview of scientific publications available in the libraries worldwide, have been used to obtain data about the impact of new EU solutions: the European Road Map for development of the European Research Area (ERA), the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, etc. A comparative analysis of innovation in publishing platforms was conducted with special attention to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s *Gates Open Research* platform. *Results:* The creators of the *Gates Open Research* platform defend the view of the rapid and socially beneficial effect of new and publicly-accepted scientific knowledge. The cutting-edge solutions are: transfer power from the hands of editors to the hands of the authors; minimize barriers or gatekeepers on the path of the new scientific outcome for society; assessment of the research not in view of the venue of publication but on the basis of the intrinsic value of the completed study; minimize the funds invested in publishing and dissemination. *Im-*

*plications*: The conclusions can be important in identifying technological and ideological regularities for optimizing the model of scientific publications and increasing the speed and visibility of any scientific news.

*Keywords*: science communication, barriers to scientific communication, scientific ecosystem, open science, open refereeing process, open access publishing model, transparent publishing, author-led publication, research-centred platform, F1000Research, Plan S

## Introduction

The past five years have witnessed more and more discussions in the EU about free access to scientific knowledge, in particular to results of publicly funded projects. If Europe wants to compete with the rest of the world, the regulations having a bearing on the access to scientific knowledge need to be liberalized, and the time required to provide free access to the latest publications, shortened. The feeling becomes ever more tangible that we are living in a time of “a war” for free access to scientific achievements. Representatives of various stakeholders ask questions, not only amongst themselves. More and more voices are heard in public, speaking about the price of scientific knowledge, its dissemination and re-use for new scientific results.

Over the past decade, it’s been getting easier and easier to circumvent the paywalls and find free research online. One major reason: the active effort of the so-called science pirates working on-line for the cause of free access to, and use of, science. The most popular among them is Kazakh neurotechnology researcher and software developer Alexandra Elbakyan, also known as “Science’s pirate queen”. Her (illegal) website Sci-Hub sees more than 500,000 visitors daily (according to data from 25 April 2019<sup>1</sup>), and host more than 50 million academic reports.

At the start of 2019 we also received two unequivocal signals from global economic players: On 1 February 2019 Elon Musk opened the access to Tesla’s patents to be used for preserving the Earth (“to help save the Earth”<sup>2</sup>). Two

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<sup>1</sup> Sci-Hub. “Twitter@Sci\_Hub”. 25.04.2019. Accessed June 16, 2019. [https://twitter.com/sci\\_hub/status/1121397571539357697](https://twitter.com/sci_hub/status/1121397571539357697)

<sup>2</sup> Simranpal Singh, “Tesla patents made public to save the world, reveals Elon Musk.” *Gizmo China*, 01.02.2019. Accessed June 16, 2019. <https://www.gizmochina.com/2019/02/01/elon-musk-tesla-patents>

months after that, on 3 April 2019, Toyota offered free access to 24,000 of its patents<sup>3</sup>.

The moods among scientists from all over the world, veering on frustration and disappointment, allow one to formulate the prediction that we are entering an era of scientific communism when knowledge will become free. In 2016, the *Vox* portal surveyed 270 scientists from different countries to determine what problems they believe are hindering modern science from developing dynamically. Based on the survey findings, seven main obstacles were formulated, among which the inaccessibility of scientific information was ranked on the fifth place: 1) Academia has a huge money problem; 2) Too many studies are poorly designed; 3) Replicating results is crucial, and rare; 4) Peer-review is broken; 5) Too much science is locked behind paywalls; 6) Science is poorly communicated; 7) Life as a young academic is incredibly stressful.<sup>4</sup>

At this background, three groups of open access defenders stand out:

1) Librarians and science funders are playing hardball to negotiate lower subscription fees to scientific journals. Jeffrey K. MacKie-Mason, University Librarian and Chief Digital Scholarship Officer at the University of California, Berkeley, told *Vox* Media on 10 June 2019: “[The publishers] know it’s going to happen. They just want to protect their profits and their business model as long as they can.”<sup>5</sup>

2) Scientists, increasingly, are realizing they don’t need paywalled academic journals to act as gatekeepers any more. They are finding clever work-arounds, making the services that journals provide free.

3) Open access crusaders, including science pirates, have created alternatives that free up journal articles and pressure publishers to expand the free access.

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Ridden, “Toyota offers free access to over 20 years of electric vehicle patents.” *New Atlas*, 3.04.2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://newatlas.com/toyota-royalty-free-patents-electric-vehicle-technology/59139>

<sup>4</sup> Julia Belluz, Brad Plumer, and Brian Resnick, “The 7 biggest problems facing science, according to 270 scientists.” *Vox*, 07.09.2016. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/2016/7/14/12016710/science-challenges-research-funding-peer-review-process>

<sup>5</sup> Brian Resnick, and Julia Belluz, “The war of free science: How librarians, pirates, and funders are liberating the world’s academic research from paywalls.” *Vox*, 10.07.2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/6/3/18271538/open-access-elsevier-california-sci-hub-academic-paywalls>

## Background

The political and economic context of the digital age connected with the creation, dissemination and use of scientific knowledge, is changing.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was the first to announce a policy of Open Science in 2007. OECD's *Digital Economy Papers*<sup>6</sup>, published at the start of 2019, predict the appearance of a multitude of platforms and ecosystems offering goods, services, information, knowledge and new forms of intermediation for accessing and using them. The transformation in the economy calls into question the traditional thinking about how to organize and implement most effectively the economic and social activities. The digital ecosystems offer users comfort with a familiar interface that creates a sense of ease of use. The development of digital platforms raises questions related to equal access and market concentration. The OECD urges governing bodies to develop public platforms, either individually or in partnership with commercial platforms, to provide administrative and social services in the implementation of public policies.

In September 2018, the European Commission and the European Research Council (ERC), along with eleven national research funding organizations, announced the launch of Plan S<sup>7</sup> to make full and immediate Open Access to research publications. In 2019 the coalition was joined by funding organizations – 13 European research funding organizations and three charities (including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation). The funders state they control around €7.6 billion of funds annually. This represents less than 1% of the nearly \$2 trillion global spend on R&D. However, it is the academic papers arising from Plan S funders' R&D activities that determine the effects on the scholarly publishing market. In this context, Plan S funders have a more significant influence (Table 1)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> OECD. *Digital Economy Papers*. Paris: OECD Publishing, no. 273, 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, DOI: 10.1787/5ade2bba-en.

<sup>7</sup> Marc Schiltz, "Why Plan S." *cOAlition S*, 4.09.2018. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://www.coalition-s.org/why-plan-s>

<sup>8</sup> Dan Pollock and Ann Michael, "Potential Impact of Plan S." *Delta Think*, 24.09.2018. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://deltathink.com/news-views-potential-impact-of-plan-s>

Table 1. *Plan S – share of scholarly articles in context*<sup>9</sup>

Scholarly articles in 2017...	Shares of Global Research Articles	Share of Global OA Output
Plan S Funders Share of Global Output	3.3%	4.1%
Plan S Countries Share of Global Output	15%	18.4%
Plan S Funders Share of their Countries Output	22%	n/a
EU proportion of Global Output	26%	32.8%
Plan S Funders' Share of Global Output including equivalent level of funder coverage from Germany	3.9%	4.9%

The consortium around Plan S, called cOAlition S<sup>10</sup>, works with Digital Science<sup>11</sup> and combines the latter's data with data from Delta Think's Open Access Data & Analytics Tool<sup>12</sup>, which makes it possible to determine, approximately, the ratio in the research production. Plan S funders account for roughly 3.3% of articles published globally. These include all articles where a Plan S funder is involved, even as part of a jointly-funded or multi-author project. Although many of the Plan S funders are national, they account for just over one fifth of their respective countries' publication output. Also, as Plan S funders are OA advocates, they account for a higher than average share of OA output. Plan S principles are also consistent with other OA-advocacy countries (Germany), several institutions (University of California), funders (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), and with the broader EU principles of a move to OA by 2020. It is reasonable to posit that Plan S will gain additional support from a variety of OA stakeholders. One such example is Germany. Its absence from inclusion may well be a matter of the timing due to its on-going publisher negotiations, rather than differences in long-term position.

<sup>9</sup> Dan Pollock and Ann Michael, "Potential Impact of Plan S." *Delta Think*, 24.09.2018. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://deltathink.com/news-views-potential-impact-of-plan-s>

<sup>10</sup> cOAlition S. Brussels, Belgium: Science Europe, 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://www.coalition-s.org>

<sup>11</sup> Digital Science. London: Digital Science & Research Ltd, 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://www.digital-science.com>

<sup>12</sup> Delta Think Open Access Data & Analytics Tool (OA DAT). Delta Think, 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://deltathink.com/open-access/oa-data-analytics-tool>

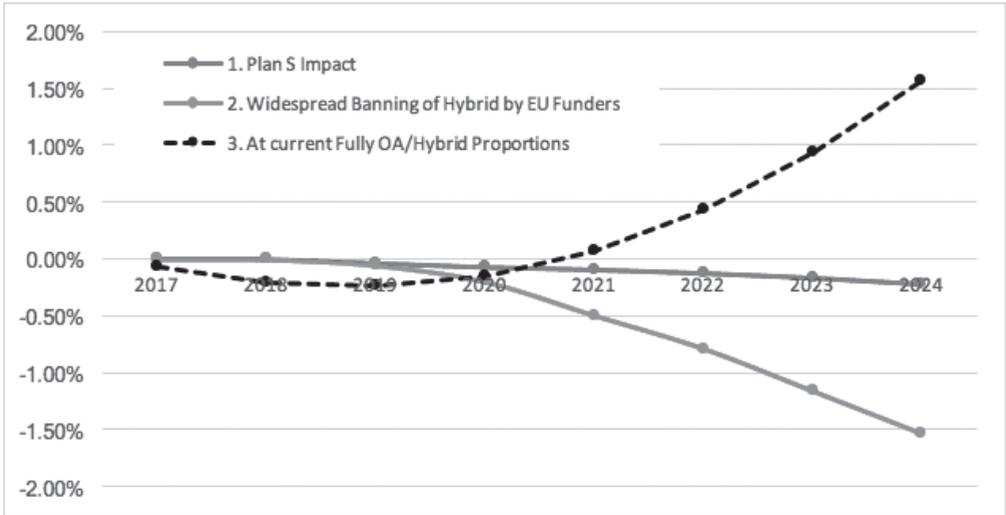


Figure 1. Change in market value of Plan S uptake scenarios compared with current projections<sup>13</sup>

Plan S includes a number of revolutionary principles that impact the market. Its preamble and principles mention banning publication in hybrid journals, requiring CC-BY licenses (Creative Commons Attribution 2.0) to be held by the author, instituting caps on APC (Article processing charge) funding, and the cOAlition S view on using the Journal Impact Factor for quality assessment and on the ban of the hybrid model. Broad advocacy exists in respect of the widespread banning of the hybrid model by EU funders covering OA output of all EU countries, among them of high OA-uptake countries, such as the UK, Austria, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Reactions to Plan S have ranged from delighting OA advocates, to suggesting that this is simply a part of the on-going discussion about OA, to responses from the mainstream scholarly publishing community urging for more detailed consideration of the complexities of the scholarly publishing market, to concerns from some researchers that it will deprive them of quality journal venues and of international collaborative opportunities.

The planned launch of Plan S, with the primary goal of opening access to publicly funded research in the European Union as of 1 January 2020, was post-

<sup>13</sup> Dan Pollock and Ann Michael. "Potential Impact of Plan S." *Delta Think*, 24.09.2018. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://deltathink.com/news-views-potential-impact-of-plan-s>

poned to 2021<sup>14</sup>. Following consultations with academic libraries, publishers and researchers, cOAlition S announced that until 2021, eased requirements will apply<sup>15</sup>:

cOAlition S will not place a cap on the cost of publishing a paper in an open-access journal. But they say journals must be transparent about publishing costs.

cOAlition S changed the rules concerning hybrid titles and offered “transformative agreements”, which give these partly paywalled journals a route to becoming open access.

cOAlition S will ignore the prestige of journals when making funding decisions.

In some cases, researchers will be able to publish work under more restrictive open licences, when approved by cOAlition S.

The reasons for the postponement can be found in two directions - in the resistance of the publishing community whose actions are increasingly in the direction of protecting their own profit, rather than protecting the quality of research and the interests of the authors, or related to the protection of the interests of researchers, their copyright and the quality of research output. It can only be noted that the use of hybrid journals is a temporary measure to full open access. Plan S is intended to accelerate the changes in this direction. Its small core of funders can have a significant impact in the future when access to research publications will increasingly be through open science on-line platforms.

## Methodology

Hypothesis: Revolutionary changes in the organization and functioning of academic journals are looming, and the model of scholarly publishing will be changed for good.

Object: open-access resources for research communication

Subject: the positive changes for academic authors and their publications in the contest of the digital transformation

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<sup>14</sup> cOAlition S, *Plan S: Principles and Implementation*. Brussels, Belgium: Science Europe, 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation>

<sup>15</sup> Holly Else, “Radical open-access plan could spell end to journal subscriptions.” *Nature* 561, (2018): 17-18. Accessed June 16, 2019, DOI: 10.1038/d41586-018-06178-7.

The study focused on the development of the view of a rapid-effect socially beneficial science based on an open-access policy, and addressed four overarching research questions:

What changes are expected at the EU level in respect of access to publicly-funded scientific output produced by the research effort of international teams?

Are the questions about the purpose of scientific achievements primarily of moral and philosophical essence, or are they predominantly related to economic and business interests?

Are the editorial teams of scientific journals threatened by the two ongoing debates - about the effectiveness of open peer reviews and about ignoring the significance of the impact factor (IF and IR) of their publications?

The qualitative systematic review (qualitative evidence synthesis), the methods of the analytic and synthetic processing of primary and secondary resources, secondary data analysis and overview of scientific publications available in the libraries worldwide, were used to obtain data about the impact of new EU solutions: the European Road Map for development of European Research Area (ERA), the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ES-FRI), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, etc. The analysis of innovation in publishing platforms was conducted with special attention to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's platform *Gates Open Research*.

### **Object of the research: *Gates Open Research* platform**

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was among the first open-science funders in the world. As far back as in 2013 Gates supported the just starting Berlin-based ResearchGate, the most popular and free networking website for scientists, with funding to the amount of USD 35 million<sup>16</sup>.

In November 2014, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation changed the rules for research funding by putting in place an open-data policy. Researchers could publish in subscription journals but had to guarantee that after 12 months their papers be made freely available<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Seattle, WA, 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do>

<sup>17</sup> Richard Van Noorden, "Gates Foundation announces world's strongest policy on open access research." *Nature*, 21.11.2014. Accessed June 16, 2019, <http://blogs.nature.com/news/2014/11/gates-foundation-announces-worlds-strongest-policy-on-open-access-research.html>

As of 1 January 2017, after a so-called “grace period”, the Foundation’s rules were changed and publishing with closed access is no longer allowed. “Personally, I applaud the Gates Foundation for taking this stance,” says Simon Hay, a Gates-funded researcher who is director of geospatial science at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation in Seattle, Washington. “The overwhelming majority of my colleagues in global health and fellow Gates grantees with whom I have chatted are highly supportive of these developments,” he says.<sup>18</sup>

The Foundation requires the publication of articles under the free Creative Commons Attribution license which enables dissemination and processing of material subject to designation of authorship.

Scientists who do research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are not allowed to publish papers about that work in journals that include *Nature*, *Science*, *the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)* and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*. This is due to the fact that the charity requires from grant recipients to publish open-access research, whereas the journals in question do not offer this kind of open-access publishing.

A spokesperson for *Nature*’s publisher, Springer Nature, said that most Springer Nature journals do comply with the Gates Foundation policies, but a “small number”, including *Nature* and some Nature-branded research titles, do not. “At the moment we believe the subscription model is still the best way to provide sustainable and widespread access to journals with low acceptance rates such as *Nature* and the Nature-branded research and reviews titles,” the spokesperson added.<sup>19</sup>

## Results

The Gates Open Research is the newest publication medium that researchers supported by the Gates Foundation can use in order to disseminate their data in a way which is fully compliant with their open access policy. The website was launched on 1 January 2017 as a platform for rapid publication by researchers,

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<sup>18</sup> Richard Van Noorden, “Science journals end open-access trial with Gates Foundation.” *Nature*, 13.07.2018. Accessed June 16, 2019, <http://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05729-2>

<sup>19</sup> Richard Van Noorden, “Gates Foundation research can’t be published in top journals.” *Nature* 541, (17.01.2017): 270. Accessed June 16, 2019, <http://www.nature.com/news/gates-foundation-research-can-t-be-published-in-top-journals-1.21299>

with transparent peer review<sup>20</sup>. Publications with closed/paid access are not admitted as of this date.

Gates Open Research is based on F1000Research's format<sup>21</sup>. F1000 is an abbreviation for the Faculty of 1000 - a cadre of experts who provide peer review and recommendations as needed. F1000Research is an open science post-publication peer review platform. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is the second funding body to partner with F1000 to generate an open-access academic publishing platform (the first was the Wellcome Trust).

The Gates Open Research platform advocates the view of the rapid and beneficial societal impact of the new and publicly accepted research. Essentially, the entire work in the platform is carried out by the team of F1000Research, and the Foundation covers the publishing costs. The publication of an article up to 1,000 words costs \$150, from 1,000 to 2,500 words - \$500, and more than 2,500 words, \$1,000. The Wellcome Trust charitable foundation works on the same principle. In November 2016 the charity signed an agreement with F1000Research and has since published about 50 research articles for Wellcome Open Research. On average, an article costs \$990 to the charity, the manuscript reaches the website within seven days and is refereed in the course of one month.

*Gates Open Research* gives authors significantly more control than normally given to them by a traditional publication model. Authors can decide what and when to publish, including replication studies and negative results. Authors will also be able to suggest reviewers for their paper or choose from a list of suggested reviewers. This is the essence of the author-led open peer-review model. The refereeing process takes 14 days at the most (*Figure 2*). Once submitted, the article has to pass basic editorial checks by the F1000 faculty prior to publication. This final process usually takes seven days (*Figure 3*). An important fact is that the grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation each year publish 2,000-2,500 papers in the area of healthcare and education.

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<sup>20</sup> Gates Open Research. London: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, F1000 Research Ltd., 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://gatesopenresearch.org>

<sup>21</sup> F1000Research. London: Science Navigation Group, 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://f1000research.com>

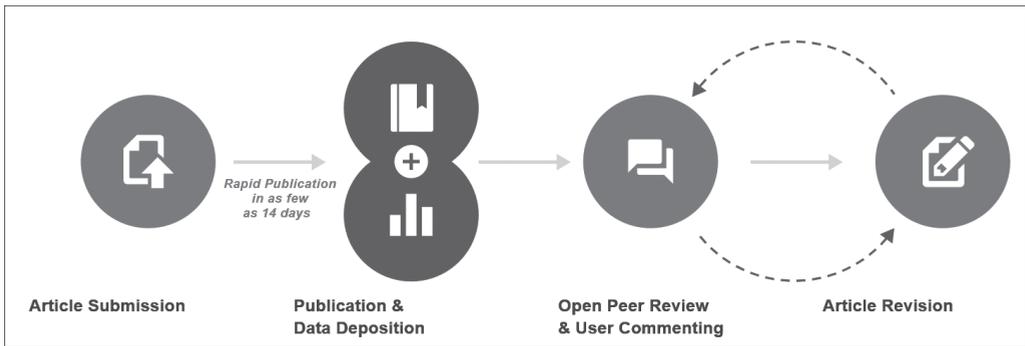


Figure 2. *The length of the refereeing process: 14 days*<sup>22</sup>

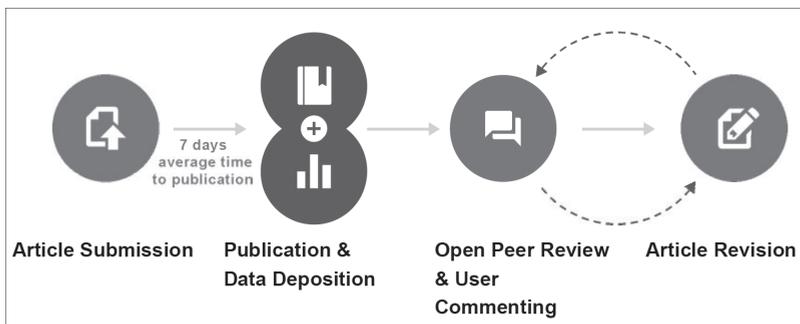


Figure 3. *The length of the publishing process for articles: 7 days*<sup>23</sup>

To recap, below we offer a summary of the most important characteristics of the new model of intermediation in science legitimized by the *Gates Open Research*:

*Benefits for researchers:* Enables authors, not editors, to decide when to make their research available. Authors suggest peer reviewers and control the process. All types of research can be published rapidly: articles, data sets, null results, protocols, case reports, incremental findings, etc.

*Benefits for research:* Shifts the way research and researchers are evaluated. Moves away from journal-based ranging towards direct assessment of

<sup>22</sup> Gates Open Research, *Guidelines for Article Reviewers*. London: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, F1000 Research Ltd., 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://gatesopenresearch.org/for-referees/guidelines>

<sup>23</sup> Gates Open Research, *How it Works*. London: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, F1000 Research Ltd., 2019. Accessed June 16, 2019, <https://gatesopenresearch.org/about>

individual outputs. Supports research assessment based on the intrinsic value of the research, not the venue of publication.

*Benefits for society:* Reduces the barrier to collaborative research through data sharing, transparency and attribution. Reduces research waste and helps to remove the bias in our understanding of research. Enables others to build upon new ideas right away, wherever and whoever they are.

The Gates Foundation is dedicated to the belief that all lives have equal value and everyone deserves the opportunity to lead a healthy and productive life. To solve the challenges of the 21st century, we must accelerate open access to high-quality research on health, education, and economic development. Gates Open Research is designed to ensure that the research we fund can be of immediate benefit to society.

If we are to summarize the contribution of the platform, it is found in the following:

- a shift from author-centred to research-centred platform;
- transfer power from the hands of the editors to the hands of the authors;
- minimize barriers or gatekeepers on the path of the new scientific outcome for society;
- transparent peer-review of research;
- assessment of the research not in view of the venue of publication but on the basis of the intrinsic value of the completed study;
- minimizing the funds invested in publishing and dissemination.

## **Conclusion**

After 2017, the landscape of scholarly publishing is much different, thanks in large part to non-governmental funds that already mandate open access. Large foundations such as Ford, Gates and Hewlett have adopted strong open-access policies that require research to be not only publicly available, but also licensed to allow re-publishing and re-use by anyone. The world's second-largest charitable foundation, the Wellcome Trust, also offers free access to the scientific output of everyone who receives financial support from it. But if the publisher does not allow them to publish for free access, the Wellcome Trust allows such articles to be embargoed for up to six months.

The circumstances that were examined indicate that revolutionary changes in the organization and functioning of academic journals are looming, and the model of scholarly publishing will be changed for good:

The barriers and gatekeepers on the path of new scientific outcomes to society will be reduced influenced by the tendency of disintermediation in the financial sector.

The funds invested in scientific communication will be streamlined.

The benefits of open refereeing will be advanced

The future models of communicating science will *centre on new knowledge and new scientific outcomes*, and not on the author or the venue of publication (the name of the journal).

The platforms for scientific knowledge creation and sharing will shift from being *researcher-centric platforms* to being *research-centric platforms*, hand in hand with the shift of the media environment from an “economy of attention” towards an “ecology of attention”<sup>24</sup>.

EU’s research potential is increasingly entering a research ecosystem of decommodification and decapitalization. It may well be that the driving forces behind a more radical and urgent change are entrepreneurs and philanthropists such as Bill Gates and Elon Musk.

Universality is a fundamental principle of science. Only results that can be discussed, challenged, and reproduced by others qualify as scientific. The moral solution is open access. What is needed is to find the proper legal framework for a fair distribution of the benefits between science and society. “Knowledge is not simply another commodity. On the contrary. Knowledge is never used up. It increases by diffusion and grows by dispersion”, Daniel Boorstin, U.S. Library of Congress Director (1975-1987), says.

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<sup>24</sup> Yves Citton, *The Ecology of Attention* (Cambridge: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 28.

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# INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM – TENDENCIES IN FUNDING

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*Abstract:* In this paper I am inspecting the development of funding investigative journalism, focusing on individual cases in foreign media practices and how these experiences have been transferred to the Bulgarian media reality. I am highlighting the following cases: communities, that are financing investigations of journalists; stakeholder media and media of consumer communities.

*Keywords:* investigative journalism, fund raising, Stakeholder media, crowdsourcing, crowdfunding.

The realities of the twenty-first century, and especially the massive introduction of new technologies that provide connectivity and integration in different communities, affect in an inevitable way the capabilities of investigative journalism.

In this paper I am inspecting the development of funding investigative journalism, focusing on individual cases in foreign media practices and how these experiences have been transferred to the Bulgarian media reality.

There are emerging non-governmental organizations and communities, which mission is in the field of civic and moral values and that are funding the creation of investigative journalism through various models. In most of the cases, these organizations are international, transnational, networked.

There are emerging communities which are funding various creative projects on the principle of crowdsourcing and crowdfunding, and which experience is the basis for creation of journalistic investigations. There are also communities that, on the one hand, are assisting journalists with information and, on the other hand, are taking benefits from their investigations. A similar type of community are consumer communities, that are making consumers more involved in specific causes.

The old watchdog-type media are being transformed into stakeholder media or they are actively cooperating with them.

## 1. CASES WHERE COMMUNITIES ARE FINANCING INVESTIGATIONS OF JOURNALISTS

### **radins.com**

radins.com is an independent online media outlet that, thanks to the services it offers, creates a community that later has been utilized to fund its investigations. Radins.com is not created by professional journalists, but essentially it uses the basic techniques of investigative journalism.

The main message that summarizes all of its content is: “Make life not only cheaper, but better”. It contains information about the offers on the Internet - those for which you get very good quality at an extremely low price. radins.com offers a service that can also be done by watchdog media<sup>1</sup>, checking commercial ads and customer’s complaints.

Another service offered by radins.com is to collect the information that the users themselves generate. There are dozens of tips on the site and a large percentage of them are generating from radins.com users themselves. radins.com is connected with six journalists who are working from home, using e-mail and telephone. In addition, the site does not need advertising as the users themselves promote it to one another.

### **Spot.us**

Spot.us functions as a hub for collecting, classifying and disseminating information in which journalists and readers are largely equal. This equivalence is seen by the way reporters can initiate an investigation on behalf of certain donors who offer them the topic of the investigation. The other way of working is when reporters suggest the topic of their investigation, and after that they begin to wait for funding from donors to whom they have provided information, what they want to investigate. The amounts they apply for are relatively small - from \$ 500 to fund the work of individual reporters, to \$ 10,000 for larger projects, that are run by an entire editorial departments.

Spot.us has also been criticised for directing the involvement of investigative journalists in a sense that it makes them highly dependent on donors and ready to make compromises with their work.

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<sup>1</sup> BESIOU, Maria, Mark Lee HUNTER, Luk Van WASSENHOVE. A Web of Watchdogs: Stakeholder Media Networks and Agenda-Setting in Response to Corporate Initiatives. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Winter 2013, 709-729.

### **Experiences in the Bulgarian environment:**

There are websites, that have created communities around them like BG-Mamma, but even in the cases when there are investigations, they are done occasionally by the users of the site and the administrators do not have the practice to check the information. Despite the lack of such experience in the Bulgarian environment, it can be expected that in the future the resources of the already established communities will be used to finance investigations by professional journalists.

Another example is the practice of the Bulgarian Foundation “Access to Information” to fund journalistic investigations on a competitive basis. This Program exists since 1996. Its purpose is to support the exercise of the right to information; to promote the search for information through civic education in the field of freedom of information; to work for the transparency of the central and local governmental institutions. It performs specific activities: it monitors freedom of information in the Bulgarian legislation and it participates in debates about its compliance with the international standards; it builds a journalistic network in 27 cities in the country with the idea to monitor the access to information practices; it also conducts special surveys on the status of access to information; it gives advises on cases, that are related to the right to information; it renders legal assistance in individual cases; it organizes conferences and trainings on problems of access to information.

At the end of 2014, the Foundation has holded competition for the first time - it invites applications with project proposals for investigative journalism on topics of major importance, with mandatory institutions that are being indicated. The goal is to submit a new information and to use public sources of information under the procedures of the existing legislation. Applicants must work as journalists. Only individual applications are allowed and project proposals are evaluated by a seven-member jury. Each approved candidate receives a grant of \$ 4,500 for their investigation coming within the project of the Civic Center to Support Transparency in Public Life, funded by a grant from the America for Bulgaria Foundation. The competition is held in 2015 and 2016, it supported 18 investigations. In 2017 the financial support for one investigation was reduced to BGN 4,000, but again a total of five<sup>2</sup> investigations have been supported.

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<sup>2</sup> It refers to the investigation of Todor Grozdev from “Zname newspaper” - Pazardzhik, to the investigation of Bozhidar Angelov from “New life newspaper” – Kardzhali; to the investigation of Ivanka Vateva from “Posredniknews” - Pleven website, to the investigation of Kalin Ivanov from “Vidin West news agency” and to the investigation of Marieta Dimitrova from the “Blagoevgrad News news agency”.

Talking about the Bulgarian experience, it is noticeable that investigations connected with the access to public information are being indissociably funded. It encourages the application of various legal instruments, but not investigations, that are a kind of “the journalist changes his profession” or investigations, that are conducted in several countries and that are related with the use of drone photographs, paid lawyer services or other professional instruments. In the future, we can hardly expect a change towards larger investigations, such as arms deals or drug trafficking. A number of media outlets, both new and established, have used grants from Foundation “America for Bulgaria” under its Media program, that supports investigations. It is noteworthy that journalists who are working for media are rarely getting involved with a different topic than those that they have developed in their previous editions. And the funding from Friedrich Nauman Foundation, which supports the so called “The Government-sponsored Black Diversion Fund” does not offer an “exclusive” investigative journalism - such as is being done just for the first time by the journalist, especially for the initiative of the German organization. Probably the idea is to promote the results of investigations, that were already been made, with the idea that they did not elicit the desired public response.

## 2. The Stakeholder Media Case

According to media researchers Mark Lee Hunter and Luk Wassenhove, when a serious financial problem in a media outlet occurs, it could retain its investigative journalism department by transforming it into a stakeholder media, or become an information service provider as for the traditional media, as well as the stakeholder media<sup>3</sup>.

On the other hand, the fact that the investigative journalism team, becoming a stakeholder media, or starting working for this type of organization, risks sacrificing its independent position and even starting to make a so called “commission journalism”, which not only gives a tribune to express a certain opinion, but begins to fight for its endorsement.

In order to prevent it from drifting in this direction, the investigative journalist should adhere to several principles: 1. to conduct extensive studies, describing the individual steps that the investigation has undergone so that the

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<sup>3</sup> HUNTER, Mark Lee, Luk N. Van WASSENHOVE. *Disruptive News Technologies: Stakeholder Media and the Future of Watchdog Journalism Business Models*. France: INSEAD, 2010, p. 21.

reader is not impressed that its outcome is assumed. 2. to express a personal moral position and to offer solutions to problems, which may be different from those of the stakeholder media.

Media researchers Guido Palazzo and Andreas Georg Scherer recall that before the so-called “era of objective journalism”, the presentation of marginal or minority views was a traditional function of news media<sup>4</sup>. Today, specific interest-based communities are using online platforms as agora where they raise their political, economic, and even personal issues. However, in these online communities or stakeholders’ media, the aim is not to create a ‘consensus environment’. The goal is to identify issues of concern in a given community and to provide solutions that help the current and the new members of the community.

They receive funds through different channels, not just through the classical model in the information industry (advertising plus revenue from a fair price). Other media also need different sources of funding that can only be considered credible if they are diversified.

According to media researchers Guido Palazzo and Andreas Georg Scherer, ten years ago, the media of the stakeholders were perceived as a threat to journalism, but in recent times the crisis in the media is so serious that the current positions are undergoing reconsideration. Stakeholder media should be seen as an opportunity for the development and existence<sup>5</sup> of investigative journalism.

The two types of media can be compared in terms of indicators - focus, attention, social benefits and values, content, attitude to the past, information such as a motor of action, type of source of information, professional ethics, change of marketing focus. According to some indicators, the stakeholder media are extending the potential of the journalistic investigation (transparency; use of experts; the fact that the content turns from a product into a service; an interest towards the past and the present), in other cases watchdog media are working for a greater effect of the investigation (targeting the state and society at large, in-depth journalistic work on a specific issue, providing verified information, obtaining first-hand information, putting a marketing focus on the entire readership).

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<sup>4</sup> PALAZZO, Guido and Andreas Georg SCHERER. Corporate Legitimacy as Deliberation: A Communicative Framework. *Journal of Business Ethics*. New York: Springer, 2006, 60–64.

<sup>5</sup> PALAZZO, Guido and Andreas Georg SCHERER. Corporate Legitimacy as Deliberation: A Communicative Framework. *Journal of Business Ethics*. New York: Springer, 2006, 66–68.

The weaknesses in the work organization are more in the stakeholders' media, which operate under reduced editorial control.

The weaknesses in the outcome of the work are maximized in watchdog investigations, because of the fact that the risk of a lack of convictions against the persons, who are investigated, has a negative impact on the confidence in media and on the trust in judicial system. When investigations in such a kind of journalism do not lead to the resignation of the corrupt politicians, the result is a decline in political class confidence and a citizens' boycott of elections.

Regarding the development of the two types of media, the traditional – the watchdog media are encouraging the increase of media interest of stakeholders, through their prerogative to provide an impartial and comprehensive description of events and problems, but at the same time these media become more dependent on them, using them as sources of information and quoting their opinions.

The emergence of stakeholder media has an impact on the social functions of investigative journalism - they are more conducive in restoring social justice and social change, as they respond to pre-existing civic intolerance for a particular negative social phenomenon.

### **3. The case with the media of consumer communities**

Consumer community media is a separate group of watchdog type media. Investigative consumer journalism emerges in the same time with the practice of the NGOs to investigate the textile and food industries. These NGOs make it available to the media either as an accomplished journalistic material or as a database representing “crude” investigations. A second big impetus for investigative consumer journalism is the online forums, where there are a shared customer reviews, that have an important role in the purchasing decision<sup>6</sup>.

The so called “consumer media” are not immune to various addictions - especially with the use of online forums - they can become a conduit of hidden advertising and false information.

At the same time, the use of internet forums should not be stigmatized, but should be treated as a standard source of information to be verified. The forums should be treated as a benefit not only from the stakeholder media as from the non-governmental organizations, that are investigating consumer journalism,

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<sup>6</sup> HUNTER, Mark Lee, David SOBERMAN. The ‘Equalizer’: Measuring and Explaining the Impact of Online Communities on Consumer Markets. Fontainebleau: INSEAD Working Paper, 2009, p. 18

because traditional media do not provide sufficiently detailed and critical information on a large number of widely used products. This is either because traditional media do not have the necessary capacity to do it, or because they do not want to start a conflict with their advertisers. Therefore the so called “consumer investigative journalism” will have an increasing potential for development. It can be financed by subscription from the readers themselves – by consumers or through donations from different consumer associations, patient organizations, trade unions.

Thinking about the experience in the Bulgarian environment we have to admit that there is not a media of consumer communities. The reason is that Bulgarian investigative journalism has not a tradition in making investigations in the field of textile and food industries.

## Conclusion

Trends in funding investigative journalism around the world seem to be taking place away from Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, the traditional mechanism - donation - is still relied on. It is also used by the most famous Bulgarian investigative site Bivol - the media partner of WikiLeaks for the Balkans, that makes it in the original form of “Tax Bivol”<sup>7</sup>. It is noteworthy that by the beginning of 2017 (on 20/01/2017), if the reader is choosing to pay the tax in a support of independent investigative journalism, he / she learns that for a year the amount of financial assistance received by investigative journalists is EUR 8 402 and the goal is to “achieve” EUR 100 000. This failure to raise donations is a testament why at this stage it is difficult to expect that investigative journalism in Bulgaria will be able to be fully funded by reading communities or interest groups. On the one hand, the divided in different camps media field in Bulgaria – Bivol, Peevski’s media, Prokopiev’s media, America for Bulgaria’s media - can only work for increasing Bivol’s donors. On the other hand, this division generally

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<sup>7</sup> The editor of Bivol are explaining what does it mean a “Tax Bivol”? It is a support for the independent investigative journalism. This is the sweetest tax. It is optional and you can stop it at any time. Paying Bivol Tax, you are receiving a real public service from competent investigative journalists who chase, track down and uncover corruption. Bivol tax is also an investment. As corruption goes down, your real income increases. When you let it spread wildly, you end up paying again. There is no other business with such a big return on investment as investigative journalism. Studies show that it is measured in thousands of percent. A modest investigation team is capable to return an amount of \$ 200,000 per a year to the Treasury or to prevent the theft of tens of millions - cash, land, assets, EU funds, etc.

diminishes confidence in the Bulgarian media and creates additional obstacles to the effective exercise of the social functions of investigative journalism, one of which is to promote the social responsibility of the media.

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# THE JOURNALIST AND THE POLITICIAN – THE BLURRING OF THE BORDERS BETWEEN TWO PUBLIC ROLES

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*Abstract:* The interplay between politics and the media is an old and well-known game. History offers a lot of examples of prominent figures who have switched between these two public roles – from a journalist into a politician, and vice versa. The mediatized politics and the politicized media environment give skillful politicians the unique opportunity to exert ever greater control over the media market and the editorial content through the use of institutional levers. In Bulgaria, for example, we see the revival of party media. Along with these processes, a quiet subversion is going on. In addition to journalism being used as a ‘springboard’ to a political career, there has been an increase in the number of politicians who become journalists and take advantage of the decreasing level of public trust the media still enjoy. This article describes and analyzes precisely this blurring of the border between politics and the media, between the politician and the journalist. Of course, the big losers as a result of this subversion are the citizens.

*Keywords:* Media, journalism, Bulgarian media environment, subversion, public interest, journalists, politicians, changes in roles

A number of reputable organizations have noted in their reports on the media landscape in Central and Eastern Europe the tendency of ruling politicians to exert increasing influence over the media market and the editorial content. External investors are selling their media businesses and their departure gives current prime ministers (as in the Czech Republic and Hungary) and businesspeople close to the government the opportunity to buy entire media clusters and turn them into propaganda shields and weapons of those in power [1].

In addition to these processes of buying and taking over media organizations, there is also a tendency towards intensive politicization of the media environment. More than a decade ago, German communications theorist Roland Burkart outlined several functions of the media in relation to the political system [2]. In his view, the media (a) create publicity by informing the public about the

specifics of the political system; (b) guarantee the diversity of opinions and the freedom to express different views; (c) mediate between majority and minority groups; (d) bear responsibility for the level of political education within a society and create opportunities for people to see themselves in a specific political role (e.g., a voter, a politician, a candidate for public office, a protester). However, the media can fulfill the last function in this list only in a clearly defined civil society in which citizens understand the essence of the social role they perform.

This social role, however, is being publicly redefined in the context of the blurring of the borders in the political system. We see examples from European countries of violating the rule of law, limiting fundamental democratic freedoms, and reining in the judicial system and law-enforcing authorities by political circles from within the government. Funds from EU programs are being used for the purchase of media ‘comfort’ [3]. In Bulgaria alone, the different governments that ruled the country between 2007 and 2019 distributed over 58 million leva (approximately 32.6 million dollars) among the media without public procurement, via direct negotiations. The notion of democracy, thus, seems to be growing more and more formal, while elections legitimize the unshakable status quo. Bulgarian-born French philosopher Tzvetan Todorov describes this phenomenon in present-day European democracies as ‘double pluralism’: ‘The pluralism of parties, which guarantees the diversity of public opinions, and the pluralism of authorities, which, embodying the autonomous institutions, constrain each other. The misuse of power means its monopolization’, Todorov points out [4].

The media have always been seen as instruments of those in power – a means for exercising social control through the dissemination of information [5]. The media have always provided a platform for the creation of a desired public image or have been used as ‘bats’. They also offer a stage of prestige that serves as a springboard for any person with political ambitions who wants to join the race for power. The presence in the media generates trust and publicly legitimizes the participants in the political system. If you do not appear on television, you are essentially disqualified from the start.

Along with the aforementioned changes in the political system and the reining of the media, the public conception of the image of the journalist is also being altered, albeit less visibly at first glance. According to media theorist Mariya Popova, there is no overall change in the political functions of the media but rather an upgrade involving the addition of new roles that correspond to the existing political and social conditions [6].

In this way, the social role of professional journalists is being redefined yet again. There are many examples of journalists entering politics. In Bulgaria,

however, the opposite is happening more and more often, with politicians turning into journalists and hosting TV shows. These politicians-turned-journalists take advantage of the decreasing level of public trust the journalistic profession still enjoys.

### **Media and politics – four problematic areas**

Focusing on Bulgaria, we can highlight four problematic areas in the relationship between the media and the political system:

1. The state, represented by the executive branch of power, is a major advertiser in the media. For the two EU program periods (2007-2013 and 2014-2020), the government has distributed more than 58 million leva (approximately 32.6 million dollars) among the media for the implementation of the communication programs of the EU funds. For some media, the ‘support’ they received accounts for over 10% of their annual advertising revenues [7]. This state of affairs makes the media vulnerable to becoming too dependent on those in power.

2. The owner of one of the most influential newspaper groups, New Bulgarian Media Group, is an active politician and a member of parliament representing the Movement for Rights and Freedoms. This is a textbook example of using one’s seemingly non-partisan media outlets for political purposes. We have seen similar examples in other European countries, such as Italy (Silvio Berlusconi), Hungary (Viktor Orban and his ‘orbanization’), and the Czech Republic (Andrej Babis).

3. Party media, including newspapers, TV channels, and websites, are booming. This politicization is in part a paradoxical replica of the one that occurred in the early 1990s, when the media landscape was dominated by party media. At the dawn of Bulgaria’s transition to democracy, many thought it was absolutely normal for a political party to have its own media. There followed nearly two decades during which major party media disappeared (the symbolic Democracy newspaper, which belonged to the Union of Democratic Forces, was closed down, while the Bulgarian Socialist Party’s Duma was marginalized) and many people came to believe that party media have no place in a well-functioning democratic society. Unfortunately, today we are witnessing a revival of the belief that the Bulgarian society needs partisan journalism. Here are some examples:

- Three parties from the ruling coalition – Ataka, VMRO, and the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria – have their own party media. Ataka owns a TV channel (Alpha) and a newspaper (Ataka), VMRO – a TV channel (Bulgaria

24) and a newspaper (Bulgaria), and the National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria – a TV channel (SKAT) and a newspaper (Desant);

- The ruling party GERB has no official media. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Georgi Harizanov, one of the party's unofficial speakers, is the chief executive officer of TV Evropa. He used to host a show on Kanal 3 and often appears as guest on programs of TV Evropa, where GERB supporters host their own shows. One example is Anton Todorov, a former GERB member of parliament and the current host of the Dokumentite show. Those in power and GERB leader and prime minister Boyko Borisov have traditionally enjoyed media comfort on the show.

- Delyan Peevski's newspapers, Telegraph and Monitor, which are among the most influential newspapers in Bulgaria, have traditionally served the interests of the party he belongs to;

- Since the beginning of 2019, the opposition Bulgarian Socialist Party has its own TV channel – Bulgarian Free Television. The party also publishes the Duma newspaper, the successor of Rabotnichesko Delo, the official party newspaper until 1989. Among the people hosting shows on the TV channel are current BSP member of parliament Alexander Simov and former member of parliament Velizar Enchev, who ran for office in the 2019 European Parliament elections (and received a large number of preferential votes).

4. The subversion of political journalism in Bulgaria has been going on for more than a decade now.

Ataka leader Volen Siderov worked as a journalist before entering politics. He has been editor in chief of Democracy, the first democratic party newspaper of the early 1990s, and deputy editor in chief of Monitor. He has gained considerable popularity since 2003 as the host of his own TV show (named after his party) on SKAT.

In February 2014, Rosen Petrov, the host of a popular late-afternoon Sunday show on bTV (one of the most popular TV channels in Bulgaria), shocked his viewers after he entered politics by handing his officer's dirk on air over to the leader of Bulgaria Without Censorship and pledged allegiance to the newborn party.

Before that, Nikolay Barekov made the same transition to politics. He hosted bTV's morning talk show for many years before becoming a host and executive director of TV7, a TV channel financed by Tsvetan Vassilev, the former majority owner of the Corporate Commercial Bank, which collapsed in 2014. Barekov then formed his own party, Bulgaria Without Censorship, also financed by Vassilev, and made a political career in the European Parliament.

Slavi Trifonov, the host of one of the most popular TV shows in Bulgaria, also flirted with politics on air for several years. His show ran on one of the biggest private TV channels in the country (bTV) for 19 years in a row. Throughout the years, Slavi's Show featured as guests politicians, singers, and other prominent public figures – from Mikhail Gorbachev through Bulgarian party leaders to famous pop-folk singers. A big chunk of the skits and satire on the show were inspired by the political elite, creating an impression of criticism through mocking.

In November 2016, Slavi's Show initiated a national referendum on changing the political system in Bulgaria. The questions asked in the vote covered topics such as the introduction of a majoritarian electoral system and mandatory voting, and the reduction of state subsidies for political parties to 1 lev (approximately 0.5 euro) per vote. Nevertheless, the show's team had even bigger ambitions.

In the beginning of 2018, the show launched a 'competition' for 'talented, qualified, and moral Bulgarians' capable of replacing the country's political class. 'If you are a good professional in your field, if you are educated, and if you really want to change the country without being dependent on anybody, show up', Trifonov urged his viewers at the time [8].

In April 2019, inspired by the example of Slavi's Show, the Ataka political party launched on its TV channel a 'political reality show' with the purpose of selecting its candidates for the European Parliament elections. The program, which ran live, gave viewers the opportunity to send text messages in support of their preferred candidate.

'This is not exactly a reality show but a kind of a full majoritarian system in the full sense of the word. You can pick a person who is willing to run for office, show up in front of a jury, and answer questions. The viewer will have the chance to decide who will appear on the list of the Ataka political party for the upcoming European Parliament elections', member of parliament Nikolay Alexandrov said at the time [9].

Slavi Trifonov's undertaking wrapped up with an opened ending. In May 2019, the showman announced that the show's contract with bTV would expire on July 31, 2019.

'My team and I have long felt we are not part of the media environment. We simply do not feel we belong. Look around, see how things are organized and operate, and ask yourselves if you feel you belong. This is how we feel. As people working in television, throughout the years we have been doing things in line with our feelings. We wish the media environment was different. We have a different understanding of freedom and the ways in which we can defend it. Be-

cause, dear viewers, at the root of our team's existence is our sense of freedom, the unconditional feeling that we are free to express our opinion. Because we have always talked to you as free people to free people. In the position in which we find ourselves now, we cannot do more. That is why I decided not to extend our contract. Do not think that we have problems with our partners, bTV. No, we do not. This is my, our conscious decision', Trifonov said on air.

The decision to stop the show has further fueled the speculations that Trifonov and his team will initiate the creation of a new political project. Veselin Mareshki, the leader of the populist Volya party, declared half-seriously, half-jokingly in July 2019 that he would like to have his own TV show called Vesko's Show [10].

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2019 the showman Slavi Trifonov established his new party called "There is no such country".

### **Media and politics – moral and ethical conundrums**

The composition of the 44<sup>th</sup> Bulgarian national assembly offers evidence of the growing number of journalists entering politics. One of GERB's major speakers in parliament is former journalist Toma Bikov. In addition to Alexander Simov, who was mentioned earlier, the BSP's parliamentary group includes Toma Tomov, a prominent journalist from the recent past, as well as Elena Yoncheva, who is known for her international reports and documentaries from conflict areas in the Middle East, Africa, and Ukraine. Yoncheva led the BSP's list for the 2019 EU elections and was elected as member of the European Parliament. Ivo Hristov, a former journalist and head of the political cabinet of President Rumen Radev, also earned a seat in the European Parliament as a BSP representative. Hristov previously worked as a publicist, political commentator, and a host of shows on the Bulgarian National Television (BNT) and the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR). He has also worked in Nova Television and has been director of the BBT TV channel, which no longer exists.

Among the aforementioned journalists-turned-politicians, Elena Yoncheva represents one of the most morally and ethically intriguing cases.

As a spokeswoman for BSP and a member of parliament between April 2017 and May 2019, Yoncheva revealed a series of abuses in government, describing her revelations as 'investigative journalism'. One such example is 'Border', a documentary that talks about financial abuses in relation to the construction of the border wall between Bulgaria and Turkey. In another 'investigation' from January 2019, Yoncheva accused the minister of culture, Boil Banov, of causing

damages to the state worth at least 700,000 leva (approximately 350,000 euro) by absolving the firm that built the Largo in Sofia of a penalty payment and giving instructions as to how some documents could be falsified. The accusation was based on a recorded conversation between the minister and an official of the ministry of culture. The prosecutor's office did not find evidence that would justify an investigation against the minister. Yoncheva said she would give the original recordings to the chief prosecutor but vowed not to disclose the name of her source. To justify her refusal to disclose her source, she referred to an EU directive on the protection of sources of information aimed at disclosing corruption schemes and to the Ethical Code of the Bulgarian Media, which also grants protection to sources of information. In other words, she acted in two roles at the same time – as a member of parliament from the opposition party and as an investigative journalist.

These examples raise the logical question as to where the (pseudo) journalistic embodiment ends and where its political 'outgrowth' begins. Is the line between the two roles not getting too blurred, and is it at all possible to perform both roles at the same time, acting as a politician-journalist or as a journalist-politician? If we want to adhere to the classic understanding of journalism as a watchdog that keeps the actions of those in power in check, or at least reveals their misdeeds, we should ask ourselves about the degree to which it is acceptable for both roles to overlap.

The journalistic profession underestimates this aspect, but the present-day overly mediated and publicity-oriented world gives birth to more and more figures resembling the two-headed Roman god Janus. The key task for us is to prevent their transformation into monsters.

#### Journalism vs. politics – demarcation lines

All these examples illustrate the hybrid metamorphoses of the public roles of journalists and politicians. Here it is important to pay attention to three key elements:

**Striving for power:** at the heart of the journalistic profession is its obligation to monitor and control the centers of public power, to prevent excessive concentrations of power, and check whether the political decisions made are in the public interest. Politics, on the contrary, operates on the basis of striving for power, which is seen as an instrument for the realization of political ideas.

**Public interest:** by virtue of their calling and professional ethics, journalists are supposed to protect the interests of the society as a whole. Politicians, on the contrary, only protect the interests of those who have elected them – that is,

of specific social groups. Journalism has a public mission, while politics seeks the approval of majority groups.

*Professional standards:* both journalism and politics are open-access professions, which means that, at least on paper, anybody can exercise them. However, good journalism requires that journalists adhere to basic professional norms and obligations, such as fairness, objectivity, factuality, and striving for the presentation of diverse opinions and views. In this sense, politics is everything that journalism is not.

The ever thinner borders between the public roles of journalists and politicians have dramatically decreased the public's trust in them. This has led to a degradation of our understanding of the notions of fairness, reliability, and competence – three of the key elements of trust. In short, this process represents a subversion that is already affecting the media. In the beginning of 2018, the Edelman Trust Barometer, an index of the level of trust in various institutions compiled by international consultancy firm Edelman, showed that the media are the institution enjoying the least trust globally [11].

“People’s concern about fake news and their willingness to listen to experts show that they yearn for knowledge. The media cannot solve this alone because of economic constraints and the politics of the moment. Every institution must play its part by educating its constituents and joining the public debate, going direct to the end-users of information”, Richard Edelman, president and CEO of Edelman, wrote in January 2018 [12].

As it can be seen, the effects of all these transformations of journalist-politicians and politicians-journalists are to be borne by the public. But the public is no longer willing to forgive easily.

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# MEDIA STEREOTYPES AS A FORM OF ANTI-COMMUNICATION

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*Abstract:* The global Hack the News Datathon in January 2019 gathered together more than 250 AI and data science academics and professionals from over 50 countries to help develop a tool that can automatically identify propaganda in the news. It focuses on detecting the use of propaganda and specific propagandistic techniques. Some of the indicators the program was created on are related to exaggerated allegations and loaded language. Similarities can easily be found between fake news and propaganda and the use of familiar media stereotypes in the contemporary Bulgarian press. Fake news is completely untrue and it soon becomes clear to everyone. Yet, it is hard for people to understand what is true in stereotyped news and what is exaggerated. The key issue is the lack of professional responsibility. Recently, the problem with the fake news and the ‘news’ from the social media is becoming more and more serious – the Guardian journalist Carole Cadwalladr described how Facebook became a platform for lies and illegal behaviour in the Brexit campaign<sup>1</sup>. The social media possess no professional responsibility for the “news” they create and spread. Today the role of the professional media and journalists is increasing – they should produce objective and balanced articles and analyses. But do they?

*Keywords:* Bulgarians, poor, history, Romani, migrants

Thanks to modern technologies, nowadays an incredible amount of information is coming from everywhere. The means of communication today are developing at tremendous speed. However, they are not the most important thing. The most important thing is the main message of the communication. Good communication, good journalism is about understanding. About a better understanding of the world around us. So the problem is what kind of information is circulating around the clock? Is it from a trustworthy source? Is it true or is it not true? That is the crucial question.

The work *Negative Stereotypes in the Contemporary Bulgarian Press* presents a theoretical-empirical study of the way some of the most important topics in our press are reflected – our own economic development, the attitude

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by Karin Pettersson, The trilemma of big Tech, *Social Europe* and *IPS-Journa*, 7th May 2019, <https://www.socialeurope.eu/the-trilemma-of-big-tech>

towards our past, migration, the attitude towards the Romani and the refugees. The paper outlines the main stereotypes in those topics. The empirical survey has covered five Bulgarian daily newspapers: *24 Chasa*, *Trud*, *Standart*, *Monitor* and *Sega* for a two-year period (June 2014 – June 2016). The first pages of the editions were explored, as well as the sections for commentaries and analyses.

The research combines three fields – social psychology, communication science and sociolinguistics. For the purposes of the study, the term “stereotype” has been preferred with the clear awareness that at times it would be more about categorizations, at other times about prejudices, and sometimes about clichés.

The thesis is that some of the most persistent and widespread media constructs in Bulgaria are the negative stereotypes of the Bulgarian community, for historical events in the recent past, for the people of other ethnicities. Stereotypes offer an extremely simplistic idea of things. They are often reduced to the most schematic, most widespread, and sometimes most convenient – for those in power and for journalists themselves – explanation of a particular phenomenon. The main focus of the work is on the power of the media to create and disseminate stereotypes<sup>2</sup>. That is of paramount importance in this case and enhances the media responsibility.

The study sets out several main tasks – to define the most common stereotypes in different topics; to reveal some of the techniques for their formation; to prove the fact that the use of stereotypes is a widespread phenomenon adverse to public interests. The methodology includes analysis of existing studies on the nature of stereotypes, the media and media language, as well as empirical research.

The main quality indicators for the selection of the publications are:

**Negative auto-stereotypes of Bulgaria and Bulgarians** – suggestions for backwardness, lack of prospects for development.

**Stereotypes of historical events** – total denial of our recent past, challenging important historical dates.

**Stereotypes of the Romani** – inherent propensity for crimes, parasitism, threat to the ethno-demographic equilibrium.

**Stereotypes of the refugees** – a threat to national security, terrorism and Islamic invasion.

The timeliness of the dissertation is determined by the fact that the use of negative stereotypes in important topics is an extremely **destructive factor**.

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<sup>2</sup> FOWLER, R., *Language in the News. Discourse and Ideology in the Press*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 17.

Stereotypes give half-true, sometimes false or too simple explanations that do not explain anything but create emotions, attitudes, moods. The psychological pressure exerted by the media leads to disintegration of society. Stereotypes also contribute to blurring the boundary between yellow and quality press.

### **Stereotypes, media and media language - basic theoretical concepts**

The clarification of the term “stereotype” through the prism of social psychology, the science of communication and sociolinguistics helps to reveal the relationship between stereotypes and the media in detail. The cognitive approach explores the role of stereotypes in the process of individual and group perception. Stereotypes are often a way for people to reduce the flow of information by filtering much of it. It is easier to treat persons as members of a group because in this way we overlook all the diverse and detailed information about the individual members. That idea was first formulated by Gordon Allport<sup>3</sup> and became the cornerstone of the cognitive approach to social stereotypes in the 1970s. It offers several possible answers to the question of why it is easier for people to understand information that is categorized in some way, and concludes that “a stereotype is an exaggerated belief related to a category”<sup>4</sup>. According to established authors such as Gordon Allport, Todd Nelson, prejudices and stereotypes are closely linked<sup>5</sup>.

Stereotypes are also psychological constructs, and there are two things that need to be emphasized in this regard. First, stereotypes cannot be separated from related beliefs, scientists say. Second, the term “stereotype” refers to the specific presentation of a group at a particular moment. It is important to underline the fact that stereotypes are shared group beliefs<sup>6</sup>. They will not attract attention unless many people share them; and they are as much means of understanding, as of misunderstanding.

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<sup>3</sup> ALLPORT, G., *The Nature of Prejudice*, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, Garden City, 1954, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> IB, p. 187.

<sup>5</sup> NELSON, T., *The Psychology of Prejudice*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> MCGARTY, Craig; Yzerbyt, Vincent Y.; Spears, Russel (2002). “Social, cultural and cognitive factors in stereotype formation”. *Stereotypes as explanations: The formation of meaningful beliefs about social groups*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1–15. ISBN 978-0-521-80047-1. Available on <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam033/2002073438.pdf>, p. 2.

The huge influence of stereotypes is due to the media. As noted by Teun van Dijk (1991)<sup>7</sup> and the American psychologist F. Aboud (1988)<sup>8</sup>, specific stereotypical perceptions and prejudices are not innate. People absorb and change them in the process of socialization and communication. The media play an important role in shaping perceptions of the world, and it is no coincidence that scientists are paying attention to how they frame reality<sup>9</sup>. The theory of social construction of reality – Berger & Luckmann (1967)<sup>10</sup>, supports the view that the media do not reflect the world in any empirical way. They help to construct and maintain it, presenting certain meanings and understandings of “reality”.

An important contribution to the study of the role of newspapers’ language is the research by the British scientist Roger Fowler. Thanks to nearly ten years of observations on leading British journalists, Fowler reveals the role of journalism in producing stereotypes. The media have the power to create new stereotypes, which are creative product, said Fowler in his research<sup>11</sup>. That further increases their responsibility to society. Fowler’s research focuses on the use of newspapers for the formation of ideas and beliefs. All that is said or written is articulated by a specific ideological position, language is not some clear glass but a refractive, structuring medium, he underlines.

### **Stereotypes and identity. Results of the empirical study**

This chapter discusses the most common auto-stereotypes of Bulgaria and ourselves (lazy, poor, unhappy, dissatisfied, backward, etc.), about our past, the ways of their formation, quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the phenomenon, as well as the formation of stereotypes of people from other ethnic groups – Romani and refugees.

The negative self-stereotypes of ourselves will be considered first, as in the course of the empirical study they proved to be the most numerous group.

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<sup>7</sup> VAN DIJK, T. A., *Racism and the Press*, London and New York, Routledge, 1991, p. 142.

<sup>8</sup> Cited by Ibroscheva, E., Ramaprasad, J. *Do Media Matter?*, *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, ISSN 1404 – 1634, issue 16, April 2008. Available on <http://www.immi.se/intercultural/>.

<sup>9</sup> SHOEMAKER, P., Reese, S., *Mediating the Message, USA*: Longman, 1996, second edition. Available on <https://journalism.utexas.edu/sites/journalism.utexas.edu/files/attachments/reese/mediating-the-message.pdf>, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> BERGER, P. L., Luckmann, T. *The Social Construction of Reality*, England, Penguin Books, 1991. Available on <http://perflensburg.se/Berger%20social-construction-of-reality.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> FOWLER, R., *Language in the News. Discourse and Ideology in the Press*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 17.

Out of the total number of texts (2348), the publications selected according to the group auto-stereotype indicator are 1557 (66.3%). Of those, 1345 have a negative auto-stereotype (86.4%). The negative auto-stereotypes of us dominate over negative stereotypes of others. It turns out that some of the most common publications in today's press are those that focus on "self-blame and self-denial". That may be considered as a component of the "strategy of self-mutilation" (Byron & Byrne 1991) – opposite of the strategy of survival<sup>12</sup>. High levels of social anxiety can also facilitate the process of self-mutilation<sup>13</sup>.

The basic thesis that one of the most stable and widespread media constructs in our country are the group auto-stereotypes of the Bulgarians, is confirmed by the quantitative indicators. From the 1345 publications with a negative stereotype, 670 publications are focused on the image of Bulgaria and of ourselves. That is the highest number of publications on a specific sub-topic, registered during the two-year empirical study. In the analysis, the following qualitative indicators for building a negative auto-stereotype were considered: self-esteem, comparisons, charts, the opinion of others about us. The texts about self-evaluation are 308 (46%) of the total number of articles about Bulgaria; comparisons - 125 (18.6%); rankings - 65 (9.7%); accusations against the state - 49 (7.3%); the opinion of others about us - 21 (3.1%). The analysis of the empirical results shows that the negative image of ourselves is largely due to extremely low self-esteem and to comparison with richer countries. And the stereotypical threat<sup>14</sup> of accepting a lasting negative image of Bulgaria and ourselves is quite real.

The stereotypes of young people are part of the negative image of ourselves, as well as the topic of discouragement and destruction of national identity. Young people are described either as extremely skilled people, whose place is abroad, or as illiterate and irresponsible goofs. The problem is that youngsters are particularly vulnerable and susceptible to messages from the information environment, as they have weaker internal defense mechanisms. Therefore, negative stereotypes of young people have the strongest psychological impact. Newspapers seem to be relieved of commitment to select their means of expression when

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<sup>12</sup> СТОЙЧЕВА, Т., Български идентичности и европейски хоризонти 1870 – 1912, София: Изток-Запад, 2007, с. 156.

<sup>13</sup> Цит. по ПЕТКОВА, Д., Културни идентичности в интеркултурен диалог, Велико Търново: Фабер, 2013, с. 148.

<sup>14</sup> STEELE, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African-Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Available on <http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org/>.

it comes to children. A negative image of the country as a whole plus a negative image of the educational system – and it is easy to conclude that “the salvation is abroad”. “Salvation abroad” is the major topic in 191 of all the texts about young people (267). Besides, the media often actively urge young people to leave. One of the techniques used in interviews with celebrities is to ask whether they will let their children study in Bulgaria. It is hard to prove whether the best young people have migrated abroad, but it can certainly be assumed that the stereotype has a negative impact on the choice of many young people. Yet, if it is best for young people to emigrate, then who will fight the demographic crisis?

The negative picture of the state is complemented by the stereotyped way of writing about politicians. The emphasis in the analysis of empirical results is on what is most often circulated in the media regarding the quality of political governance in the country. Every third Bulgarian associates the word “criminal” with politics, and thus a stereotype of collective irresponsibility is created. Our recent historical past has been totally denied and some of the most persistent negative media stereotypes are about it.

The negative stereotypes of the Romani are also very persistent. They are directly related to the low self-esteem of Bulgarians as a whole. The Romani are portrayed as social parasites who live on the backs of the majority and have the “privilege” of not obeying laws, as people with innate criminal inclinations who, above all, reproduce uncontrollably. The confrontation between Bulgarians and Romani intensifies over every Romani-related incident reported by the media. According to Roger Fowler, it is of utmost importance whether the media focus on a social category with accusatory language. And in the articles about Romani, the tone towards that ethnic group is entirely accusatory<sup>15</sup>.

Despite the historical experience – our country has harboured Armenian refugees, Bulgarians from Thrace and Macedonia, Russians after the October revolution – the current global form of this phenomenon is relatively new to the country. The flow of people seeking asylum or better living conditions has been sidestepping our country for a long time. That explains the relative lack of preparedness of both institutions and individuals with regard to refugees. The same is true of the media, which exaggerate the concerns of people related to refugees – such as national security and the possible negative consequences. The humanitarian aspect of the matter is pushed into the background and universal human rights are neglected. Solidarity and sympathy are lacking, and without those no society can exist. The fears of people are being exploited by both politicians and

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<sup>15</sup> FOWLER, R., *Language in the News. Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London: Routledge, 1994, p. 22.

the media. The media favour stories about negative events, and such stories are generally recalled better, especially in the case of outgroup members<sup>16</sup> – in this case the refugees, who are largely treated as outlaws.

There are several basic quantitative and qualitative indicators by which refugee-related publications are examined – the ratio between the use of the terms “migrants” and “refugees”; an analysis of people’s major concerns; criticism of EU refugee policy. Those indicators are based on an international survey on refugees in Serbia, Hungary and Germany, exploring how the topic of asylum-seekers is reflected in the media, presented at the Sixth European Communication Conference in Prague from 9 to 12 November 2016, organized by the *European Communication Research and Education Association*. (ECREA)<sup>17</sup>.

Finally, the results of the empirical study make it possible to draw the following conclusions. The empirical study highlights **a new scientific fact** – the negative auto-stereotypes of the Bulgarian community predominate over the negative stereotypes of other ethnic groups. The use of negative stereotypes in the media leads to accumulation of a **critical mass of self-hatred in society**. There is obvious **overexposure of the negative**. Empirical data allow for formulating the hypothesis that the **collapse of media confidence** is largely due to the excessive use of media stereotypes and it is a serious **challenge** to the professional and social responsibility of journalism. The use of negative stereotypes prevents the media from performing their social functions, part of which is the **integrative function of the media**. It can also be summarized that the use of stereotypes is comparable to the use of fake news, since the ultimate effect is similar – poor communication and instilling fear.

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<sup>16</sup> VAN DIJK, Teun A., *Mediating racism. The role of the media in the reproduction of racism*. University of Amsterdam, Benjamins, 1987, p. 204. Available on <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.653.4884&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>17</sup> *Narratives of pity and fear: Migration in the European press* London School of Economics and Political Science by dr Rafal Zaborowski, London School of Economics and Political Science.

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# THE CASE OF IVANCHEVA AND PETROVA - INSTITUTIONAL PROPAGANDA, CIVIL CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND ETHICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

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*Abstract:* As practice of public communication, the case with the mayor of Mladost District of Sofia Municipality Desislava Ivancheva and her deputy mayor Bilyana Petrova is exceptional and emblematic in terms of conducting an information war between institutional propaganda and civil crisis communication. The case concerns the mayor of a metropolitan area and her deputy, who in 2016 were elected with a huge lead over the candidate of the ruling party in Bulgaria with the main promise to stop the huge overbuilding in the area. Mayor Ivancheva kept her promise, revealed numerous frauds in Mladost properties and a year and a half after the election, together with her deputy, she was spectacularly arrested with € 56,000 found on the rear seat of their car. The question of how this money got there is at least highly controversial. The testimonies of the main prosecution witnesses are also very contradictory. The information war for the truth on the part of the public relations practitioner as a crisis communications expert is extremely difficult in a public arena with heavily dependant media environment. When Bulgaria became a member of the European Union in 2007, it was 36th in the Reporters without borders annual index of the media freedom, and today it collapses to 111th position from 180 countries. However, efforts have been crowned with success, but the information war on the case is far from its end. It seems like a new horizon is open to the practice of the ethical public relations.

*Keywords:* contrived bribery charge, information war, institutional propaganda, civil crisis communication, ethical public relations

The case of the detention with false bribery charge<sup>1</sup> against Ms Desislava Ivancheva and Ms Bilyana Petrova is the biggest and the most brutal case of

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<sup>1</sup> The conclusion that the bribery charge was patched-up is justified by a number of facts, including: the actions of the authorities during the spectacular arrest, including the court's refusal to request the camera recordings at the intersection during the 12-hour arrest, the contradictory testimony of key witnesses in the case, material evidence considered key was dropped, misreported records of special intelligence tools, a series of lies told to the media by representatives of the prosecution, refusal by court to investigate facts, incriminating public authorities in crime, etc. No fingerprints were found on the euro banknotes, despite the statement of the Specialized Prosecutor's office that Ivancheva and Petrova were touching the money.

political repression since the beginning of the transition from totalitarian to democratic rule in Bulgaria. A brutal demonstrative arrest, bribery accusations, fixed only on false and constantly changing testimonies, disappearing and manipulating of special intelligence recordings, ruthless propaganda, and an outrageous campaign of ill-fated civilian officials, a huge bunch of different human rights violations – during the detention, in the detention facility, during conveying and even in the courtroom and in the hospital. These are only the main the main features of what happened to the civil mayors of Mladost District. The detention of false accusations of bribery and all human rights abuses of the mayors of the metropolitan area is, however, shockingly worrying for Bulgaria as a country that has been a member of the European Union for 12 years and many political analysts say it has long since completed the transition from a repressive totalitarian system to a democratic one with a separation of powers and the rule of law.

This case is also an example of extraordinary crisis communication efforts and the introduction of a new professional moral standard by the engaging public relations and crisis communication practitioner. This practitioner was me Dr. Petar Kardzhilov. I worked in the administration of the mayor of Mladost region Ms Desislava Ivancheva as a public relations specialist for three months before the date of their brutal spectacular arrest and fabricated bribery accusation. Ever since their 12-hour detention on April 17, 2018 at one of the busiest metropolitan intersections in Sofia, I was sure that their arrest and bribery charge was a hoax. At the very date of the arrest, I launched a crisis communication campaign against this deliberate hoax. I continue this campaign to this day, without any material rewards and benefits, because I want the truth to be revealed and both innocent women to be justified.

### **Who are Desislava Ivancheva and Bilyana Petrova?**

After a series of civil protests against overbuilding, in the end of 2016 Mayor Dssislava Ivancheva and her Deputy Bilyana Petrova won the municipal elections in Mladost – the most developed economic district in Sofia, promising to preserve the green areas between existing residential buildings formerly assigned as new construction sites. Mladost's civilian candidate won the elections with nearly twice as many votes against the ruling party candidate.

Ivancheva and her team stayed true to their political beliefs, and have pursued a sustainable built environment development policy. By doing so, the Mayor and her Deputy have consistently opposed unsustainable and constitutionally illegal activities relating to new-build construction, including falsification of

documents. Perhaps, due to this, at times they have been drawn into policy conflict with certain representatives of Bulgaria's ruling party Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria<sup>2</sup>.

### **Detention with “bribery”**

One and a half years after the beginning of the non-party civil mayor's term, on 17 April 2018 Ivancheva and Petrova are stopped with their office car in the centre by masked men. Both women were locked with handcuffs, humiliated and threatened by Anti-Corruption Commission officials. 56 000 euro were found on the rear seat of the car. Minutes before the detention on rear seat travelled a former Mayor of Mladost by the ruling GERB party Petko Dyulgerov, who met them earlier and asked for a transport to Mladost, but decided to leave the car in advance on the pretext that he had another appointment. Ivancheva and Petrova were handcuffed and held on the street in conditions humiliating to their human dignity and harmful to their health: Their hands were cuffed behind, they were physically prevented from speaking, prevented from calling for legal representation, prevented from drinking water, prevented from using the toilet. All this in front of the cameras on all TVs. The fingerprints of their hands were taken in the evening - more than ten hours after their arrest. A man with a mask threatened Bilyana Petrova that if she wanted to see her child, she had to say what they ordered her to testify against Ivancheva. The prosecution refused to investigate who this employee was.

Ms Ivancheva and Ms Petrova requested lawyers at the time of the arrest. Instead, masked employees forcefully covered their mouths with a hand to stop them from shouting. This act, apart from a rude violation of their rights under the laws and the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, also constitutes physical violence committed in public.

During the arrest, employees spread inside the car quantities of glowing dust - the same with which euro banknotes were marked, to make it look like both women touched the money and then touched the car inside. This is evident from some of the media videos and the protocol for the certification of the car itself. The protocol lacks information about glowing dust found on the seat belts, though both women were wearing seat belts when police stopped them at the intersection.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information, pictures and videos visit web page: [www.freethemayors.com](http://www.freethemayors.com).

The finding and taking out the rear seat of the car of three bundles of euro banknotes also happens in particularly strange circumstances.

### **Why the PR practitioner decided to take crisis communication actions?**

During the detention of the mayors on April 17, 2018 Petar Kardzhilov is in Mladost Municipality building in his third month of service as PR specialist. By noon the building is occupied by masked men and police officers. Everyone is forbidden to enter and leave the building. The doubts of the PR specialist and his decision to launch anti-crisis communication actions on the same day arose for the following reasons:

A masked employee in the municipality building ordered the practitioner not to use his mobile phone during the occupation process.

The practitioner learned that a member of the ruling party, popular with his propaganda suggestions, took a photo of the arrest minutes after the detention, put it on Facebook and soon all media arrived on the spot.

The practitioner learned that about four hours after the arrest both mayors were still detained at the intersection with handcuffs, violating their rights and not allowing lawyers to join them. Investigators counted the euro banknotes on the roadway of the boulevard, so that all television cameras shoot “the bribe”

The practitioner also knew very well the personalities of Ivancheva and Petrova – their moral status, personal behavior, public and professional deeds and had the information that both were threatened and warned more than once by different displeased people.

The most obvious argument that made the practitioner understand the organized actions for false bribery allegation was the press conference held by the Specialized Prosecution’s office the next day – April 18. The head of the Specialized Prosecutor’s Office Mr Ivan Geshev (currently Deputy Chief Prosecutor and sole candidate for Chief Prosecutor of Bulgaria) then said a lot of lies, which later the practitioner refuted in a video by documents from the case itself.

### **Institutional propaganda**

The Prosecutor’s Office carried out a noisy campaign to discredit the detainees and instill in society the presumption of guilt, contrary to Art. 6, para. 2 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, according to which “Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law”. However, a

study by Gallup International sociological agency was presented in the news broadcast on the national television bTV on 27 April 2018, in which a significantly higher percentage (44%) of the respondents said the accusation of the two was contrived. The torture and public humiliation of the politically independent mayors continues while in the detention center, too.

The next day after the public arrest of Ivancheva and Petrova on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018 the Specialized Prosecutor's Office and the Anti-Corruption Commission held a press conference where their heads Ivan Geshev and Plamen Georgiev said many false claims and guilt suggestions. All of these were refuted later by the crisis communication expert Dr. Peter Kardzhilov through evidence from the court hearings in video posted in the Facebook page of Ms Desislava Ivancheva<sup>3</sup>. Here are some of these false claims and guilt suggestions:

**Lie:** Ivan Geshev: "I would use the term 'black-mail' in a purely life-sense, not as a criminal-law qualification."  
**The truth:** All of the more than 30 witnesses interviewed by the court denied that they knew about the blackmail on the part of Desislava Ivancheva and Bilyana Petrova in any sense.

**Lie:** Ivan Geshev: "Under the guise of the fact that we are fighting for human rights, and to some extent this may be the case, it turns out that purely personal interests are pursued. And in the end, maybe even useful. I'm not worried about using that word."  
**The truth:** All of the interviewed over 30 witnesses from the Municipality of Mladost and the construction industry denied that they had ever heard Desislava Ivancheva or Bilyana Petrova ask for money or a gift for themselves.

**Lie:** Ivan Geshev: "I told you, dozens and hundreds of files in the cabinet, instead of being with the specific specialists. Including in the mayor's home, such files were found."  
**The truth:** No files or other municipal documents were found in either Ivancheva's or Petrova's home. The records of the searches of both apartments can be seen.

**Lie:** Ivan Geshev: "Several meetings are arranged that do not occur for different reasons. Whether because the mediator is engaged, whether because the mayor is not in good condition because of a stormy night life."  
**The truth:** Desislava Ivanchev has never had a "stormy nightlife". On the contrary - she worked late into the night in Mladost Municipality. This lie of Geshev aims at further damaging the reputation of the mayor of Mladost and giving cause for further slander and lies in the yellow press. Evidence that Ivancheva

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<sup>3</sup> The video in Bulgarian: <https://www.facebook.com/DIvancheva/videos/845811452256074/>

worked late in the municipality are the testimonies of former Deputy Mayor Nikola Vaptsarov and of Ms Ivancheva's secretary Margarita Stoyanova given on October 18, 2018.

**Lie:** I. Geshev: "Everybody lit up like Christmas trees." (He speaks about the light reflective dust with which the banknotes are marked.)

**The truth:** The photos and records of the testimony clearly prove that the hands of Ivancheva and Petrova are contaminated with a luminous substance with only small spots on the outer parts of the hands, but not in their gripping parts on the fingers and palms. The testimony of Ivancheva and Petrova is not carried out immediately, but for the whole 10 hours after the arrest - in order to have enough time to stain them with this substance during the arrest, carried out under the direction of Geshev, and to justify that, if not found enough substance on the gripping parts, it was due to the long stay out.

One of the most serious discrepancies of the prosecution is the way in which the bribery was transmitted. According to the first version, the money is distributed and counted by everyone in the cafe. There is no evidence of this version, though prosecutor Ivan Geshev claimed there was a video. According to the second version, the money was placed in the back seat of the car by the mediator Petko Dyulgerov. However, there is also no evidence for this second version.

### **Strategy of the civil crisis communication campaign**

The protection of Ivancheva and Petrova in the public media space (understand here the struggle for society to learn the whole truth) is the longest and most difficult political crisis communication campaign, known in Bulgaria. The campaign is still ongoing as the trial is pending for two more courts, and the state propaganda against Ivancheva is still running in many dependant media.

The strategy of a civil crisis communication campaign is, in general, a systematic disclosure in the course of the judicial process of the truth about certain facts and events related to the case, the arrest or management of Mladost municipality including frauds with municipal properties by former mayors. Part of the strategy is the participation in the European and local elections in Bulgaria in 2019. In this way, it is evident that people believe them and do not believe in the blatant accusation against them. For example, in the European Parliament elections, Ms Ivancheva won more than 30,000 votes, which is more than some candidates from the ruling coalition.

## **Some of the most important tactics of the Civil Crisis Communication Campaign include:**

Immediate saturation of the media and social media space with the true version of what happened to the mayors of Mladost - both have not committed a crime, but are victims of a crime of incrimination for bribe. In the organized crime group that committed the crime against the mayor of Mladost, accomplices are the state institutions the Specialized Prosecutor's Office and the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Organizing public protest actions for a fair trial and release from custody of the two women.

Regular submission of information about the work of Ivancheva and Petrova in Mladost and clarification of the reasons that led to the false bribe accusation.

Regular submission of information from the courtroom on the course of the case.

Regular submission of information about the repression and violence against them in custody and imprisonment.

Information on the current overbuilding in Mladost after the mayor's brutal arrest and organization of public protests against this overbuilding.

Production of printed information materials (stickers and leaflets) and organization of special outdoor information events.

Correspondence with Members of the European Parliament, European Commission, International Non-Governmental Organizations, Ambassadors.

Desislava Ivancheva and Bilyana Petrova were held in custody at the Sofia Central Prison for eight months under extremely harsh and humiliating conditions, which permanently damaged their health. Twice in a row, the second instance violates the law to keep the two women in custody, even though the first instance sends them into house arrest. The President of the Supreme Court orders an inquiry and finds violations of the law in these cases. They received first instance sentences for bribes of 20 and 15 years in prison. No such bribery convictions have ever been issued in the history of the Bulgarian court. Convictions for premeditated murder are often less than these.

Today, the main organizer of the arrest of Ivancheva and Petrova, Mr. Ivan Geshev is the only candidate for Chief Prosecutor of Bulgaria. The whole society expects the decision of the President to sign or refuse to sign the Statute for the appointment of Geshev.

*Dr. Petar Kardzhilov's dedicated work in informing the public about the truth about the contrived bribery charge against the civil mayors of Mladost is recognized not only by public communication specialists in Bulgaria, but also by people of different professions throughout the country. This is an example of a new perspective on ethical public relations practice.*

# ANTI-FASCIST DISCOURSE AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES: CONTEXT OF THE PAST

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*Abstract:* The paper shows the research of antifascist discourse and communication strategies used in the texts of the daily newspaper “Dan” which was published in Vojvodina, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. *Dan* was the only legal daily newspaper which was published in the Serbian language and it was printed during the six years prior to the Second World War. The year that was selected for analysis was 1938, given the importance of historical events such as Anschluss, the merging of the areas of Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia to Germany, the Crystal Night and other discriminatory acts against the Jews. In analyzing newspaper content we used the quantitative and qualitative method of content analysis. Result interpretation was through the method of critical analysis of media discourse. The research also used a historical method, which is very important if we take into account that this is an interdisciplinary research that must encompass the role of the historical context in communication. Through the analysis of the texts we show which mechanisms of propaganda were used in the antifascist discourse and in what way the promoted values were contrary to those propagated through the regime of dictatorial policies. The results of the research show how the discourse was conditioned by the context of the communication situation and how it was reflected in the chosen communication strategies – *the propagation of opposing values, call-to-action strategy, proving of lies and the discovery of (hidden) intentions, evocation of empathy, proclamation of responsible and the strategy of espousing patriotism.*

*Keywords:* critical discourse analysis, discourse strategies, propaganda, anti-fascist discourse, ideology, fascism.

## Introduction

Throughout history we have encountered numerous successful and less successful ways of propagating attitudes, values and ideologies, but the one that certainly stands out is the Nazi propaganda instructed by Hitler and Goebbels before and during the World War II. The subject of this paper is a discourse that was the opponent to fascist propaganda - we wanted to study what were characteristics and to what extent anti-fascist discourse appeared in public speech of Yugoslavia. This paper covers the research of anti-fascist discourse and commu-

nication strategies used in the texts of the daily newspaper *Dan*, which was published in the territory of Vojvodina, in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the years before the World War II, but with the focus on 1938.

Regarding the media context, Dušan Popov was the author who wrote about the newspaper *Dan* the most. Author states that the most significant newspaper in the territory of Vojvodina in the period from 1935 to 1941 was *Dan*: “It could be said that, although civic-oriented, it managed to preserve a certain dose of independence from regime policy” (Popov 1983, 380). Fierce struggles between ideological-political currents reflected themselves in the press, which sought to survive in pre-war conditions, in a specific economic situation and under constant political pressure (Popov 1983, 373). Barović examined the influence of national-socialist ideology and in his research found that *Dan* “frequently made reports on the activities of the Kulturbund<sup>1</sup> and was among the first newspapers in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia that pointed to all the evils carried on by the national-socialist ideology and propaganda” (Barović 2007, 72).

### Theoretical Framework

In order to define anti-fascist discourse as the object of our research, establishing the definition of fascism imposed as the necessary prerequisite. Olivera Milosavljević (2010) explains the double usage of the term *fascism* in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: “It marked a specific Italian ideology, but was used to summarize all totalitarian nationalist systems (in Italy, Spain, Portugal)” (Milosavljević 2010, 16). We chose to use this term as a collective term for all right-wing totalitarian systems and movements.

The key role in the rise of the fascist regimes predominately had the political propaganda, orchestrated by the Ministry for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment (RMVP), founded in March of 1933. Interesting was the Goebbels statement on significance of the language in propaganda, as he described it to be “a carefully built up erection of statements, witch rather true or false can be made to undermine quite rigidly held ideas and to construct new ones that will take their place” (Thomson 1977, 111, from L’Etang and Pieczka 2006, 10). L’Etang and Pieczka wrote about similarities between American theorist and Nazi propagandist practices, stating that Goebbels and Bernays manipulated the

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<sup>1</sup> German Cultural Association in Kingdom of Yugoslavia, was originally conceived as a non-political organization, but propagated fascism before and during the Second World War.

audience “through means such as constant repetition of a few relatively simplistic points“ (L’Etang and Pieczka 2006, 10).

Nolte looked back on the relationships between the leaders such as Hitler, Mussolini, Mosley and Gömbös, and similarities of their ideologies, which he particularized: “the principle of leader and desire for a *new world*, the love of violence and the rapture of youth, the awareness of the elite and the effect on the masses, revolutionary fire and respect for tradition” (Nolte 1990, 15). One of the main features of Nazi propaganda was *demonization of the enemy*, who were most often embodied in the Jews and the British: “In posters, newspaper articles, and broadcasts, Churchill was lampooned as a drunkard, the Royal Family as decadent, and the British ruling élite as tired old imperialists who had had their day (Taylor 2003, 245).

Nolte asked an important question regarding anti-fascist propaganda: “Didn’t it sometimes have to be admitted that the hostility to fascism itself often contained fascist features?“ (Nolte 1990, 13). Considering his question and universal propaganda tools and linguistic means, we shaped discursive strategies to be found in the anti-fascist discourse of *Dan*. The topic of propaganda, the object that was portrayed as the enemy in the discourse, and discursive strategies used for their presentation were most important to consider in the analysis.

## Methodology

The aim of this research was to show how was the anti-fascism propagated in the daily newspaper *Dan*, specifically, to present the usage of the rhetorical and logical means utilized in message formation. The stated goal includes the deconstruction of discourse strategies in the texts in which we could mark the anti-fascist discourse, that were published during the year of 1938. Subject matter were texts in which anti-fascism was directly or indirectly proclaimed: texts in which anti-fascist ideas, attitudes and personalities were attacked by derogatory vocabulary or other micro-strategy; texts that propagated the opposing values (such as democracy, peace etc), with or without mentioning fascism and national socialism and their leading figures; texts on the war discourse, meaning texts that focus on arming and war, with or without allusions to fascist and Nazi movements; texts that cover events such as the adoption of the Nuremberg Laws, with or without the interference of subjective evaluations of the author.

The main methodology was Van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis, and it was used for result interpretation as it studies relations between “discourse, power, domination, social inequality, and the position of analysts in such social

relations” (Van Dijk 2001, 300). Quantitative and qualitative content analysis method was used to collect and describe the data. Quantitative data was obtained using the specifically designed code. The study also used the historical method as explicative method which aims to present the social phenomena, while “having in mind the historical background of the cause of that phenomenon” (Pejanović 2009, 9). Our utmost attention was on discursive strategies, defined as “more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve social, political, psychological or linguistic aim (..) located on different levels of linguistic organization“ (Reisigl and Woodak 2005, 44).

## Results

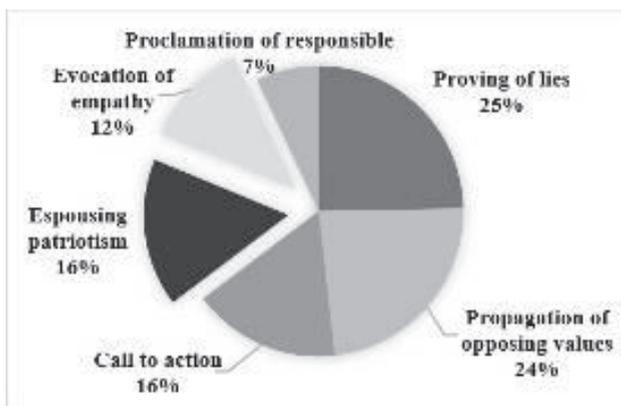
Starting from the spring of 1938, until the end of the year, we could notice sudden decline in newspapers interest in foreign policy issues. Redaction turns it's attention to the state events, such as the elections, to the regional news and other events, not including topics regarding foreign policy as much as earlier. The cause of the attention shift might be found in the censorship directorates after the Anschluss in March of 1938. Foreign policy was mainly placed on the front page, in the reports without editorial comments and author's subjective attitudes. Reporting on the Third Reich and international relations was only seen in publishing of the news broadcasts of major world media and news agencies (such as Avas, DNB, etc). This means that the anti-fascist discourse was mainly propagated indirectly and subtly, most often by insisting on certain values, and by refutation of the others.

### *1. Propaganda mechanisms as the strategies of action*

We classified discourse strategies in three groups: micro-strategies, strategies of treatment/action and strategies of construction of otherness. This paper presents only the strategies of action towards the enemy, that we could define strategies as the linguistic constructs that directly or indirectly carry within some type of active measure against the enemy.

Regarding the quantitative data, in the year of 1938 we marked 84 units of analysis and collected 331 discourse strategy. Strategies of action make up 27 pct. of all collected strategies, within which we determined six sub-groups regarding their mode and their aim. When we talk about mode, these strategies can be direct and indirect (Chart no. 1 - *Strategies of action: direct and indirect*).

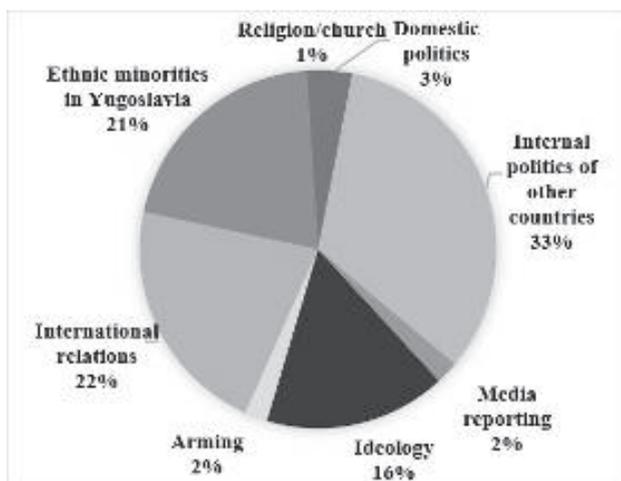
Chart no. 1 - *Strategies of action: direct and indirect*



Indirect ones are the *strategy of espousing patriotism* (17 pct) and *evocation of empathy* (12 pct) of the corpus. Direct strategies of action are: *proving of lies* (25 pct), which is the mostly used and implies lies, includes discoveries of some hidden intentions and reducing the credibility of enemy's actions or personality; *propagation of opposing values* (24 pct); *calls to action* towards the enemy (16 pct); and *proclamation of the responsible* people (7 pct) as the least used in the discourse.

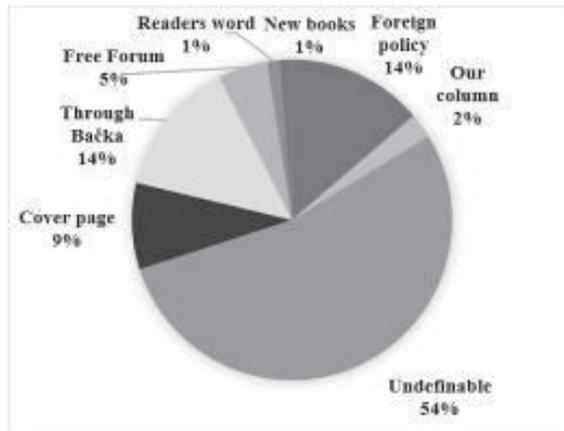
Correlation of these strategies to the column and the topic of the text show that strategies of action were mostly used in articles on Internal politics of other countries (33 pct), on topics such as international relations (22 pct) and ethnic minorities in Yugoslavia (21 pct) (Chart no. 2 - *Correlation to the topic of the text*).

Chart no. 2 - *Correlation to the topic of the text*



As far as the column is concerned, most noticeable was the usage in both Foreign policy column (14 pct) and the column *Through Bačka* (14 pct) (Chart no. 3 - *Correlation to the column of the text*). Column *Through Bačka* was mostly used to desiminate the attitudes towards ethnic minorities in Vojvodina, especially towards German people. Analysis has shown that German ethic group living in Vojvodina was vastly used as the object for attributing negative characteristics and globalizing the negative picture of Germany and German people.

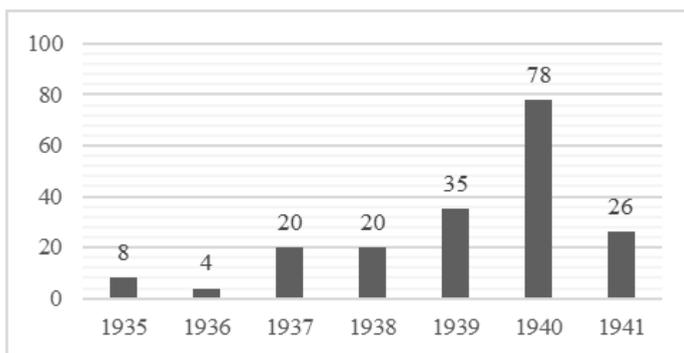
Chart no. 3 - *Correlation to the column of the text*



## 2. Values presented in antifascist discourse

One of the mostly used strategies was the *propagation of the opposing values*, and we could see it's usage peaking in 1940, just before the war has started in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Chart no. 4 – *Quantification of the strategy of opposing values*).

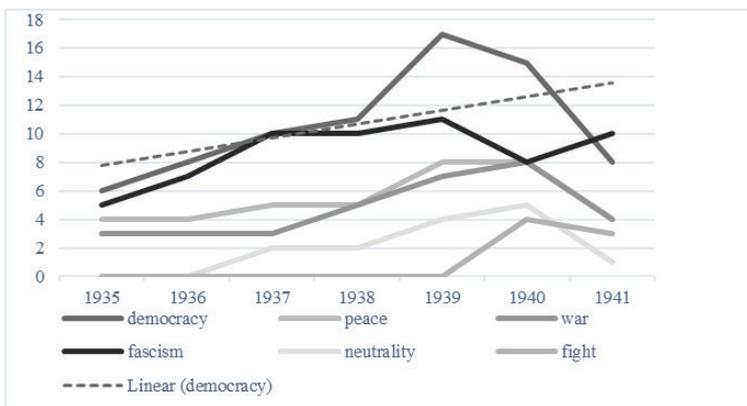
Chart no. 4 – *Quantification of the strategy of opposing values*



*Strategy of opposing values* was manifested in two ways: by the popularizing antifascist values, and by the negation of fascist values. First one includes approving and positive connotations of values we defined as antifascist: peace, freedoms etc. (example: Chamberlains speech, 29th of August 1938: *You know that I am working and that I will work for peace until the last moment*), and the other includes negation of fascist values: the conflict among people, grabbing power, intimidation and force, war etc. (example: Ibid: *I don't like the conflict among nations, but if I were convinced that any nation firmly decided to grab the dominance of the whole world by intimidation and force, I feel that the people should be resisted*).

This part of the analysis required distinguishing micro and macro concepts of both fascist and anti-fascist values. Macro concepts such as democracy, freedom, peace, life, dignity, justice, culture, mainly had micro concepts representing or describing them in the text. It was important to showcase how did these concepts behaved chronologically, which ones had a priority, and how did that correlate to how antifascism was proclaimed through the time in general. As an example, antifascism was firstly, when created, distinctly non-violent movement that represented the idea of peace, but in the 1939 when the war began, anti-fascism got distinctly combatant position. In analyzed corpus (Chart no. 5 – *Macro concepts trough the time*) we could see that concept of *fight* (meaning war against fascism) does not show up at all until late in the 1940, and then it shows up in a small percentage, even less than *political neutrality* of Yugoslavia. This ratio was constant until the 1941, when the war in Yugoslavia seemed to be inevitable. Concept of democracy was dominant and had growth tendency. Usage of concept of fascism peaks in 1939, meaning the strongest linguistic directly against fascism was during that year.

Chart no. 5 – *Macro concepts trough the time*



### 3. Contextually conditioned usage of discursive strategies

In our corpus we segregated three objects as contextually significant – Adolf Hitler, Germany (meaning Third Reich as the state) and ideology of fascism. Comparative analysis has shown that the usage of discourse strategies depended on the object of the reporting. *The propagation of opposing values* was largely used when it came to writing about the ideology of fascism and national-socialism, and also when it came to writing about Adolf Hitler. *The strategy of espousing patriotism* is the second most used, and it was used equally for the discourse on Hitler and for the discourse on ideology. *Call to action* strategy was mostly used when talking about the ideologies – it shows up in 44 per cent when it comes to this object. *Proving of lies and discovery of (hidden) intentions* was used when talking about Adolf Hitler, and the *evocation of empathy* was leading when the object was the Third Reich. *Proclamation of the responsible* is least used of the given strategies, but is equally used for all three objects.

When writing about Hitler, they mainly used *propagation of opposing values* (46 pct) and *strategy of espousing patriotism* (31 pct), and in smallest number the *evocation of empathy* and *proclamation of responsible people*. When talking about Nazi Germany as a state, the most numerous was strategy *evocation of empathy* (38 pct), same as the *propagation of opposing values*, *calls to action* and *strategy of espousing patriotism* (25 pct. each). When it came to ideology, convincingly the mostly used was *propagation of opposing values* (78 pct), and then *call-to-action* and *espousing patriotism* (44 pct. each).

## Conclusion

One of the main findings of our research was that in newspaper *Dan* macro concept of democracy was used as the main opposing concept to fascism and national-socialism, and that through the time it had a growing tendency. This concept included micro concepts such as the tolerance towards all forms of diversity, freedom, human rights, but also freedom of the press and importance of having a free public opinion. Macro concept of fascism was proclaimed through the concepts of the demagoguery, totalitarianism and authoritative regimes, which were described through different linguistic means - antrophonyms denoting mental deficiency, ethnonyms with negative connotation, negative ideologies, relationyms etc. - mainly as unfair, brutal, as propaganda, lies/liars, fear, suppression, egoism and spying.

Mostly used strategies of action in 1938 were *proving of lies* and *propagating the opposing values*, and they were principally used when object was

Adolf Hitler and fascism and national-socialism. In the discourse of antifascist propaganda negation of fascist values was distributed more than popularizing antifascist values. Examining the discourse also showed that *Dan* was “late” to disseminate attitudes towards fighting fascism by using force, when compared to the world media.

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# “ME TOO” AND “TIME’S UP” MOVEMENTS: FROM A SINGLE TWEET TO A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

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*Abstract:* “Me Too” and “Time’s Up” are new feminist movements posing a challenge before existing gender norms and battling sexual harassment and gender inequality at the workplace. The aims of this report are to follow how both movements transformed from social media posts to global initiatives leading to tangible changes in society’s attitude towards sexual harassment and to discuss what separates these two movements from other social media trends. Critical analysis of some of the newest publications on the topic is made in this report.

*Keywords:* Me Too, Time’s Up, movements, social media, online activism, sexual harassment, gender inequality.

*“... So I want all girls watching here and now to know that a new day is on the horizon! And when that new day finally downs, it will be because of a lot of magnificent women, many of whom are right here in this room tonight, and some pretty phenomenal men, fighting hard to make sure that they become the leaders who take us to the time when nobody ever has to say ‘Me Too’ again. Thank you.” - Oprah Winfrey*

## Introduction

These words with which ends the speech of Oprah Winfrey at the Golden Globes Awards in 2018 mark one of the turning points for the new feminist movement called #MeToo.<sup>1</sup> This is a new phenomenon: the taboo on the public discussion on sexual harassment and sexual abuse has been broken in a pretty vocal way. A single Tweet by the actress Alyssa Milano at the beginning of October 2017 marked the start of a movement which quickly turned global en-

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<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Russonello. “Read Oprah Winfrey’s Golden Globes Speech”. *The New York Times*, January 7, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/07/movies/oprah-winfrey-golden-globes-speech-transcript.html> .

compassing thousands of women worldwide. From the United States to South Korea, from the United Kingdom to India, women around the world gathered the courage to share their (often very painful) personal experience with sexual harassment. The #MeToo movement started on social media but succeeded to manifest itself in the “real” offline world.

In this report it will be briefly discussed the evolution of the social media movements “Me Too” and “Time’s Up” from a pure online activism to their spread in different areas of life. The aims are to observe how that transformation actually happened and discuss what separates these two movements from other social media trends.

The methodology used in this report consists of critical analysis of some of the newest publications on the topic.

### **Brief timeline of events**

Before the discussion of “Me Too” and “Time’s Up” movements a brief timeline of the most important events in the first-year anniversary of these movements will be presented. This will improve the discussion as it will help clear out the facts and outline the impact of both movements on different aspects of life in modern society.

Little known fact is that the “Me Too” movement actually has quite a long history before the publicity it gained by Alyssa Milano’s Tweet in October 2017. The beginning of the movement is in 2006 when activist Tarana Burke founded the nonprofit organization Just Be Inc. and called this nonprofit’s movement “Me Too”. Its aim was to help people who have experienced sexual harassment and abuse. The phrase “Me Too” has even longer history as it came to Burke in 1997. Burke heard the story of a 13-year-old sexual abuse survivor. Later, the activist shares this story with The New York Times: “I didn’t have a response or a way to help her in that moment, and I couldn’t even say ‘me too’”.<sup>2</sup>

At October 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 The New York Times comes with a huge exposé by Jodi Kantor and Meghan Twokey: the highly influential Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein is publicly accused of sexual harassment by actresses and former Weinstein Company employees. For decades there have been rumors of Weinstein’s inappropriate behavior but they have always been quickly brushed

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<sup>2</sup> Elena Nicolau. “A #MeToo Timeline To Show How Far We’ve Come - & How Far We Need To Go”. October 5, 2018. <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2018/10/212801/me-too-movement-history-timeline-year-weinstein> .

up under the rug as there haven't been actual proof or people publicly accusing him. The producer's predatory behavior has been described as yet another Hollywood rumor to be quietly spread at parties. The New York Times story was the first recorded incrimination of Weinstein's moves. Immediately the producer issues a public apology in which he insists that all of these encounters were consensual (something upon which he continues to insist to the present day) and that his attitude towards women could be attributed to his growing up in "the 60s and 70s when all the rules about workplace and behavior were different".<sup>3</sup> The next day he was fired from his company.

The beginning of #MeToo is at October 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 when actress Alyssa Milano posts her (now famous) Tweet in which she encourages people to share their experience with sexual harassment and abuse using #MeToo to illustrate how well spread this problem is.<sup>4</sup> This hashtag becomes viral around the world and many women began confessing their stories. Some of them even created their own hashtags: #BalanceTonPorc in France (which translates as "rat out your pig"), #Ana\_kaman in the Arab world (meaning "me too"), #YoTambien in Spanish (again, meaning "me too").

Women are the first to break the silence. But a story shared by Anthony Rapp via BuzzFeed addresses a largely ignored problem: men can also be victims of sexual harassment. Rapp confesses that actor Kevin Spacey made a sexual advance at him when Rapp was only 14. Another emblematic Tweet follows: this time from Kevin Spacey himself. The actor announces his homosexuality. He also argues he does not remember the Rapp incident. He writes: "But if I did behave as he describes, I owe him the sincerest apology for what would have been inappropriate drunken behavior, and I am sorry for the feelings he describes having carried with him all these years."<sup>5</sup> Many accusations towards Kevin Spacey followed Rapp's story resulting in the actor now undergoing treatment of sex addiction in a special clinic.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 1

<sup>4</sup> Alyssa Milano (@Alyssa\_Milano), "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write "me too" as a reply to this tweet." Twitter, October 15, 2017, [https://twitter.com/alyssa\\_milano/status/919659438700670976?lang=bg](https://twitter.com/alyssa_milano/status/919659438700670976?lang=bg) . You can see a screenshot of the tweet at the end of this report, Fig. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Kevin Spacey (@KevinSpacey). "I have a lot of respect and admiration for Anthony Rapp as an actor. I'm beyond horrified to hear this story..." Twitter, October 29, 2017, <https://twitter.com/kevinspacey/status/924848412842971136?lang=bg> . You can see a screenshot of the tweet at the end of this report, Fig. 2.

This is another pivot moment for #MeToo as now men are also encouraged to share their stories breaking the taboo on the public discussion of men as victims of sexual misconduct.

“Me Too” movement gave birth to another movement – “Time’s Up”. They both have similar visions on the battle against sexual harassment, but their specific goals differ. “Time’s Up” is a “next step” in the #MeToo movement that “addresses the systematic inequality and injustice in the workplace that have kept underrepresented groups from reaching their full potential”.<sup>6</sup> The movement is initiated by a group of more than 300 women which include prominent Hollywood actresses such as Meryl Streep, Reese Witherspoon, Shonda Rhimes and Gwyneth Paltrow.<sup>7</sup> Both movements start to have their own life in the “real” world offline where they can have a true impact on people’s lives.

The “Time’s Up” movement’s main aim is to improve laws, employment agreements and corporate policies to enable more women to hold people involved with sexual misconducts accountable, earn equal pay and be treated as equal to their male co-workers. Part of this movement is the Time’s Up Legal Defense Fund whose aim is to offer legal and financial support for people (men and women) who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace and want to fight it in the court but may not have the funds to do so themselves. According to GoFundMe, this fund is the most successful campaign it has ever seen, collecting more than \$ 21 million in just two months (it has started in December 2017), and it continues to receive donations every day.<sup>8</sup> Women and men are able to request aid through the website and they are matched with a lawyer whose cost is covered by the money from the fund. As of February 2018, more than 500 attorneys have offered their services to Time’s Up and over 1,800 women have requested/ received help.<sup>9</sup>

All of the events outlined above clearly show the transformation of “Me Too” movement in an international phenomenon which has tangible consequences for people from different countries, of different gender, with various social backgrounds. Sexual harassment and abuse became the topic of public discussions and are no longer considered “dirty little secrets” better not to be shared with other people. According to Sian Brooke of the Oxford Internet In-

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<sup>6</sup> Katie Thomson. “Social Media Activism and #MeToo Movement”. June 12, 2018, <https://medium.com/@kmthomson.11/social-media-activism-and-the-metoo-movement-166f452d-7fd2> .

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

stitute who studies gender and sexism online, “It’s brought the idea of sexual harassment and assault into the public consciousness.” “Even if the discussion about the movement is criticism, you are still bringing about an awareness that this happens”, they continue.<sup>10</sup>

### **Impact of “Me Too” and “Time’s Up” movements and backlash danger**

Sarah J. Jackson, a professor of communication studies at Northeastern University, believes context is the key to anchoring “Me Too”.

“I couldn’t call hashtag “Me Too” a movement at all”, she says. “I would call it a campaign that is part of a larger movement. So I would call women’s rights the movement, and feminism the movement. And I would say #MeToo is one indication of the sort of conversations that need to happen”.<sup>11</sup>

Analyzing the success of #MeToo movement, it is useful to consider all the various elements that made it such a breakthrough:

A social media influencer (Alyssa Milano) with a powerful voice;

A timeless message that transcends cultures and nations;

Social platforms – Twitter and Facebook – that makes it very easy to re-tweet and like content (thus making it easy for other people to show solidarity with just a single click);

A hashtag that is simple, direct, empowering and highly personal.<sup>12</sup>

A social media analysis conducted by the PEORIA Project of George Washington University’s Graduate School of Political Management compared #MeToo with previous conversations about sexual harassment on social media. 96 million Tweets from 2010 to 2017 were collected by this Project – the participants searched for Tweets with hashtags that were about sexual harassment and abuse. This team also compared #MeToo with other feminist hashtags. Unlike other feminist movement hashtags that died out quickly – such as #YesAllWomen, #WhyIStayed, #YouOKSis, #ItsNotOkay and #ToTheGirls, #MeToo has positioned itself as more than just a fleeting moment on social media. As of February 2018, there is consistent discussion about #MeToo on social media with

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<sup>10</sup> Rebecca Seales. “What has #MeToo actually changed?”. *BBC News*, May 12, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44045291> .

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Christian Zilles. *Op. cit.*

38,000 to 1 million #MeToo related Tweets in the U.S. alone.<sup>13</sup> Such consistent discussion for a long period of time is unique.

At the end of this report a brief analysis of the fear of backlash against “Me Too” movement will be presented.

Of course, publicity helps raising awareness about how big a problem sexual misconduct is in all aspects of modern society. However, it should be handled with care as this does not constitute a witch-hunt.

The biggest backlash danger is a false accusation that will undermine genuine accusers. A fake accusation would most likely activate such a backlash. People would start thinking: “You see, all these stories aren’t true. Women are making it up.”<sup>14</sup>

The next fear is that men will get so nervous that someone will accuse them of sexual harassment that they will stop hiring or interacting with women.

“The question of who stands as judge and jury is also a cause for concern. There’s often no corroborating evidence in cases of historic abuse, no witnesses of photographs. We’re still learning how to distinguish what seems credible and what doesn’t. Women’s stories of harassment should be believed and they often haven’t been in the past, but they should also be able to withstand scrutiny.”<sup>15</sup>

There is a fear that all cases of bad behavior will be treated equally, and this will become a witch-hunt in which lots of men are implicated and punished. Men will be considered the villains just on the ground that they are male. Already there are women sharing the opinion that it has been unfair for so long that if a few innocent men get wrongfully accused, that is a price they are happy to pay,

“Already men are nervously asking what’s acceptable and what’s not. It all flirting now banned? Is a pat on the back ok, but a pat on the bottom always a searchable offence? This confusion could fast turn to anger.

The risk is that men, feeling under siege, kick back and say “enough is enough, this is not fair.” Then we risk losing the support and sympathy of our male colleagues.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Katie Thomson. Op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Katie Kay. “Why women fear a backlash over #MeToo?”. *BBC News*, December 1, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42200092> .

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusions

There are several conclusions which could be drawn at the end of this report.

First, both “Me Too” and “Time’s Up” movements are unique in their ability to transcend online borders and manifest themselves in the “real” world offline. People are now discussing openly sexual harassment not only on Twitter and Facebook but in everyday conversations. Both movements truly manage to help victims of sexual misconduct seek their rights. Workplace environment is changing everywhere in the world with employers trying their best to promote gender equality.

Second, there are different opinions about the involvement of celebrities in these movements. One thing is for sure though: they help spreading awareness about sexual harassment in society.

Third, “Me Too” and “Time’s Up” movements lead to a fear of backlash where the real goals of their creators – end of sexual harassment at the workplace, healthy working environment, pay equality for both genders – will be overshadowed by false accusations and a new wave of witch hunting.

Fourth, social media play an important role when talking about social activism. It could be said that they help spreading activism in our society. Something which traditional media are not always capable of doing.

Fifth, both movements are just simple small steps in the eradication of sexual harassment. The founder of Me Too, Tarana Burke said in an interview, “Harassment is a symptom of larger, systematic pattern of exclusion for women, for people of color, and a lack of equilibrium of our business. If you want to solve sexual harassment, you actually need to solve all those other things.”<sup>17</sup> Sexual harassment is a result of other systematic social problems that must be solved as well.

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## Appendix

Fig. 1 Tweet by Alyssa Milano



Fig. 2 *Tweet by Kevin Spacey*



The image shows a screenshot of a tweet from Kevin Spacey (@KevinSpacey). The tweet is in Russian and contains two paragraphs of text. The first paragraph is an apology to Anthony Rapp, and the second paragraph is a personal statement about his life and privacy. The tweet has 28,122 retweets and 83,700 likes. The interface includes a 'Следване' (Follow) button and a date of 21:00 ч. - 29.10.2017 г.

**Kevin Spacey** @KevinSpacey Следване

I have a lot of respect and admiration for Anthony Rapp as an actor. I'm beyond horrified to hear his story. I honestly do not remember the encounter, it would have been over 30 years ago. But if I did behave then as he describes, I owe him the sincerest apology for what would have been deeply inappropriate drunken behavior, and I am sorry for the feelings he describes having carried with him all these years.

This story has encouraged me to address other things about my life. I know that there are stories out there about me and that some have been fueled by the fact that I have been so protective of my privacy. As those closest to me know, in my life I have had relationships with both men and women. I have loved and had romantic encounters with men throughout my life, and I choose now to live as a gay man. I want to deal with this honestly and openly and that starts with examining my own behavior.

- Kevin Spacey

21:00 ч. - 29.10.2017 г.

28 122 ретвита 83 700 харесвания

# IMAGE: THE STRATEGIC INSTRUMENT IN THE AGE OF GEOCOMMUNICATION

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*Abstract:* Geocommunication is a new term for a completely new holistic human communication behavior standing against the century-old communicative status quo and its values. Changes lead to system transformations of human society and modify intellectual matrix of each single person. Geocommunication model<sup>1</sup> is set on three 3 basic *communication* pillars: a) *sociotechnological*; b) *intercultural*; and c) *image*. It is voicing new interactive, multipersonal, multimodal conversation, enforcing powerful mass-mediated images in global persuasion communication. Personal image, individual or collective, is ingredient of cosmopolitan communicability and transformation of internationality and nationality as perceptions.

The idea of two instrumental images - *image-perception* and *image-reception*, is developed. The intellectual concept is a theoretical attempt to further construct the notion of personal image, first elaborated by Milko Petrov<sup>2</sup>.

*Keywords:* Geocommunication, image-perception, image-reception, Self-Other communication, axeologeme, communication identities, East-West perception.

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<sup>1</sup> Ivelyna Vatova, "Geocommunication: An Innovative Model of International Communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> c."- in: *Young Researchers. Conference Proceedings 2018*, Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski", (Vol. 1, 2019): 523-542. (in English); and also Ивелина Ватова, "Геокомуникацията: Технология на силата в мрежовото общество", (Ivelina Vatova, 'Geocomunicatiata: Tehnologia na silata v mrezhovoto obshtestvo', 'Geocommunication: Technology of Power in the Network Society'), in: *Annual of Sofia University, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication*, (Vol. 24, 2017): 253-271; and Ивелина Ватова, "Геокомуникацията: Новият имидж на межкултурната комуникация в 21 в." (Evelyna Vatova. "Geocomunicatiata: Noviyat image na interculturata comunicatiata"; "Geocommunication: New Image of Intercultural Communication in the XXIst Century"), in: Nako Stefanov, (ed.). *South East Asia Countries on the Way of Social and Economic Development and Progress*, (S., Propeler PH, 2017), pp.138-144. – NOTE: the names Ivelina and Evelyna are different transliterations of my originally spelled in English first name Ivelyna.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Milko Petrov is a Bulgarian scholar from Sofia University; his main fields of interest are image communication, international communication and history and modernity of foreign media and journalism.

## Introduction

International communication has always been a communication of survival and predominance in the Self-Other communication field, a holistic, reciprocal, mutual understanding based on either exclusion or/and inclusion. The conceptual core of *geocommunication* is shaped on the ground of communication as the 4<sup>th</sup> fundamental human activity<sup>3</sup> and provoked by the concept of *social change* as the most stable and permanent outcome of this activity. Today's person is a global person, nationally awared. This radical change is supplemented by enormous *social fear*. The dynamics of versatility between links and joints of various components of the 3 pillars in the Geocommunication model directs information energy into two (social) psychological parallel processes: *socialization* of individual and *emancipation* of collective; two functions of the very communicative technology are flowing synchronically: *operational* and *moral-assessive*.

International communication is a design communication.

According to William B. Pearce<sup>4</sup> there are three fundamental components of each communication process: (1) *persons-in-communication*<sup>5</sup>; (2) *energy-in-communication*<sup>6</sup>; and (3) *communication channel for information energy*<sup>7</sup>. There is *no media*<sup>8</sup>, *everything is communication. This is an active global conversation*.

The 21<sup>st</sup> c. world is an ocean of national identical virtual images. Material facts are interpreted *by* them, *through* them, *with* their assistance. Therefore, it is a world of intellectual communication. The image becomes a conductor of the '(dis)orchestrated', for now, transforming human globality.

Image-perception and image-reception.

The important ingredients of image-making process are: a) perspective; b) startup viewpoints such as: assessments, consideration of Self and Other as positioned in a shared communication field, environment panorama, etc.; c) contents of conversation messages; d) communication act stability and security; e) respect to game rules: dialogueness, consensus, conflict resolution, ability to compromise, to negotiate, to consent; f) soft power and image dramaturgy.

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<sup>3</sup> The rest are *production, reproduction* and *recreation*; communication has a welding effect; none of the others or their products may survive without it.

<sup>4</sup> W. Barnett Pearce, *Communication and the Human Condition*, (Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 90-97.

<sup>5</sup> Pearce, *Communication and the Human Condition*, 91-2.

<sup>6</sup> Pearce, *Communication and the Human Condition*, 95.

<sup>7</sup> Pearce, *Communication and the Human Condition*, 96-97.

<sup>8</sup> In McLuhan's view.

Summarized, interpretations of the term *image* shape threefold basic semantic picture:

The image is an iconic mental representation, *receptionally internalized* via audio~ and visualization, near to, but not identical with, the *perceptionally informed* one.

The internalized image I define as *image-reception* and the informed image - as *image-perception*.

Internal images are constructed by virtue of imagined external pictures. In fact, the image-receptions are intensely well-filtered personalized image-perceptions.

The formers are created under the outer world influence but, possibly, due to the individual imagination and fantasy, they may be unique inner Self-products: *thought image* (thinking), *mnemonic memory image* (memory), *sound image* (sound and hearing). The manipulative perception emotionality is closer to recipient emotional attitudes to apprehend, while reception rationality is subservient to metacommunicator's goals, implanted in the persuasive message. Reception is an individual intellectual act, related to the personal internalization of imported information. It depends on the specific individual communicative competence and communicative literacy. Perception, even individually imported, is a collective, i.e. group, act.<sup>9</sup> Metaphorically, integrativity of perception-reception geocommunication process may be assumed as *Loquere ut te videam maximus*<sup>10</sup>. Both, image-perception and image-reception, are two images circulating simultaneously in the geocommunication through the information flows.

### **The axeologeme.**

Based on the traditional axiologeme, Milko Petrov<sup>11</sup> created *axeologeme* as a new methodological unit and term while developing his concept for the specifically mass mediated sociocultural environment image: "Axeologeme is a fact, assessment, contention, situation description; it is someone's opinion or something, valuably tinted; it possesses semantic and lexical structure within a particular publication framework and is determined by principles, coded in

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<sup>9</sup> E. R. Smith and D. M. Mackie. *Social Psychology*. (Psychology Press, 2000, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 20.

<sup>10</sup> *Speak to see You!*(Lat.)

<sup>11</sup> Милко Петров. "Методика на аксеологематичния анализ" (Milko Petrov. 'Metodika na axeologematichniya analisis', 'Methodology of Axeologematic Analysis'), in: *Newmedia21.eu.*, May 29, 2011. Available from: <https://www.newmedia21.eu/atelie/metodika-na-axeologematichniya-anali/> (In Bulgarian)

the deeper meaning of the individual text, such as non-discrepancy, non-opposition or neutrality.”<sup>12</sup> *Axeologeme* informs about value level of: a) introduced knowledge and its position in the intellectual matrix; b) medium, emanating the message; c) message goal, coded under the visible content surface and deeply implied in the message essence; d) assessment of reliability, knowledgeability and truthfulness of the information, *per se*.

*Axeologeme* registers value-duality of human communication and human being. The traditional axiologematic communication act may be either public or/and private, even intimate, while axeologematic communicative act is just a public act.

Due to the newly emerged global sociotechnological context, image becomes more globally visible, more cosmopolitan. However, its new visibility is grounded on a strongly stereotyped and manifested national, respectively regional, identity; it is a desired cultural identity exerting a powerful influence on the image-making process. The West does not understand the East and its collectivism. The East does not understand the West and its individualism. In East, SouthEast and South Asia<sup>13</sup> collectivism is a paternalistic tradition, millennial family behavior model. In this survival contest the Other is collectively stereotyped in plural, as ‘Barbarians’. Behind life experience there is a huge portion of emotionality interlaced with fate; the notion of powerful togetherness or *guan-zi* (管子), as Chinese say, is enforced. In the West collectivism is corporative. Interest is the ruler; each community develops individual interest, designs its collective face; competition within the framework of each concrete Self-Other communication field is free, situatively interpreted as singular case.

Imagined knowledge for imagined communities.

“*The images develop a picture of reality in human mind*”<sup>14</sup>, Milko Petrov writes. In my view, each mental picture is rather subjective and reflective, reverberant. Each of us perceives the same event in a diverse, different and even disparate, way; each creates own personal reception, i.e. the world in us. Otherwise, it will be a kind of ‘manufactured thinking’ producing ‘manufactured images’ and, finally, a copy-paste intellectuality. The image, *per se*, does solely create

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<sup>12</sup> Милко Петров. “Персонален имидж. Изграждане. Контрол. Рецепция”, (Milko Petrov, *Personalniyat image. Izgrazhdane, Control, Recepcia. The Personal Image. Structure, Control, Reception.*), (S., Atlantis-Media, 2005), 136. (in Bulgarian); the translation of all citations in this text is mine, Ivelyna Vatoва, in my capacity of a chartered-translator.

<sup>13</sup> I am considering these Asian regions due to my dissertation theme – *The Media Image of South East Asia on the grounds of communication strategies of China, India, Japan and Other Countries from the Region.*

<sup>14</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image.*), 185.

virtual information environment that gives a chance for the reception mind to create individual reflective imagined pictures. So, the image is just an orientation marker in several dimensions: a) space; b) time; c) relationship; d) personality and identity; e) value systems.

„Our images are always interconnected with the images of the others”<sup>15</sup>. This is a hint at one of the notions I, myself, develop – about the image-perception and image-reception, their distinction and dynamic visible relationship. They are not merely connected as structures but functionally interconnected. This phenomenon I am defining as *connected differences* or *interconnected otherness*; unique in their mental universality, they cannot be equal in their material reality. All these notions form the holistic moral-value package of axeologeme.

“The image is an introduced picture.”<sup>16</sup>, M. Petrov writes and I may fill in: *the picture is a receipted image*. Both, the image-perception and the image-reception are complex entities, subordinated to the holistic human communication activity. It is possible, the image-reception to set up self-contained image-perceptions and to send them to the outside world separately as single messages, depending on the specific public context where the metacommunicator wants to be positioned. Milko Petrov speaks about “Self-recruitment” of ‘personal image’. However, these messages will be just individual aspects of the sender’s total portrait, holistic face. Meanwhile, they may start independently functioning as image-perceptions in the open geocommunication space because “the image ... is a specific ‘picture’ of the perceived subject/object”<sup>17</sup>.

Mass mediated manipulation is obvious. The manipulative role of the image is hidden in the interactive communicative process of “energy-in-conversation”. The image, *per se*, is non-active, non-influencing, in a particular way it is without any form and has no face. However, as a message it carries the comprehensive metacommunicator’s goals, i.e. it imports information consciously desired to be perceived. Always beyond the image there is a peculiar rupture in the truth-worth correlation between the real and the virtual object. The reason is in the compression of ‘the image colorfulness’, M. Petrov notes; its function as instrument of suggestivity and influence.

“This specific compression of visual perception reinforces *the emotional appeal impacts*, ...increases the suggestive influence aspects.”<sup>18</sup> Due to two processes - perception and internalization, the outer image-perception and the inner

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<sup>15</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image*.),162.

<sup>16</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image*.),111.

<sup>17</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image*.),111-12.

<sup>18</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image*.),113

image-reception cannot be blended and amalgamated at a 100%. The knowledge transformation is a creative, provocative, informative, strongly concentrated process (“*originally peculiar condense*”). Possibly, a huge amount of new information may be vigorously expressed and radiated in the limited volume of the image ‘energy-in-conversation’. Quite often the strong persuasive influence leads to a reverse effect and may be accepted as “a *fake news*” or provoke a “*communicative conflict*”<sup>19</sup>.

“*The image not simply takes the role of a filter; it is designated to be a filter.*”<sup>20</sup> Here I would say: it assigns the tempo of any further recipient valuations, receptions, social, political, ethical and aesthetic preferences. As Milko Petrov explains, “the elaborated combination of interpretations, decisive for the world development, and permissions, experienced intellectually and moral-ethically’ may be imagined, perceived as “*amalgama of prejudices and innovations*”; and adds: “we weave ourselves either into the texture of *already* created and fixed network, checked and trusted connections or into a *novelty*, eternally sought by humans; and, if discovered, should be ‘*cultivated*’, *adapted to our needs and ideal, notional desires and wishes*”<sup>21</sup>. The functional essence of image communication, so, is to create a concentrate of personal and collective values, ideals, orientations and models, standards and norms. BUT the image does not form ‘the world around us’<sup>22</sup>, it simply influences over our minds how to receive it as individuals.

“*The image traditionally may be reformed but not revolutionized.*”<sup>23</sup>, the Bulgarian scholar emphasizes. Yes, it is a component of evolution and not of revolution. It becomes an image of revolution post factum, when the burst of the radical change has faded, i.e. when the Self has gone out of the crisis situation of the transformative chaos in the conversation with the Other.

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<sup>19</sup> Image communication examples from the international communication are the situative conflict D. Trump-US Congress and the Wall: behind the Wall (a very good image metaphor) is migration as an actual real international problem, and beyond it – the great inner political Democrat-Republican conflict; associatedly, the informed image-perception is Trump as a businessman; another case is the so-called US-China ‘Trade war’; third case is the China’s ‘baton’ in the US-North Korean conflict. The 3 events are actually correlated and shape a serious component of D. Trump’s personal image.

<sup>20</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image.*), 181.

<sup>21</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image.*), 154.

<sup>22</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image.*), 155.

<sup>23</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image.*), 156-7.

## Some outcomes

In the 21<sup>st</sup> c. communicative environment is an environment of virtual images. Obviously, on hand it is the informed shared multipolarity and its reciprocal sharedness. Balance and harmony, inclusion and controlled exclusion, synchronic and asynchronic dialogueness are some major principles used.

There are strong geocommunication nests, where individual identities, awared as communal, ethnic and national belongings, are manifested as cosmopolitan. They may survive in ‘the broad and hostile world’ via constructing camouflage image firewalls, converging humans into *social chameleons*. It depends on ‘the good immune system of the entire image as a holistic whole’.<sup>24</sup> Milko Petrov concludes: “The image is a fragile and at the same time very tough and fast design which demands *involvement of all and everybody*”<sup>25</sup>.

The communicative holistic creativity matters! Image is the message and message is the medium.

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The author declares no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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<sup>24</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image*.),166.

<sup>25</sup> Петров. “Персонален имидж.”, (Petrov, Personalen image. *Personal Image*.),275.

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# PERSONALIZATION PROPAGANDA IN RUSSIAN TV SHOWS

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*Abstract:* During the last decade Russia has launched a number of TV-programs, which increased greatly the amount of propaganda upon the certain communities in Russian Federation and neighbor countries. However, the old template from the times of USSR can't be implemented in the times of Internet, and at the same time the main valor – pluralism and democratic approach should be visible, as it legitimizes every discussion.

The number of political shows appeared on the main TV-channels. “Время покажет” (“Time will tell”) on the First Channel, “60 minutes” and “Вечер с Владимиром Соловьевым” (“Evening with Vladimir Solovyov”) on Russia 1, “Место Встречи” (“Meeting point”) on NTV and many others. Discussing as usual the same problems, generally connected with the geopolitical situation, the journalists need someone, who will represent certain countries, as their voice is an important part of a dialogue. After years of existing of such programs, there became clear the main figures, which represent certain countries: Ukraine, Poland, USA, France and others. People have begun to draw conclusions through the prism of point of view of these people, their helplessness and incompetence, personalizing the countries.

This article shows how Russian media use personalization to increase pro-Russian influence on every Russian-speaking community. Based on the examples it gives an understanding, why such manner of representing the news can be dangerous as it increases nationalism and xenophobia, making the stereotypes rule over the facts. The long-term objective of my work is to prevent the development of such kind of personalization and to decrease the negative influence upon other countries.

*Keywords:* Russian television, personalization, propaganda, political talk shows, international relations, public opinion.

Vladimir Putin's Russia is an extremely powerful country with complicated international relations and, besides some difficulties, it continues to be one of the main opponents of the European countries and the USA. The history of Russia shows, that after the first decade of the democratic changes in a country in 1990s people were highly disappointed in a liberal government that nearly brought the whole country to bankruptcy. A new strong and charismatic leader from 2000s had rebuilt the country, changing the system of governing and expanding his authority. And after almost 20 years of governing the country, Vlad-

imir Putin has built a new effective system of controlling not only a country, but, what is much more important – public opinion.

One of the most significant changes, starting from 2000s were in media system. In 1990s, new developing media in Russia were strongly connected more with the groups, companies, oligarchs, that generally used television, newspapers, radio during election campaigns, promoting certain candidates. That made it close to Hallini and Manchini's model of the polarized pluralism, however the new developing field of partly free journalism was too young to be certainly classified as polarized pluralism model. After Putin became a president in 2000<sup>th</sup>, his administration made efforts to fortify government control of the media, establishing a 'return to government model' in the country. As Anna Aratunyan writes: "Two key events characterized this epoch – the creation of the Ministry of Press, Broadcasting and Communication and Mass Communication, and the consolidation of VGTRK, the all-Russian state television and radio company, into a major holding with new channels and radio stations"<sup>1</sup>. All the disloyal media barons were eliminated from the media politics, as it was with Boris Berezovsky, former co-owner of the Channel One or Vladimir Gusinsky, former owner of NTV, "Echo of Moscow" and "Segodnya" newspaper. In the chaos of the early 2000s, a new media model was created in Russia, consolidating the power in the hands of Kremlin.

But foremost, Russia focused on the television, as it was and still is the most influential and popular media in the Russian Federation. According to Levada Center research in 2018, 63% of the respondents watch TV almost every day<sup>2</sup>. Generally this is due to: the first, the great territory of the country, that makes the other media impossible to reach people in every region of the country (newspapers, radio), the second, low income of the families: in some departments of the country the average salary is about 25 thousands rubles (350 euro)<sup>3</sup>, so the free television becomes the only option with no alternative.

Analyzing the report of Levada Center, among the most popular programs are: sport events, movies, TV-series and political-social talk shows. The last one is a phenomenon in Russian TV during last years. The first appearance of this kind of programs was in late 1980s, when after Gorbachov's Glasnost media in the USSR began to implement new TV formats. During the 1990s, political

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<sup>1</sup> A. Aratunyan. *The media in Russia*, (London: McGraw-Hill Education, 2009), p.33.

<sup>2</sup> Фонд общественного мнения, "Как часто и зачем люди смотрят телевизор", 2018, accessed at September 29, 2019, <https://fom.ru/SMI-i-internet/14029>.

<sup>3</sup> Fincan "Средняя зарплата по регионам в России", 2018, accessed at September 30, 2019, [http://fincan.ru/articles/16\\_srednyaya-zarplata-v-rossii-po-regionam-v-2018-godu/](http://fincan.ru/articles/16_srednyaya-zarplata-v-rossii-po-regionam-v-2018-godu/)

talk shows were pretty rare, the same situation was till the 2014. Only a conflict with Ukraine caused the appearance of greater number of propaganda programs, including above all political talk shows.

A **talk show** is a television or radio show in which famous people talk to each other in an informal way and are asked questions on different topics. Political talk shows are constructed as spontaneous and informal but are in fact rigidly structured. It is claimed that they offer a space for political commentary that allows audiences to form their own political views, but critics claim that political talk shows do not inspire healthy political debate and instead focus on trivial matters<sup>4</sup>. During the last 5 years a plenty of political talk shows were on the main TV channels such as Russia 1, Channel One, TVC, NTV. Their number decreased in 2018, however the duration of the programs increased greatly. In 2018-2019 media season for example, the overall number of hours per day, dedicated to political talk shows on Russia-1 sometimes was more than 6 hours. The number is extremely high, considering that Russia-1 is an entertaining-informational channel.

The phenomenon of popularity of Russian political talk shows can be explained generally through escalating of Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2014-2015. The first initiative to increase the number of political programs was from the government, however it met the need of people to know more about the country, where a lot of men and women have had connections. As a result of journalistic licenses revocation, production of the reportages from the territory of Ukraine became a little bit more difficult, so Russia decided to implement a well know format, that had already had a great success. After all, the channels didn't rival for the audience, as the season schedule afford people almost non-stop watching of political talk shows on different channels<sup>5</sup>.

Currently the most important talk shows are Evening with Vladimir Solovyov, 60 minutes on Russia-1, Time will tell on Channel One and Place of Meeting on NTV<sup>6</sup>. In general, the differences between programs are insignificant. Every political TV show has the following elements:

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<sup>4</sup> Н. Гегелова. Культурно-просветительская миссия телевидения: монография, (Москва, Издательство РУДН, 2011), р. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Ю. Долгова. 'Феномен популярности общественно-политических ток-шоу на российском ТВ осенью 2014-весной 2015 года', Вестник московского университета, серия 10. Журналистика, по 6 (2015), pp. 162-177.

<sup>6</sup> Телеспутник, "Mediascope назвал самые рейтинговые телепередачи на российском ТВ в телесезоне 2017-2018", 2018, accessed at October 1, 2019, <https://www.telesputnik.ru/materials/tsifrovoe-televidenie/news/mediascope-nazval-samyre-yeitingovye-peredachi-na-rossiyskom-tv-v-telesezone-2017-2018/>.

One or two charismatic moderators – their position should be extremely strong, so that they can dominate in the studio no matter which kind of guests could be.

The guests should represent 2 or more parts of the conflict (the only exception are catastrophes, terroristic attacks, tragedies). There should be an action in studio, people should represent various opinions. The only rule here is that the majority should represent pro-government point of view, the maximum ratio of against- and pro- is 1:3.

The audience in the studio – the third important element. The ‘crowd’ in political talk shows doesn’t participate directly (or it can be a very rare phenomenon), nevertheless it plays an important role of ‘approval’ of the necessary arguments and emphasizes unity and consolidation with pro-governmental speakers or with moderators.

Thematically political talks shows are divided into two parts: internal problems in Russian Federation and international politics, mainly connected with the USA and Ukraine. International issues are strongly connected with the latest news, so these kind of programs are used by the TV channels for better understanding and deeper analyzing of the current news. In addition, political talk shows help the viewers to understand two sides of the conflict (the topics, in general, are debatable) and to judge according to the arguments, that used by the guests. The main goal of political talk shows from the very beginning was to build a democratic platform for exchanging opinions, showing that there is a pluralism in Russia and everybody, no matter how critical one can be to the power, can take a chance to perform a certain point of view to the publicity.

This how it should be in theory. Reality is a little bit more complex. Yes, political talk shows are used as a “democratic tool” in the media, however in a completely different way. Presenting the variety of opinions and points of view, Russian television is trying to manipulate public opinion by presenting the opposite to government ideas with no chance to succeed. There is plenty forms of manipulation that are used in political TV shows. Without a chance to gain the approval of the audience the number of the active participants from the opposition decreased significantly that caused a slightly change in a strategy of the shows. People characters have come to the foe instead of arguments and the programs have become more similar to pageant, where everybody plays its own role. Ideas, political views, parties, nations or the whole countries are always have their own representatives, however if their number is decreased to 1-3 persons, their personal qualities could be much more important than their ideas, personalizing them.

Personalization in mass media is a very powerful tool, that is used generally to blame the opponents of the actual political system in Russia. Personalization has many definitions depending on the sphere: from the advertisement selection according to the interests in Internet to the impact of personal qualities on the elections in democratic countries. The studies upon the political personalization through media have begun in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, describing mainly presidential election campaigns in USA. Paolo Mancini and David Swanson in their research upon politics and media underlined the power of TV during election campaigns and importance of a charismatic leader, that can establish a personal contact with the viewer through the screen<sup>7</sup>.

Gideon Rahat and Tamir Sheafer in their analysis of the election campaign in Israel give a very straight definition of political personalization. They define it as a “dynamic process that is expressed in an increase in the weight of individual political actor and a decline in the weight of a group (i.e., political party) in politics over time”<sup>8</sup>. Some years later Rahat in collaboration with Ofer Kenig described the structure of personalization of politics, that was divided into 3 main parts: institutional, media and behavioral personalization. The second one can be represented in controlled and uncontrolled media and it has a great influence on the methods that are used by the TV, radio and other mass media. So, they describe it as “a process in which a presentation (controlled media personalization) and coverage (uncontrolled media personalization) of politics focuses less and less on collective entities and more and more on individual politicians. Controlled media personalization occurs when messages sent by political actors increasingly originate from, and are preoccupied with, individuals – at the expense of political groupings. This is evident, for example, when election campaigns put the parties in the back seat and highlight both political and nonpolitical (private) traits of individual politicians – party leaders on the national level and candidates at the constituency level”<sup>9</sup>. Developing this idea the scholars distinguish positive and negative personalization: one for promoting and the other for blaming the opponents.

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<sup>7</sup> D. Swanson, P. Mancini. *Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy: An International Study of Innovations in Electoral Campaigning and Their Consequences*, (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996). pp. 10-12.

<sup>8</sup> G. Rahat, T. Sheafer. “The Personalization(s) of Politics: Israel, 1949-2003”, *Political Communication*, Vol. 24 (2007). p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> G. Rahat, O. Kenig. *From Party Politics to personalized politics? Party change and political personalization in democracies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). p. 120.

However here occurs a problem with classification and typology of personalization, because the research upon it is strongly connected with the election campaigns and politicians in media, public events and PR. In this article has to be a slightly different approach. Yes, political talks shows are a platform for the debates during election campaigns with a discourse based on personalizing political movements, nevertheless they have 2 significant differences: the first - personalization is not connected only with elections, parties, but it appears in programs on an daily basis; the second - this phenomenon does not cover only politics – it is also connected with social movements, ecology, countries, peoples etc.

In general, personalization in Russian political talk shows is a form of communication, when politics, ideas or even countries, nations are perceived through representative persons. It is important, that these chosen men and women need to have strongly marked personal qualities that can influence on the people's perception of the information. These persons may not be directly connected with the politics, they may not have a citizenship of a represented country or they even can be created artificially for these kind of programs.

The research is based on framing analysis of Russian political talk shows starting from 2016 till 2019. One episode of “Time will tell”, “Evening with Solovyov” and “60 minutes” per month had been taken to make the image of ambassador-guests more visible and to ensure that it does not change in time. The main goal of the article is to discover how the personalization works, that is why a few examples of image of Poland, Ukraine and the USA are presented in this article.

In Russian political talk shows we are dealing with two levels of personalization:

International politics is filtered through personal attributes of politicians by showing only main persons that are in power. For example, presidents, prime-ministers, national leaders.

The whole nations or communities, ideas are represented through individual personalities of the guests in programs. In this case personal attributes can influence on a perception of a nation/idea.

The first level is based on Walter Lippmann's theory of simplification of the world. According to him every person lives in a very complex reality that causes stereotypization of the world<sup>10</sup>. Personalization of politics is manifested by presenting the whole spectrum of decision-making process, relations with

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<sup>10</sup> W. Lippmann. *Public Opinion*, (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997).

Russia only in one visible person (leader) and in a strong connection between the country and the leader. For example, Donald Trump – USA, Recep Tayyip Erdogan – Turkey, Angela Merkel – Germany, Vladimir Putin – Russia, Nursultan Nazarbayev – Kazakhstan etc. As regards to Russian media a personality, qualities of a person or even his appearance can be a way to explain politics to the public. This kind of personalization appears only if it is important to change country's image or to explain international relations in a very short period of time.

One of the brightest examples was the image of Erdogan, that represented the official Russian attitude towards Turkey after 2015 Russian Sukhoi Su-24 shoot-down. The first 6 months after he was presented as an unconfident, cowardly, influenced, uncertain, dumb and paranoid person<sup>11</sup>. After almost half a year Erdogan on the same channel was marked as a wise, sober and brave leader, who leads Turkey in a right direction. However this is a quiet natural process, where all the main media belong to the people-in-power and help to explain a very complex process of international relations in such a simple way, describing a national leader as an extremely charismatic person (no matter in a positive or negative way).

The second level of personalization is much more complicated and is based mainly on the guest presence (politicians, experts, activists etc) in programs. The main goal of political talk shows is making a drama, show, based on a conflict in studio. A conflict becomes possible when at least two persons with opposite points of view are in the studio. From 2003 till 2009 this kind of program was on NTV channel – “To the barrier”. It was a moderated debate between two persons with a chance for the audience to vote for the winner, however it was closed “due to corporate reasons”<sup>12</sup>.

Starting from 2014 all political talk shows have the same structure and use the same methods of manipulation, so, after first two years of enthusiasm that this can be a platform for discussion of current issues in Russian politics, the number of guests from the opposition decreased significantly. The main reason was impotence and failure to achieve any success in discussion<sup>13</sup>. However the

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<sup>11</sup> “Вечер с Владимиром Соловьевым”, Россия 1, accessed at October 14, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VrzkB81oL0&t=3102s>.

<sup>12</sup> А. Мельман. “Минаев „убил“ Соловьева”, Московский Комсомолец, 2009, accessed at October 14, 2019, <https://www.mk.ru/social/highlife/article/2009/04/28/265319-minaev-ubil-coloveva.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Ю. Дудкина. “Толова-ящик: как устроены российские политические ток-шоу”, *Esquire*, 2018, accessed at October 14, 2019, <https://esquire.ru/novosti/46302-inside-russian-television/#part0>.

frequency of the programs on every TV channel demanded a constant presence of people from Ukraine, USA and other unfriendly towards Russia countries.

During the first years after political talk show's boom a new kind of representative persons has formed. Russian media, including also some popular pro-government web-portals called them "Whipping Boys"<sup>14</sup>. A "whipping boy" is a person – guest, expert, politician, social activist, journalist in political talk shows, who represents the opposite point of view in a program (mainly representing the other countries, such as Ukraine, Poland, USA, Latvia etc or the liberal opposition). Among the principal attributes of the whipping boys are:

1) participation in all the political talk shows on every Russian TV-channel;

2) an extremely active position and a will to declare it;

3) russophobia and anti-Russian behavior;

4) taking orders of the program: inability to leave the studio until the moderator or the other guests will ask them to do it, undoubtedly acceptance of the moderator's authority;

5) extremely bright personal qualities, that allow to create a scenario and narration around their personality and predictable attitude.

They play the role of marginal opposition that has no influence on Russia, showing the power of pro-government force. As far as it does not give any prestige, any chance to succeed and brings more negative effects, a lot of media resources (both the opposition and pro-government) had begun to investigate, whether "whipping boys" had any financial compensation for this and in 2017 some big newspapers (later also Echo of Moscow, TV-Rain, Meduza) had posted an information, that this kind of "compensation" is about 1 million rubles per month (about 15000\$)<sup>15</sup>.

To show how the personalization works, the brightest examples of so called "political experts" from Poland, Ukraine and USA have been chosen. The choice is based on the Levada Center's research about enemies and friends of Russian Federation<sup>16</sup> - these countries are on the 1st (USA), 2<sup>nd</sup> (Ukraine) and 6<sup>th</sup> places

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<sup>14</sup> Раскрыты гонорары иностранных „мальчиков для битья“ на российских ток-шоу, Лента, 2017, accessed at October 14, 2019, [https://lenta.ru/news/2017/10/17/deneg\\_net/](https://lenta.ru/news/2017/10/17/deneg_net/).

<sup>15</sup> Р. Голованов., "Антироссийские эксперты в телешоу готовы терпеть побои за хороший гонорар", Комсомольская Правда, 2017, accessed at October 14, 2019, <https://www.kp.ru/daily/26744.7/3772307/>.

<sup>16</sup> Левада Центр, „Союзники“ и „Враги“ среди стран, 2019, accessed at October 14, 2019, <https://www.levada.ru/2019/06/14/soyuzniki-i-vragi-sredi-stran/>.

(Poland) among the main “enemies” of the Russian nation. The second criterion is the number of programs, where the experts from these countries take place.

As far as Poland is one of the main Russian opponents in the UE and in the international relations in general, the appearance of active Polish guests make the episodes extremely interesting. The main “experts” here are Tomasz Matejczuk and Jakub Korejba, while the last one has in 2019 significantly more time in prime-time programs. He was working till 2016 for the Polish department of Sputnik agency, promoting Russian ideas in this country<sup>17</sup>, and from 2015 he has become a regular participant of Russian political talk shows with diametrically opposite point of views. There were many incidents with Korejba in different talk shows: he was beaten, people throw glass in him, he was kicked out of the studio<sup>18</sup>, however Jakub continues to participate in these programs. Often he is a guest in programs not related to Poland directly, however his behavior can be characterized as an extremely aggressive supporting of any kind of anti-Russian arguments and initiatives. He likes to provoke the opponents and makes an impression of an unstable person with no actual position, who is willing to support everyone, who is against Russia, without any will to convince the opponents or the viewers. Besides of this Jakub Korejba is trying to make fun of every program he is participating in. His behavior correlates with the image of Poland, that Russian television is trying to build – this is an absurdly aggressive state towards Russia, however can do almost nothing besides blaming and threats<sup>19</sup>.

Ukraine after 2013 is one of the most unfriendly countries to Russia and it is one of the most popular themes, being the part of agenda almost on everyday basis. With such number of produced programs, TV-channels need more representatives as from Poland and among the most popular are: Vyacheslav Kovtun, Olesya Yachno, Vadim Karasev, Andrey Okara, Vadim Triuhan and some others. The most famous among them is Vyacheslav Kovtun – an extraordinary person, political expert from Ukraine, who prefers an radical position towards Russian Federation, his statements sometimes can be extremely controversial and his threats sometimes have interpersonal origin. During the last two years his biographical facts and personality have become more popular not only with the

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<sup>17</sup> J. Korejba. “Putinizacja? Czemu nie?”, *Sputnik*, 2016, accessed at October 14, 2019, <https://pl.sputniknews.com/opinie/201601271934481-korejba-putinizacja/>.

<sup>18</sup> Г. Егоров. “Польский политолог Корейба устроил драку с украинцем на шоу Скабеевой”, *Экономика сегодня*, 2019, accessed at October 14, 2019, <https://rueconomics.ru/403156-polskii-politolog-koreiba-ustroil-draku-s-ukraincem-na-shou-skabeevoi>.

<sup>19</sup> “Оружие Польши”, *Время покажет*, Первый, 2019, accessed at October 15, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHmniM81xa4>.

help of political talk shows, he was also a participant of some other TV-shows, such as Man's destiny<sup>20</sup> or New Russian Sensations<sup>21</sup>. The programs present not only Kovtun's biography, but also his personal attitude to his ex-wife, friends, showing the main character as an disloyal ex-husband, tyrant, a person who doesn't want and his point of view is the only possible. Vyacheslav's role in political talk shows is one of the most obvious – he needs to increase rejection of the ideas, even hate to this person with his behavior, as well as attract the viewers by the public “execution” of that person.

USA are the main opponent of Russian Federation in the international politics. This fact puts that country on the top of the agenda in Russian media. In the political talk shows “America” is presented by Michael Bom, Greg Weiner, less often by Mark Nuckols or some others. Their personalities differ much, as long as they present different sides of the American politics.

First, for example, Michael Bom, is an “American journalist”, as he is presented in Russian television. However his journalistic authority is closer to the Russian media than to the American, as for years he is an active writer and speaker on Echo of Moscow<sup>22</sup>. In the Interview for the Echo of Moscow in 2017, where Michael Bom described how the political talk show act in Russia, he agreed, that plays a very difficult and important role in television, presenting the whole country, adding that this is an extremely difficult work with a lot of stress and aggressive situations<sup>23</sup>. Despite of this he refuses to answer to the question of his financial interest in these shows<sup>24</sup>. He presents himself as an American patriot, who used to live in Russia and even wants to get a Russian citizenship, one of the most polite persons in political talk shows. However, he can do nothing, he cannot provoke the opponents, cannot express his point of view, his arguments have no any influence and he makes the image of the USA very naïve and simple.

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<sup>20</sup> Ковтун Вячеслав, Трюхан Владимир, Судьба Человека, interview by Ковчеников Б., Россия-1, 2017, accessed at October 15, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DG1eA25mi4>.

<sup>21</sup> “Ковтун против Ковтуна. Очная Ставка”, Новые русские сенсации, НТВ, 2018, accessed at October 15, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OhpBnhLiU>.

<sup>22</sup> “Бом Майкл”, Эхо Москвы, 2019, accessed at October 20, 2019, [https://echo.msk.ru/blog/bom\\_m/](https://echo.msk.ru/blog/bom_m/).

<sup>23</sup> Майкл Бом на Эхе про свои дебаты на ТВ, Эхо Москвы, 2017, accessed at October 20, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wE5vZ9762QI>.

<sup>24</sup> „Сколько ты зарабатываешь?“ Что не надо спрашивать у Майкла Боба”, TV Rain, 2019, accessed at October 20, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H77JrqYrvWo>.

Mark Nuckols, on the contrary, one of the most radical guests in political TV programs, that is presenting as journalist, working for the New York Post, where he has only 3 articles in 2014<sup>25</sup>. In 2019, TV Rian made a research on the personality of this expert. According to them role in the programs is quiet obvious: American patriot, an archetype of a silly and aggressive “cowboy”, who wants to see how the USA rule the world<sup>26</sup>. Besides of Nuckols’ positive mood in political talk shows, his arguments and absurdness, aggressive rhetoric make his image a very simple for the strong negative attitude.

The last person that is on the list is Greg Weiner – an American journalist, as he is presented in the programs. In fact he was a Russian businessman, who had a Travel Agency in the USA. However this company went bankrupt in 2012 and Gred (whose name in fact is Grigoriy Vinnikov) was used to move back to Russia, where his image was artificially created by the Russian media<sup>27</sup>. Having no any specific knowledge in political science, journalistic, Greg Weiner is not able to succeed in any discussion, making the image of the whole presenting country powerless, weak and foolish.

The number of the “TV ambassadors” is much more bigger, presenting also such countries as Lithuania, Turkey, Great Britain, Czech Republic, Germany, France and others. So, why the personalization is so important in the political discourse in TV? Firstly, using the personalities of the guests it is easy to operate and manipulate the image of the country. Presenting the USA as an aggressive country with no morality – there is Mark Nuckols in a studio. Or if it is necessary to show Ukraine as a country with hysteric, disloyal and short-sighted leadership – there will be definitely be Vyacheslav Kovtun.

Secondly, the whole nation that is represented by the same selected persons may increase the stereotypes in Russian society towards Americans, Poles, Ukrainians etc. Viewers, as usual, have no direct contact with the citizens of the other countries, and have no opportunity to refute or confirm the image the countries. In this case the increasing power of stereotyping or even blaming the other nations through the image of selected guests in the political talk shows is just the question of time.

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<sup>25</sup> “Nuckols Mark”, New York Post, 2019, accessed at October 21, 2019, <https://nypost.com/search/Mark+Nuckols/>.

<sup>26</sup> “Fake News #33: Американский псевдопрофессор обманывает всех”, TV Rain, 2019, accessed at October 21, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJQqsGVE8Hw>.

<sup>27</sup> И. Жегулев. “Грэг Вайнер, он же Григорий Винников”, *Meduza*, 2017, accessed at October 22, 2019, <https://meduza.io/feature/2017/04/27/greg-vayner-on-zhe-grigoriy-vinnikov>.

Thirdly, personalization of international politics simplifies the complex reality, transforming international issues into the dispute between two or more persons. The viewers should have a strong confidence of the Russia's right decision not because of the arguments, but because of the powerful personalities on the Russian side and weak or controversial people on the opposite.

All this make personalization a strong tool in Russian propaganda in Russian-speaking countries. Personalization is cheap and effective instrument to manage public opinion of the viewers, making them vulnerable to any kind of influence from the government. Russian media system need programs and television that can balance the negative impact of these talk shows. The further research should be based on the research on the ways to avoid the development of such kind of aggressive rhetoric in TV.

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# ON THE TRACES OF MEDIATIZATION OF EMOTIONS: REBUILDING OF RECENT FRAMEWORK

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*Abstract:* The aim of this work is to reconstruct the research framework of the mediatisation of emotions. For these purposes, we have decided to analyze articles written from 2015 to 2019, and which contain two words in the keywords: emotions and media. The Two research questions drive the analysis: [RQ1] How are communication scholars dealing with mediatisation of emotions? [RQ2] Based on the studies produced what is the mediatisation of emotions? Iramuteq software was used to analyze the texts, and it allowed the advance of three-dimensional interpretation: 1) emotion and media; 2) research and analysis procedures; 3) expression of emotions of the connected public.

Step by step, it was possible to reconstruct present-day emotions-scape. Step by step, it was possible to reconstruct present-day emotions-scape, finding the latent meaning of the mediatisation of emotions and the dark sides of this framework. Those that are the shortcomings, that is what has not yet been studied by scholars.

*Keywords:* mediatisation, mediatisation of emotions, emotions, tweets, textual data analysis

## 1. Introduction

The introduction of the word and the concept of mediatisation is connected to the process of change of the social and cultural institutions as a consequence of the growing influence of media, taking however the circumstances into account, that is how culture and society are changing. We are referring to the constant communicative contact with others, which occurs in completely unknown ways (Cardoso 2008, Boccia Artieri 2012, Colombo 2013), transforming life

conditions into a new social horizon and determining a metamorphosis of social relationships. The reference is to practices or a *habitus* performed according to specific needs which contains in itself an entire world of capabilities, restrictions and powers (Couldry 2012).

It is not difficult to accept the idea that the use of a means of communication for a prolonged period of time determines the nature itself of the knowledge to communicate, and that its pervasiveness brings to the birth of a new civilization, that is to a particular form through which the material, social and spiritual life of a population reveals itself (Innis 1951, Ong 1982, La Rocca 2017). The social aspect of social media is now evident; They are part of a society in which multiple intermediation functions are performed (Colombo 2013). However, when we describe their particular characteristics, the adjective “social” acquires a specific meaning. Indeed, they seem to have made participatory collaborations possible, but at the same time, they favor a Simmelian kind of sociability (Simmel 1911), which can be summed up in characteristics identified today by Dahlgren (2009) in the talkative society.

In recent years, many scholars have investigated the nature of mediatization and asked themselves if it is a new paradigm, a meta-process (Krotz 2007) or a cultural phenomenon. It is the case of Lunt and Livingstone (2015), when commenting the works of numerous other scholars who have dealt with this topic such as Schulz (2004), Deacon and Stanyer (2014, 2015), Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby (2015). As Lunt and Livingstone (2015) have noticed, if today we perform a research on mediatization, we discover that under this umbrella are gathered various media studies, connected to the mediatization of politics, education, the family, sport, law, work, etc.

Whether we consider it a paradigm, a meta-process or a cultural phenomenon, it is here to stay. Many definitions have been given of mediatization. Here we accept Schultz’s one, based on four dimensions: by extending human capacities for communication through time and space, substituting prior or direct social activities or experiences with mediated ones, amalgamating primary and secondary, and accommodating social activities and institutions to the logic of media.

We prefer this definition – and other similar ones – because they help us understand the difference between mediatization and mediation, and consider mediatization as “something” which has a lot to do with the ability of social media to redesign social practices, attributing full independence to the Web, which becomes a social sphere of its own. Looked at this way, mediatization can be considered a technological affordance (Hutchby 2001, Hutchby & Barnett 2005).

Being still a multiform magma, mediatization has not become a paradigm, but should be considered a sensitizing concept (Blumer 1954), that is an undefined concept that gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances.

Thus, we position the claims about mediatization as opening up an enabling and flexible research framework. Within this framework we can insert the phenomenon of the mediatization of emotions, placing it in a specific context: the one of well-known television characters who have declared their homosexual or transgender orientation. The objective is to understand if the cloud of feelings they have created on the Web is to be attributed to a true globally mediatized emotional exchange, or just an expression of emotions on the social media, which have become emotional media (Tettegah 2016), where the emotions are gathered under hashtags (Papacharissi 2014, 2015).

As Dovelung *et al.* (2018) write, this complex spectrum of mediatized emotions becomes extremely relevant because it appears in occasion of political campaigns, terrorist attacks, natural disasters and deaths of celebrities.

In these cases should we talk about new emotions, cultural practices (McCarthy 1994), affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015), digital affected culture (Dovelung *et al.*, 2018), freedom of speech or hate speeches?

## 2. Looking for Mediatization of emotions in Literature

The phenomenon of mediatization of emotions seems to be recent, and it is connected with the spread of the mediatization paradigm. In order to know the representation of the mediatization of emotions in communication studies, we have decided to analyze the contributions published in the last five years. We have chosen to apply an automatic procedure to analyze the papers, specifically: textual data analysis, it allows us to reconstruct the most treated topics and also discovering a latent meaning in these works.

We have proceeded in this way:

extracting the papers from the digital library databases (open access), selecting them using these criteria: year from 2015 to 2019, keywords: media and emotions;

selecting only the text of the article (we have deleted: authors, keywords, footnotes and references);

*corpus* construction;

analysis with the Iramuteq software (<http://iramuteq.org/>).

We develop this procedure to answer two research questions:



It is interesting to highlight how the main point of the studies is focused on emotions, a word from which three main ramifications: the first two emotional and medium have well-defined edge, as we can see in the tree of similarities, the medium only later becomes social. The third is less dense in terms of related words and exploration in studies, but it inevitably marks the new aspects linked to the affection of the connected public and digital culture.

Among the word tokens, which occur with greater frequency, we find: “emotion” (728 occurrences), “medium” (435), “emotional” (419 occurrences), “social” (308 occurrences), and “tweet” (168 occurrences). It is clear that the first relevant aspect of these tools are emotions and medium. The wide use of the word “emotion” denotes the centrality of the first-dimensional interpretation “emotion and media” within the dialogues on communicative interactions and on the integration processes of the flow of expressions of emotions through the media, and their classification. From the analysis of the local context<sup>2</sup> related to the occurrence of this word it is possible to distinguish three macro conceptual areas, which are perfectly represented by the edge density of this word, which is obviously the main point of the studies and – consequently – of our analysis. The different connotations of the lemma “emotion” were therefore attributed to several potential subsets and categorized according to its high frequency level. From the analysis of the concordances<sup>3</sup> “media” rises that it is connected to a set of meanings descending from itself, which have to do with technology, mediatization, the expression of emotions. For example: “mediatization making sense of the internet of things conceptually historically empirically is a challenge to media research mediatization offers a promising approach”, “social media offer a unique platform for such contestation we draw on existing research on contemporary digital memorial culture”, “in addition interest in the social nature of emotion has extended into the exploration of its emergent formation in relation to mass media and recently also social media”.

Looking at the mass media, they are connected with films (141 occurrences) and brand (124 occurrences), mainly. Instead, looking at social media, Twitter (53 occurrences) is first and only long after Facebook (17 occurrences). Instead, by checking the occurrences for “tweets” (168) we can understand how

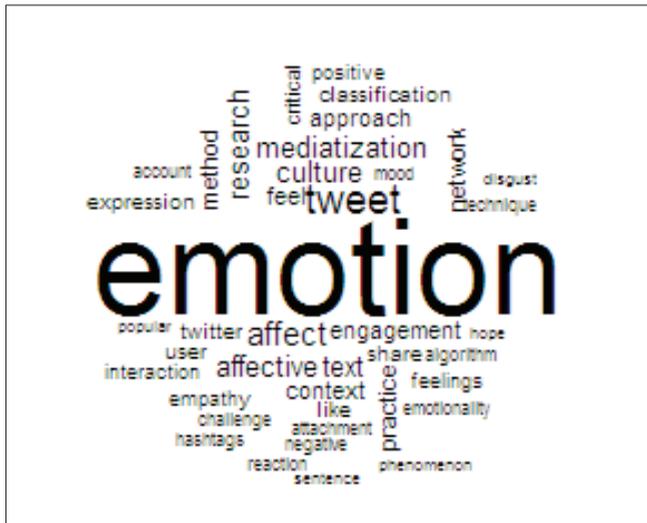
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<sup>2</sup> We are referring to the analysis of concordances.

<sup>3</sup> The analysis of the concordances or analysis of the local context is a technique which allows to study the different contexts where the word appears, “between 5 or 10 words first and 5 and 10 words after the term selected – which acts as pivot”, and through which we try to study the “the conceptual relationships” between the pivot and its contexts of use (Bolasco 1999, p. 184).

they are prevalent, both in the use and in the analysis; even surpassing the old media. Are the emotions all in tweets? Maybe, we must remember that “tweets serve as pseudo labeled data and are used to train machine learning classifiers in a supervised manner”, and the role of hashtags “supervision in emotion recognition with twitter many researchers overcome the lack of annotated data by crawling tweets with emotional hashtags”.

Figure 2 – Word Cloud for Tweets



The second-dimensional interpretation: research and analysis procedures is linked with the conceptual area “emotions classification”, moving on to the analysis of it what emerges is that the scholars are looking for a procedure to work on them. From the analysis of the concordances what emerges is “a text mining application of emotion classification of twitter”, and “many researches labeled emotions into 2 categories that positive and negative consequently this excludes twitter s users different general feelings like anger sad disgust and surprise”. Linked to these are the attempts at “strategies of emotion prediction in text”. Questioning on the lacks of these analysis procedures “these tweets have many hidden emotions a written tweets have more than one emotion or may not have any emotion”. What is emerging is a bias in the procedures of analysis of a kind of digital communication that is polysemic. In fact, it is enough to analyze the concordances for the word “context”, that this bias emerges strongly: “evaluation in the context of digital culture where emotions also serve as constructions

of value polarized emotion”, “a second context for artifact emotions is technology specifically the technology of the medium in which is realized”.

In spite of these reports, it is enough to look inside “approaches” to see how the research trajectories – and with them the possible solutions – are turning towards algorithms and machine learning.

“emotion mining utilizes machine learning with neural networks to classify the emotion of a complete sentence”, and “to make news selection subject to algorithms one problem with that is that social media algorithms combined with the emotional dynamic in sharing and interaction tend to reinforce filter bubbles and echo chambers”.

In the classification of the words that occur most frequently it is very interesting to evaluate “affect” (122 occurrences), because it opens another skyline: “the expression of emotions of the connected public”; returning and restoring the value of feelings to emotions and ours third-dimensional interpretation.

Although, we know that in literature there is a difference between feelings, which have the characteristic of being persistent in our lives, and emotions, that are instead an intense and short-lived feeling, in this narrative process it seems to disappear. We could consider this an affordance of the platforms, or better ask ourselves about this process of uptake. Another important difference between emotions and feelings is that emotions embody a mental and/or physiological state resulting from an internal or external stimulus, and allow for an immediate response to survival. They are therefore visible events thanks to neurophysiological activation and acquire a relational function. Instead, the feelings, which refer to a private experience, can last longer than the emotions, even if with a lower intensity. In communication studies, it has been established that the distinction between online and offline has collapsed and that we are always connected. It is also established that to express our emotions, the likes of the posts were no longer enough, and so the platforms developed emojis to allow us to express our emotions. In the face of all this, how to distinguish between emotions and feelings of those who are victims of hate speech? Of those who express their happiness, their pain, their participation in the lives of others? Of those who read a post and then cry and, still later, expresses what it feels?

We here adopt the perspective of the studies, we are analyzing to resolve this long-standing dilemma: “in this diversified body of research the terms emotion and affect are often used interchangeably with emotion serving as a superordinate category”.

It, of course, brings with it the setting given by Papacharissi (2015) and that we find again in the analysis of the concordances by “affect”: “the study of

the mediatization of emotion and affect online entails attention to digital practices and the formation of affective publics that is networked publics which are mobilized and connected identified and potentially disconnected through expressions of sentiment”. And “the study of emotion and mediatization by drawing attention to the ways in which social media affect forms and norms of emotional communication and affective flows online”. The word affect seems to be the one that most marks the studies in this sector and is the one that allows a meta-analysis on these contributions. Making us almost think that – although mediatization of emotions is an attractive label – perhaps, in communication studies, we should talk about mediatization of digital affect.

Looking at “how affect forms not only the key type of sharing content”, and “approaching mediatized emotion as digital affect cultures”.

## **2.2 Summarize the topics trend**

Starting from this first description of the *corpus*, it is already possible to answer the first research question: How are communication scholars dealing with mediatization of emotions? In fact, digital media have a double nature: they are both interactional and representational. On the one hand, they relate people to one another within their communicative practices, which are also manifestations of emotions and affection; on the other hand, they allow people to make a continuous narration of themselves emotions, that require that researchers find adequate tools to analyze them. The communicative practices enabled by social media are characterized by an obsession for the objectification of one’s daily life and of present day reality; the understanding of what a culture does “with” these tools means to look at the sense they are given in the practices of daily life and in digital tracks. We try here to outline therefore what is the substance of the usage of media in the expression of emotions and which aspects have been the object of study by communication studies.

To do this we use the lexical world extrapolation technique of the speaker, which allows to group and then to analyze the context units typical of one or another word found in the texts (Reinert 1986, 1990, 1995). The study takes place by analyzing a double entry table, which contains in column the forms taken into consideration, and in row the various context units making up the *corpus*. Following a binary logic, the software signals the presence or absence of a form in the elementary context unit or repeated segment. Even if statistical analysis does not permit to explain in detail the declarative operations of the speaker – here considered as all the answers given to the questions by the interviewees – it offers the possibility to clarify the probable ambits inside which an individual

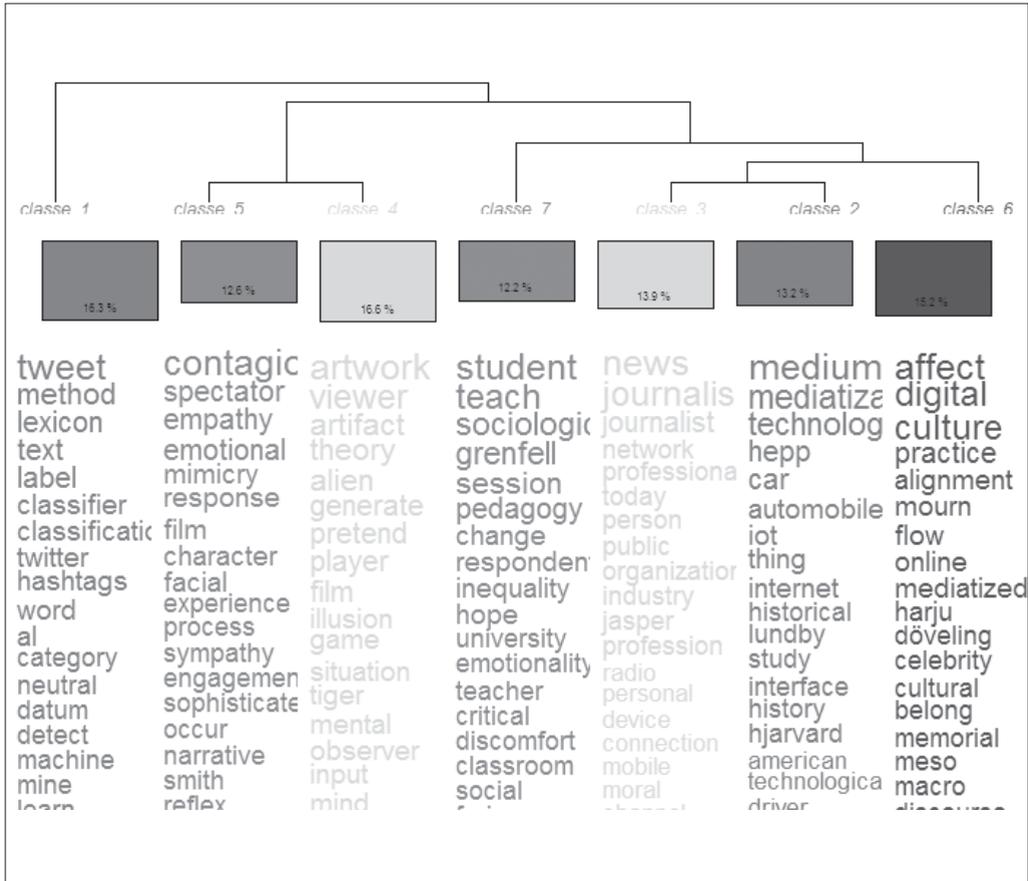
builds his objects of representation. Reinert says that a lexical world “constitutes the lexical trace of the individual’s “referential world” (1995, p. 206). With this procedure we can rebuild the places of the discussion, presupposing that the words associated to the same context unit connect to one another the objects coming from the same mental universe. The text is first divided into segments of lines and then simple forms and instrumental words are identified<sup>4</sup>. The recognition of these forms starts from the use of a dictionary; then the forms of the *corpus* which can be traced back to the same root are grouped together. We create some classes using the descendent hierarchical method (Reinert 1985) and for each class we calculate the list of words present in a significant way<sup>5</sup>. The software identified 1.414 segments out of a total of 1.638. This means that it was able therefore to fragment in elementary context units a percentage equal to 86.32% of the text. The dendrogram obtained through a descendent hierarchical classification works in a divisive sense, that is from top to bottom. All the elements can be found first in only one cluster “Twitter: research and analysis procedures” to be then divided in sub-clusters. Two main ramifications move from the dendrogram tree; where the second main ramification produces another branch. We here call them “spreadable emotions in media” and “mediatization of emotions in daily life”. Inside “Twitter: research and analysis procedures” there’s just one class (1), instead the classes 5 and 4 fall under the “spreadable emotions in media”. They define a field of studies in which we deal with the representation of emotions in the media and how the media themselves press for the expression of emotions. The “mediatization of emotions in current studies” collect two specific currents: the first is formed only by class 7, which define a field of study collateral to the object of this analysis, we could say that it is almost off topic, but that obviously we find it when we set a query for generic keywords such as emotions and media. Instead, classes 2, 3, and 6 reconstruct the framework within which the mediatization of emotions is inscribed. Starting from class 6 which collects the study on the affect of the connected public, we find alongside the paradigm of mediatization and news analysis.

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<sup>4</sup> We consider as such articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, the auxiliary verbs be and have.

<sup>5</sup> The significance is established by using Chi-2 ( $\chi^2$ ), which is an association coefficient with one degree of freedom, built moving from the contingency table which intersects the presence or absence of the word in an elementary context unit with the belonging or not of this elementary context unit to the class considered.

Figure 3 – Dendrogram obtained through a descendent hierarchical classification (total of elementary context units 1.414 – 86.32%)



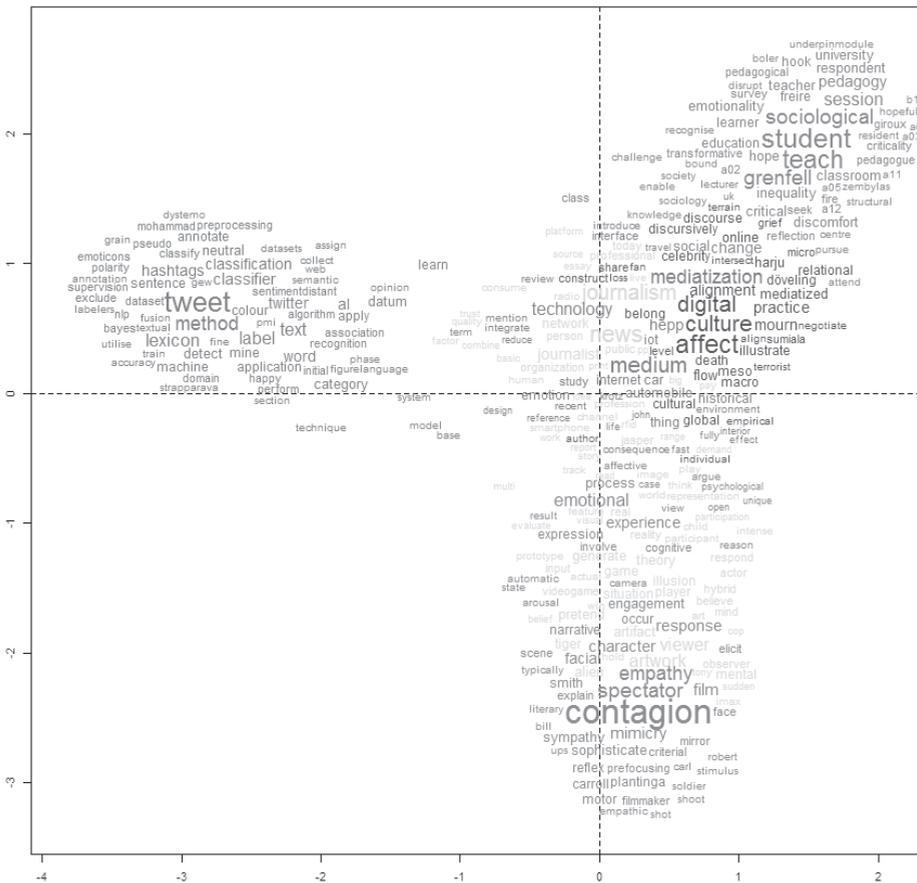
We read the words inside the aggregations and builds up their sense. This procedure allows us to identify the study areas of the mediatization of emotions in communication studies. These classes are for us research skylines, which draw a landscape of study approach to the mediatization of emotions; so we can say that we found: present-day emotions-scape.

### 3. About the building of sense

The second research question leading this analysis is: Based on the studies produced what is the mediatization of emotions?

To answer this question, we must connect to what we have already found in the emotions-scape, which allows us to understand – even in a very intuitive manner – the form that this field of studies is taking. We can also draw a graphic panorama useful for the visualization of the emotions-scape (fig. 4). A vector representation of the descending hierarchical classification is the analysis of lexical correspondences, built on two factors. The factor 1 represents 22.5% of the total of the classes, while the factor 2 represents 20,5%; in figure 4 it is possible to see the associations between words and texts on planes delimited by the two factor axes. It's possible interpret the factorial axes as semantic dimensions through which to read the corpus: the proximity between words on the factorial level refers to their combination or association in the text, drawing the clouds of words for the classes within our factorial plane.

Figure 4 - *The emotions-scape*



The exploration of the lexical worlds (fig. 3) and its representation (fig. 4) allows us to reflect on what the mediatization of emotions is not. In fact, it is part of a paradigm of mediatization that seems to be defined, on the contrary its edge are less carved.

Reflecting on the definition of a paradigm as a theoretical perspective that is shared and recognized by scientists, and is based on previous acquisitions and is able to direct research regarding the choice of relevant facts to study, the formulation of hypotheses and the methods and techniques of necessary research, surely this is not the mediatization of emotions. Instead, it could be considered as a framework, according to Goffman. We can think of it as frame, and look at what scholars are doing as putting and removing frames from a reality (framing), in an attempt to investigate an increasingly articulated and connected reality. In this operation of putting and raising something is included and something is left out.

Thinking about the mediatization of emotions as a research framework, we can point out which areas are still to be explored.

Remaining unexplored the other platforms, there is a concentration of research on Twitter and moreover they focus on the analysis of texts, forgetting that in platforms the communication is polysemic and connected. We need to consider emoticons, emoji, comments, references, photos, links, videos and all the tools that allow us to replace the text according to the expository intentions of who created or shared it. It is discourse analysis to deal with these phenomena with greater interest, but we cannot ignore them if the objective is the analysis of new and social media digital contents. Indeed, how it is it possible to restrict our observation only to the written text and not extend it to its extra elements, if our goal is to understand the sense of what is said about a certain topic or phenomenon on the Web and the emotions connected to them?

Only this way content analysis can open up to the possibility of considering the language used as a technologized meta-resource. So considered, content analysis seems closer to ethnographic discourse (Androutsopoulos 2010, 2011) than to an analysis of occurrences because it is not simple to reconstruct the path and the emotions of an online topic. This is due to the grammar structure and the syntax of the messages, to the linguistic admixture, to the necessity to recodify the emoticons and to evaluate the text according to them.

We need to develop a multimodal content analysis approach, indicating with this term how also in this field it is necessary to carry out what occurred in the study of discourse (Jewitt 2014, Kress & van Leeuwen 2001), where attention is placed on how language interacts with other semiotic systems, replacing

the “language” with the construction of content, that inevitably interacts also with other semiotic systems.

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# NEW CHALLENGES TO CONCEPTUALIZING MEDIA ECOLOGY

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*Abstract:* Media ecology is defined by authors as scientific construction and focus of the dimensions and reflections of the media ecosystem as a whole, as well as its structural elements and sub-elements - journalistic, information, television, etc.

The purpose of this article is to review the current challenges and to identify the challenges ahead in conceptualizing media ecology in the new digital environment, as well as to bridge the relevant digital media literacy. It is made in frame of Project KII-06-H25/4, financed by Bulgarian research fund.

*Keywords:* media ecology; media ecosystem; digital media literacy; conceptualization

The concepts of "media ecology" and "media ecosystem", which underpin this study, have their own background. A review of the academic literature reveals that these concepts, as well as some of their derivatives, existed in the second half of the last century. At the end of the last century, media ecology theory was now referred to as a separate scientific area, covering "media research, technology and communication, as well as their impact on the human environment" (Anderson, 2013).

Foreign and Bulgarian scholars who contribute to the conceptualization of media ecology consider the media ecosystem not only in its specific field of applicability, but also in terms of its expansion. Established in 1998 by the Media Ecology Association<sup>1</sup>, it was relatively unanimous that the main concepts underlying media ecology theory were proposed by Marshall McLuhan back in

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<sup>1</sup> The Media Ecology Association was formed on September 4, 1998, by five of Neil Postman's former students - Susan B. Barnes, Thomas F. Gencarelli, Paul Levinson, Casey Man Kong Lum and Lance Straight at Fordham University, USA. It is concerned with promoting the study, research, criticism and application of media ecology in the educational, industrial, political, civic, social, cultural and artistic contexts, by exchanging ideas, information and research among scholars from this field around the world <https://www.media-ecology.org/goals-of-the-media-ecology-association/> <https://www.media-ecology.org/goals-of-the-media-ecology-association/>

1964, but that the term “media ecology” was formally introduced by Neil Postman in 1968. This view is also articulated by many contemporary researchers (Anderson, 2013; Mavrodieva, 2019).

In fact, the transformation of media ecology into a scientific field is due not only to a number of scientists who have initiated it, but also to others who contribute to its positioning both as a theory and as a research approach. (Postman, 1973; Nystrom, 1973; Nystrom, 1979; Barnes, 1996; Strate, 1996; Levinson, 2000; Gencarelli, 2000; Sternberg, 2002; Fuller, 2005; Postman, 2006; Gencarelli, 2006; Strate, 2000; Mullen, 2006; Serazio, 2008; Milberry, Anderson, 2009; Nystrom, 2011; Polski, Gorman, 2012; Scolari, 2012; Polski, 2013; John, 2014; Poell, 2014; Stephens, 2014; Robert, 2015; Postman, 2016; Soukup, 2017; Hildebrand, 2017; Peicheva, Raycheva., 2017; Peichev, et al, 2018).

Its substantive instrumental framework, covering the available media and updating them, is gradually being strengthened. It is called the “media ecosystem”, similar to other ecosystems in society, probably as a neoreflexion of the systems approach that has proven to be relevant to the all specific subsystem elements in society.

Relying on Google N-Grams, which provides an overview of the spread of various phrases in Google’s scanned corpus, tracking the growth of the term “media ecosystem” since 2001, Christopher Anderson claims that since then the use of the phrase has doubled every year referring to 2008 as it is the last year for which data are available. (Anderson, 2013).

Although the Bulgarian author Milena Tsvetkova in her course “Communication Ecology”, taught at Sofia University “Kliment Ohridski” in 1999, addressed the problems of media ecology and ecosystem<sup>2</sup>, in her published article “Why we need an ecology of information”<sup>3</sup> (2000), Henry Jenkins is considered the first author to use the term “media ecosystem” in his article “Convergence? I am diverging” (Jenkins, 2001). H. Jenkins’ article claims that the so-called old media are rarely replaced by new ones. “The content of a media can change, the audience can change, its social status can rise or fall,” the author writes, “but once a media is established, it is and continues to be part of the media ecosys-

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<sup>2</sup> Curriculum of lectures on Communication Ecology by Dr. Milena Tsvetkova, Lecturer in Ethnology Master’s Program at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in October 1999 included lectures on the following topics: communication ecology, information ecology, media ecology, cultural ecology, behavioral ecology, moral ecology, media literacy, information literacy, information equilibrium, communication hygiene and more. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314181292\\_Communication\\_ecology\\_Course\\_of\\_lectures\\_1999](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314181292_Communication_ecology_Course_of_lectures_1999) Full-text available Communication ecology: Course of lectures (1999)

<sup>3</sup> <https://ras.nacid.bg/dissertation-preview/15215>

tem”and onwards” “none of the media will win the battle for our ears and eyes.” (Jenkins, 2001: 63). Later, there were a number of special emphasis on the conceptual apparatus and conceptualization of media ecology - from both foreign and Bulgarian authors. (Bloxxham, 2005; Schultz, 2007; 2011; Durkin, & Glaisyer, 2011; López, 2012; Cavazza, 2012; Napoli, Stonbely, Friedland, Glaisyer, & Breitbart, 2012; McCollough, & Anderson, 2013; Iliev. 2013; Anderson, 2013; Lin, 2014; Raicheva, 2014; Spasov, 2014; Velinova, 2015; Erzikova, 2015; Raicheva, 2016; Cerezo, 2017; Peicheva & Raycheva, 2017)

In 2009, an expanded mix of “social media ecosystem” by Robert Harris appeared, followed by other authors. (Harris, 2009; Cavazza, 2012).

Another term - the “communication ecosystem”, which refers predominantly to the journalistic sphere (a similar new combination) - is mentioned at the same time, even earlier than the term “media ecosystem” by H. Jenkins. In George Gerbrner’s famous *cultural ecology* movement from 1990 and 1992, it articulates itself as the ecology of the communication and media ecology.

Since 1997, she has been theorized by Bulgarian authors Tanya Boneva (1997) in a collection under her auspices entitled “Culture Ecology”, as well as by the already mentioned author Milena Tsvetkova (2000), using the term “information ecology”. The term “communication ecosystem” was introduced in 2005 to describe the work of a conference of the same name on the topic. (Anderson, 2013).

In 2011, A. Peace, V. Goodstadt, and M. Agarwal (2011), in their article “Technology, business, & policy implications as the communications ecosystem” moves from pots to pans”, reveal the basic dimensions of existing and expanding communication ecosystem.

Since 2010, numerous articles have appeared on this topic (Pew Research Center, 2010), as well as specialized specifics for journalistic and news media ecosystems - as sub-communication ecosystems of their own in different order. (Lewis, 2010; Williams & Delli Carpini, 2011) Anderson (2013) points out that by 2012, the news ecosystems at Google Science listed more than 50 articles and books related to this topic.

While some of the author’s nuances in using one or the other specific terms related to media and communication issues, it could be summed up that among all of them, the media ecosystem is understood unequivocally like the environment that existing media form - who they are, what they are, how they interact with society. (Gencarelli, 2006).

Media ecology is the scientific construction and focus of the dimensions and reflections of the media ecosystem as a whole, as well as its structural ele-

ments and sub-elements - journalistic, information, television, etc. Media ecology explores the issues of how communication with the media in general, and in particular, influences on human perception, understanding, acquisition of knowledge and follow-up patterns, how contacts with the media facilitate or hinder people's chances of cultivation and why not survive.

The media-ecological approach also involves meaningful studies of the environment that media create and structure, the dynamics of their structure and the effects of specific media on people.

The media ecosystem is a dynamic set of media, their horizontal and vertical connections between them and with people, institutions, as well as their functional influences, and media ecology is their knowledge structure.

As part of the power ecosystem, though unofficial, the media ecosystem directly corresponds with the official institutions of power, structuring its information and control functional tools in two opposite directions - supporting and / or opposing specific power manifestations. It also corresponds in a third variant, through the incarnation of specific media in the kind of party bodies of officially registered political organizations. (Kulevski, 2013)

Each media ecosystem, or the individual and constituent ecosystem elements, imposes on individuals and institutions certain ways of thinking, feeling and behavior. Theorizing the specifics of media ecology, M. McLuhan does not accidentally claim that every period of time has an environment that characterizes the nature of society, which corresponds to the dominant mode of communication.

H. Innis (1894-1902) was not directly involved in the theorizing of media ecology, but much of his development and findings inspired M. McLuhan to develop his own ideas and foundations of theory. As M. McLuhan's research mentor at the University of Toronto, and most of all through the thematic perspectives he has launched in his book "Bias of Communication", Innis contributes to McLuhan's interest in connecting the media ecology with emerging social processes and change, and taking into account the special role of the media in societal change (Innis, 1951). McLuhan goes further, claiming that "if words are ambiguous and well-studied not only in terms of content but also in terms of their effects in a given context, the same may be true of other human artifacts - the press, telegraph and television (McLuhan, 1964: 67).

It is these judgments that are considered to be the most important grounds for structuring ideas about the media ecosystem itself, as well as its immanent positioning as an object of media ecology (Postman, 2006, 2016).

Although stimulated by M. McLuhan, Neil Postman was actually the initiator and creator of the Media Ecology Program at New York University in 1971, as well as the pioneer of scientific research successfully deployed in the years since. According to Postman, media ecology explores and analyzes the environment in which communications and technologies work and disseminate information, as well as their effects on recipients. “Such information forms - the world of print and the world of television images - are not simply tools that make things easier,” he argues, “they are symbolic environments in which we discover, model and express humanity in certain ways “and further ...” I see no point in studying media unless it is done in a moral or ethical context.” (Postman, 2006: 78).

N. Postman’s media ecology science approach underlies three fundamental issues:

- What are the moral consequences?
- Are the consequences more humanistic or anti-humanistic?
- Do we, as a society, win more than we lose, or do we lose more than we win?

Another scientist with a very significant presence in this theorizing of the problem is Walter Ong. He is said to have written more than 450 publications, most of which focus on the link between conscious behavior and the evolution of the media. He is said to have accidentally received the Media Environmental Association’s Walter Benjamin Award for his particularly popular article, “Digitization-Ancient and Modern: The Beginning of Writing and Today’s Computers.”

In Russia, it is claimed that a similar media ecology theory was developed by Yuri Rozhdestvensky. It is pointed out that in more than five monographs, Rozhdestvensky has outlined the systematic changes that occur in society every time new communication media are introduced, and relates these changes to the challenges of politics, philosophy and education. He is also the founder of the School of Ecology of Culture. (See: Polski; Gorman, 2012).

Other well-known media ecology theorists include the authors Matthew Fuller and Jussi Parika (See: Fuller, 2005), who represent a post-structuralist political perspective on the media as complex dynamic systems.

The scientific field of media ecology has not yet been unequivocally accepted due to the fact that it has relatively different meanings. (McCollough & Anderson, 2013; Napoli, Stonbely, McCollough Renninger, 2015)

In the view of the Media Ecological Association, the North American definition tends to interdisciplinary in media theory, including basic study of the media environment, while the European version of media ecology aims at

studying media systems in their complexity and dynamism, and their influence on individuals and societies. With this focus are some of the publications of the Bulgarian authors Silvia Mineva (2014), D. Peicheva and L. Raycheva. (Peicheva, Raycheva, 2016; 2017, Peichev et al, 2018)

In the collective monograph “The Ecology of Virtual Reality”, as in some of her earlier and later publications, Silvia Mineva, expressing concern for the media ecosystem (2010; 2014; 2016), describes specifically how new functionalities for accessing and using information affect on media environmental perception of all kinds of realities and spaces.

There are several fundamental developments in the media and communication eco-processes, which are fundamental and must be taken into account when conceptualizing contemporary media ecology.

- interactivity of emerging online media and social networks in the communication environment;
- media convergence;
- dynamic spatial and temporal compression;
- interchangeability between different communication means;
- media bias - many of them exist online and offline;
- functional similarity;
- multimedia or transmedia - combining in one media the capabilities of other media and turning them into combinations of different meta-media constructs;
- blurring the boundaries between commercial and public media;
- demasifying and fragmenting the audience;
- activating the audience and transforming into a communicator;
- a decline in media confidence,
- speculative hybrid “texts” of products, respectively hybrid war through the media, etc.

All these modern technologically determined developments, incorporating trajectories from traditional and new media, are one explication that, like the natural ecosystem, the media ecosystem is in constant dynamics and is constantly expanding or diminishing its spatial reality and influence.

Today’s online media have a fundamentally new type of temporal and spatial communication immanence, characterized by instantness, mobility, interactivity and multimedia focus. They complement the picture of the media ecosystem in an ever-cross-sectioned audience activity, allowing it to become a totally attractive focus and depending on many social processes and the society as a whole not only on new but also traditional means of communication.

This media dependency is particularly relevant to today's 21st century society, in which the emergence of new mass media is a common occurrence with both complicating and facilitating effects.

The processes of formation of new social communities and entities of virtual and extremely mobile nature, paralleling the virtual and physical and their unification into a single medialized reality, reveal a different type of complication of society and its functioning. This new type of complication is accompanied by the mediatization of many of these processes and, at the same time, by the facilitation associated with the compression of time and space, with accesses of different nature, new forms of group and community solidarity.

The media ecosystem is a dynamic combination of old traditional media (radio, television, print) and new online media, which represent the whole variety of media varieties - blogs, websites, vlogs, and so called social media, including platforms, social networks, forums.

The functioning of all these means of communication and information is functioning within a dynamic mediatized environment.

Similar to the natural ecosystem, in which each biological entity interacts with and changes, the different types of media also interact with each other and change more or less. In today's media ecosystem, there is a mutual flow of information between traditional and new media. On the one hand, traditional media feeds on information from blogs and networks, and on the other hand, blogs are also based on broadcasts or publications from traditional mass media. The overflow between the different media is even greater, given that most traditional media have their analogues through their websites, function similarly to online media, have their own Facebook pages. As a result of the interplay between different types of media, their boundaries are increasingly blurred and faded, newer and more transmedial constructs emerge, the common media ecosystem becomes, like the natural ecosystem, an incomprehensible, boundless systematic entity with diverse and unforeseen consequences.

In this new without border media environment, recipients are increasingly targeting and relying on information from new media - blogs and social networks (Mavrodieva, 2011; 2016; 2019; Keranova, 2019).

The contemporary media ecology approach to the media and communication ecosystem places emphasis on the state of the media, but taking into account the almost constant changes that accompany them. It takes into account the rapid development of information and communication technologies, their applicability, the effects they provoke and the degree of digital media literacy.

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# DEBATING THE NEW NOTION OF THE MEDIA IN THE BULGARIAN MEDIA ECOSYSTEM

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*Abstract:* The transformations in contemporary media ecosystem require a regulatory balance between access to online content services, consumer protection and competitiveness to be achieved. The aim of the proposed paper is to **determine the extent of the applicability** of the criteria and the standards outlined in the Council of Europe's *Recommendation on a New Notion of the Media* (2011) in the contemporary communication environment in Bulgaria. Quantitative and qualitative social surveys were conducted in December 2018/February 2019 among journalism students, media practitioners and media experts in order to answer the main research question to what extent the global challenges of ICTs have impacted the national media ecosystem, which encompasses the interaction of all actors and factors for allowing the media to function and to fulfil their role in society. The results of the surveys outline the basis of discussion and analysis of the media trends in the country in multi-layered aspects.

*Keywords:* Media ecosystem, ICT, professional criteria and standards

## Introduction

Contemporary societies are undergoing significant social, economic, cultural, and political transformations, which correlate with the dynamic developments of the ICT environment. Today, these transformations are being catalyzed by the intense development of the media ecosystem, combining the traditional media with the potential of the blogosphere, the social networks, and the mobile communication technologies. Situated in the context of globalization processes, the media themselves are undergoing multi-layered transformations; they change with the dynamic developments taking place in technologies, business models, regulatory policies, professional practices, and the behavior of the audiences.

The rapid developments of ICTs greatly influenced the transformation of the media - from linear to non-linear services, and the audiences - from passive consumers to active prosumers (producers and consumers). Thus, in the new media ecosystem people can enter an unmediated dialogue. However, while traditional media can rely on codes of ethics, self-regulation and co-regulation in

compliance with professional principles, the content in the online environment can hardly be regulated and it is difficult to organize public correction of the politics (Raycheva, 2014).

The applying of the two essential documents that are directly related to media regulation on pan-European level since 1989 – the *European Convention on Transfrontier Television* (ECTT) of the Council of Europe and the *Audiovisual Media Service Directive* (DAMS) (successor of the *Television without Frontiers Directive 89/552/EEC*) (AVMS Directive) of the European Union is an ongoing process. Therefore, it is of particular importance in the digitalized modernity to define what is meant by the concept “media”. That is why, on September 21, 2011, after an extensive analytical preparation, the Committee of Ministers adopted a *Recommendation* to the member states of the Council of Europe to accept a new, wider concept about the essence of media.

### Setting the context

The abundance of diverse information offered to users requires a flexible daily response with regard to the content itself and also with regard to how it is communicated both to more compact and to individual audiences. Media convergence is situated in the field of technological innovations, of computer-mediated communication, and of social networks. It pushes civic participation and transnational cultural dialogues away from the area of the widespread trend of individual communication. Torn apart between their commercial and political functioning, and restricted by the specificity of their outward form, the traditional media gradually but steadily cede their audiences to the Internet environment. And that environment is changing genealogically.

Among the many definitions of media, the prevalent one determines them as means for transmission of information to multiple recipients. This includes not only the traditional media (radio, television, press) but also films, books, disks, products with wideband technology services and Internet, etc. (Ellmore, 1992).

Dennis McQuail has outlined the structure-defining conditions for a free and healthy media environment: absence of censorship, licensing or other control mechanisms exercised by the executive power; equal opportunities of all citizens for media access; independence from control or intervention by owners, political or economic interests; competitiveness of the system, with restrictions on concentration and cross-media ownership; freedom of the media to acquire information from reliable sources (McQuail, 2005:193).

Manuel Castells asserts that “on the one hand, the media must be close to politics and management – close enough to have access to information, to benefit by regulations, and in many countries, to receive substantial subsidies. On the other hand, they must be sufficiently neutral and distanced to maintain their credibility and act as mediators between citizens and parties in the production and consumption of information streams and images that are at the core of public opinion formation, voting and political decision making” (Castells, 2006).

The specificity of the modern information and communication environment imply a change in the concept of media. In 2009, in his comprehensive report to the *Conference of Ministers Responsible for Media and New Communication Services*, Karol Jakubowicz outlined the evolution of the concept of media. Thus, in *Recommendation No. R (99) 15* only two media are referred to – printed and electronic (Council, 1999). Less than a decade later, in the similar *Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) 15*, special attention is devoted to clarifying the term “media”. This term is said to refer “to those responsible for the periodic creation of information and content and its dissemination over which there is editorial responsibility, irrespective of the means and technology used for delivery, which are intended for reception by, and which could have a clear impact on, a significant proportion of the general public. This could, inter alia, include print media (newspapers, periodicals) and media disseminated over electronic communication networks, such as broadcast media (radio, television and other linear audiovisual media services), online news-services (such as online editions of newspapers and newsletters) and non-linear audiovisual media services (such as on-demand television)” (Council, 2007). The *DAMS*, in seeking a new, more comprehensive, technologically neutral definition of media, devoted considerable space to defining linear and non-linear audiovisual media services (European, 2007).

The *Recommendation on a New Notion of Media*, adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011, addresses the member states that they should “adopt a new, broad notion of media which encompasses all actors involved in the production and dissemination, to potentially large numbers of people, of content (for example information, analysis, comment, opinion, education, culture, art and entertainment in text, audio, visual, audiovisual or other form) and applications which are designed to facilitate interactive mass communication (for example social networks) or other content-based large-scale interactive experiences (for example online games), while retaining (in all these cases) editorial control or oversight of the contents”. The unchanging goal of the media, or of mass communication services similar to the media, to provide or disseminate information,

analyses, commentaries, opinions, and entertainment to a wide audience is emphasized (Council, 2011). This relationship can be seen as an ecosystem .

## Methods

The aim of the proposed paper is limited to the determining of the extent of applicability of the criteria outlined in the Council of Europe's *Recommendation on a New Notion of the Media* (2011) in the contemporary communication environment in Bulgaria. It envisages to contribute filling the research deficiency on the development of a new, consensual definition of media based on these criteria. The limited size of this paper does not allow to provide the results regarding the application of the three standards (rights, privileges and prerogatives; media pluralism and diversity of content; and media responsibilities), outlined in the *Recommendation*.

In order to answer the research question three methods have been applied: individual direct closed questionnaire among journalism students, a focused interview with open and closed questions to media professionals; and expert's evaluation. They were conducted in the period of December 10, 2018 – February 10, 2019.

The individual direct questionnaire of 24 questions among students N=100 was conducted at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of the St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University. The same questionnaire was proposed to journalists and experts. Furthermore, the focused interview with 9 closed and 3 open questions was conducted with media professionals, self-selected on the basis of their spontaneous interest and willingness to participate in the research. Responses were collected from 12 media practitioners: N=3 (press), N=3 (radio), N=3 (TV), and N=3 (online). The experts' evaluation was collected from 12 University media professors, media executives, and media regulators.

Although non-representative, the conducted surveys outlined the basis of discussion on the application of the *Recommendation*. The results can contribute to clarifying of the concept of media as well as to the analysis of the media trends in Bulgaria in multi-layered aspects.

## Results

The *Recommendation* sets out six criteria for the impact of the media on society: intent to act as media; purpose and underlying objectives of media; editorial control; professional standards; outreach and dissemination; public expect-

tation. It also provides that not all criteria carry equal weight and that the absence of some of them such as purpose and underlying objectives of media (criterion 2), editorial control (criterion 3) or outreach and dissemination (criterion 5) would tend to disqualify a service from being regarded as media.

### **1. Criterion 2 - Purpose and underlying objectives of media**

The *Recommendation* foresees for the assessment of this criterion 4 indicators: produce, aggregate or disseminate media content; operate applications or platforms designed to facilitate interactive mass communication or mass communication in aggregate (for example social networks) and/or to provide content-based large-scale interactive experiences (for example online games); with underlying media objective(s) (animate and provide a space for public debate and political dialogue, shape and influence public opinion, promote values, facilitate scrutiny and increase transparency and accountability, provide education, entertainment, cultural and artistic expression, create jobs, generate income - or most frequently, a combination of the above); periodic renewal and update of content.

The results for this criterion show that there is an approximate consensus among all respondents on its applicability: students - 39%, journalists - 33%, and experts - 38%. The activity with regard to media outcomes is the most essential indicator in the assessment of this criterion by the students. The skepticism of one quarter of the journalists is a bit striking – for 25% of them this criterion is applicable to a moderate extent. Their responses, however, are logical – in fact, they are those who actually work in the conditions of the creation of media content, and these conditions are not clearly defended in the Bulgarian media realm. According to the 2018 Press Freedom Index, Bulgaria ranks 111-th out of 180 countries in the world (Reporters, 2018). One of the journalists states: “This criterion can be fulfilled with a certain degree of success. Purposes are sometimes distorted by the pressure of everyday practices, and the final results cannot always be achieved correlatively to the purpose because of the multiple factors of influence and the fragmentation of the communication process”.

On the contrary, the experts seem more optimistic. For one of them, assessing the modern media ecosystem in Bulgaria, “the production and dissemination of the media content is of particular importance”. For another expert “the main purpose is to create media content that: contributes to a reliable information to the public about important events and facts, and the resulting opinions; to be a fair mediator and to provide space for public debates along with the rele-

vant analyses; to create prerequisites for dialogue between society and politics in terms of transparency and accountability; to promote values, education and culture; to facilitate communication with platforms and applications”.

## **2. Criterion 3 - Editorial control**

Four are the indicators, according to which the applicability of this criterion is verified: editorial policy; editorial process; moderation; editorial staff.

In their responses journalists are strongly convinced of the applicability of this criterion – 67 % agree entirely and 33% - agree to a great extent, experts – respectively - 56% and 44%. The still inexperienced media students are more cautious – 37% of them agree entirely and 35% - to a great extent. Namely, students mark the editorial process as the most essential indicator for this criterion.

The answers in the focused interviews highlight the strong support of the journalists for all four indicators of this criterion. Editorial responsibility is largely accepted as an important criterion for determining the essence of the media functioning.

Similar is the assessment of the experts. In his opinion one of the experts emphasizes that editorial process is the most important for this criterion”. For another one “The clearly stated editorial policy is a guarantee of respect of professional standards, as well as for compliance with the media legislation, the principles of pluralism, credibility and accountability and non-admission of censorship”.

## **3. Criterion 5 - Outreach and dissemination**

According to the *Recommendation* if the outreach and dissemination are limited, the service should not be considered as a media. That is why it is recommended that for an assessment of outreach, attention should be paid to the aggregated audiences, namely to all those sharing the platform or common features of the service and who can be reached by the content produced, selected, aggregated or distributed by the provider, including when the delivery of or access to content is not simultaneous.

Three are the indicators that are essential for the assessment of the criterion applicability: actual dissemination; mass-communication in aggregate; resources for outreach.

The responses here are very interesting. The journalists’ opinions about the applicability of this criterion are equally divided among the opportunities for

“agree entirely” - 33%, to “agree to a great extent” – 33% and agree to a moderate extent 33%. In general, experts accept this criterion positively. The students’ opinions are the most diverse. They have indicated as the most essential for the applicability of this criterion the indicator relating to resources to achieve the outreach.

The majority of the journalists expressed their opinion in favor of the applicability of this criterion. One of them stated: “With so much feedback, dissemination management and technologies available, this criterion is achievable”. Some of the media professionals, however, were concerned about the sustaining of the copy- and neighboring rights when disseminating content on different platforms.

As for the expert’s assessments they were mostly concentrated around the resources of dissemination as a major prerequisite for actual dissemination.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

The significant changes in the media ecosystem, caused by the rapid developments in information and communication technologies and their application to mass communication, are determined by the new ways of disseminating content on a large scale. This often happens at considerably lower cost and with and fewer technical and professional requirements. According to the *Recommendation* these new features of contemporary media environment include unprecedented levels of opportunities for democratic citizenship due to the interaction and engagement by users. The trend is that they are become prosumers, i. e. active participants and creators of content in online space. Therefore media’s intrinsic editorial practices have diversified, adopting new modalities, procedures and outcomes.

It was found from aggregating the comments of all respondents that the periodic renewal and update of content followed by the production, aggregation and dissemination of media content are the most important indicators for the applicability of criterion 2: *Purpose and underlying objectives of media*. For criterion 3: *Editorial control*, the leading indicators are the editorial process and the editorial team. Their importance is underlined by the responses of journalists in particular. Under Criterion 5: *Outreach and dissemination*, the actual dissemination is the leading one. While the experts’ opinion on the feasibility of all three criteria is relatively high, and for students relatively moderate, journalists see a peak in the editorial control criterion. This shows that journalists are aware of

the importance of their mission to inform audiences according to professional standards.

The conducted surveys, although with a limited scope, outlined the basis for further research among the media professionals. This broader research scope on the application of the *Recommendation* can contribute to better clarification of the concept of contemporary media.

### *Acknowledgements*

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# THE INFLUENCE OF VISUAL INFORMATION

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*Abstract:* “Each of us has been infected with information design. It is poured into eyes through the Web and we want a visual expression of our information” - David McCandless

Information today takes many forms and easily accessible. People are suffering information overload in all life spheres, especially when it comes to large texts. That’s why audio books became so popular and a movie based on book is often more popular and more famous than the original story. Videos have become powerful tools for brands. More often than not, we visualize a blog post that contains a few complementary images. Visual content – info graphics, memes, images, videos, graphs – enables you to engage your target audience through more channels. When a visual cue is identified or when an image draws an emotional appeal? The way in which we relate to information depends on how it is designed. The decision is visualization is to see more structures and relations. The conversion of human senses to computer terms is a diagram by Danish Physicist Tor Norretranders. It demonstrates why visualizations are so effective in conveying huge amounts of information in split seconds. Visual Content Can Increase Social Media Presence. Consider Visual First Strategy in sustainable way. The world economy is rapidly becoming an information economy; information is a commodity and can be bought and sold. There is a danger of new classes “information rich” and “information poor”. Information also affects the standard of living. The media themselves are changing their business models and looking for new sources of revenue.

*Keywords:* visual, content, information, visualization

We live in new age of quality content. In direct response to the technology evolution over the past decade, audiences are consuming information in new ways, from smaller, more portable screens on mobile devices to third-party apps and discovery platforms. The result has been a shift in content consumption preferences, and 91% of consumers now prefer interactive and visual content over traditional, text-based or static media.<sup>1</sup> What does it mean? Are people are tired of reading today? This is frequently asked question and the question is reason-

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Anderson, B2B Marketers Leverage Interactive Content For Relevant Buyer Experiences, August 19, 2015. <https://www.demandgenreport.com/features/industry-insights/b2b-marketers-leverage-interactive-content-for-relevant-buyer-experiences>

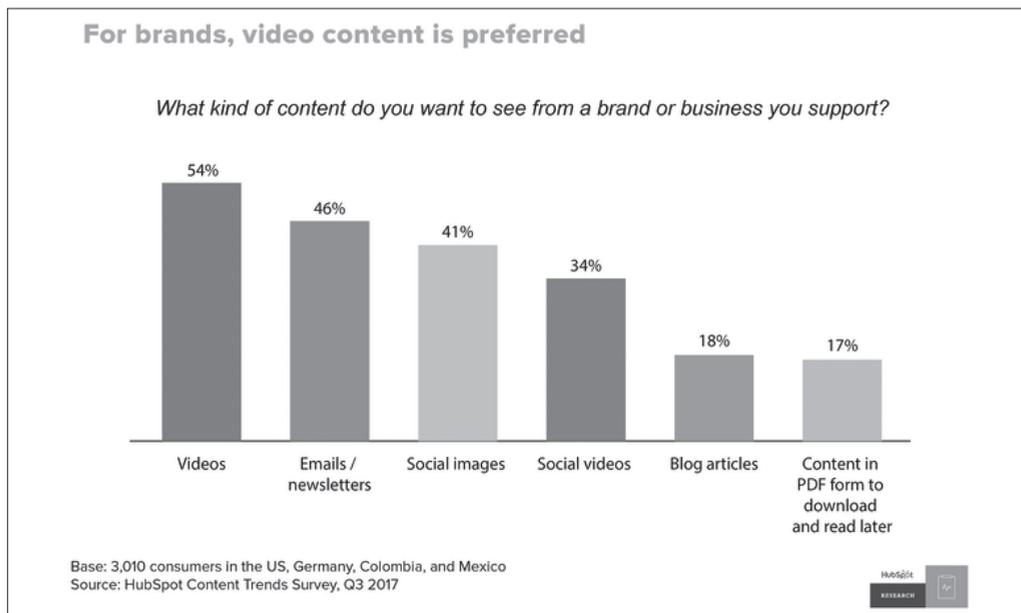
able, because with every passing year even the moderately web literate people demands to see innovative things that catch the eye and gravities eyeballs right there. That’s why the website designs are getting more posh.

Information today takes many forms and easily accessible. People are suffering information overload in all life spheres, especially when it comes to large texts. Children in most instances don’t like reading. “It’s going to take a lot of time.” Time... It’s another reason why people tend to read less. Why spend time for reading when information can be perceived in other way and save precious hours?! That’s why audio books became so popular and a movie based on book is often more popular and more famous than the original story. How many actually read ‘The Lord of the Rings’ or ‘Game of Thrones’ books before the movie or TV show had emerged? The answer is obvious.

According to Josh Schwartz, a data scientist at the traffic analysis firm Chart beat visuality today is the best way to deliver most of your precious thoughts to the audience. Human mind tends to perceive information in images.<sup>2</sup>

Videos have become powerful tools for brands. Globally in 2018, YouTube is consumers’ leading source of video content, at 83%, shows a graphic below, based on Hubspot Research:<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1. *Video trends*



<sup>2</sup> Meet Chart beat for digital Publishing, <https://chartbeat.com/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://research.hubspot.com/charts/branded-video-is-preferred>

Video continues to be one of the most effective elements in a digital marketing strategy at moment also. The consumers find video content more engaging, more memorable and more popular than any other type of content out there. Video as a means of storytelling and advertising is no longer a nice option – it’s a necessity.

Seeing is believing for most of the consumers of information. Today the sentence “A picture is worth a thousand words” has never been more true with the creation of social media platforms providing visual content today like Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Flickr, and We Heart it... the number of users has grown steadily in the past years. If yesterday runways were the main sources of inspiration, today social networks create the beauty trends of tomorrow! Visuality is imposed since July 25, 1925 when a newspaper Washington Post publish article with same insight “A picture is worth a thousand words”.

More often than not, we visualize a blog post that contains a few complementary images. Visual content – info graphics, memes, images, videos, graphs – enables to engage our target audience through more channels.

Visual content is effective because of the way our brains work. Physiologically this is assumed. Our brains can process visual information 60,000 times faster than it takes to decode text. It takes one tenth of a second (1/10) for our brain to process visual prompts. The average consumer has an attention span of about 8 seconds, leaving you with a very short window to capture their interest. That is very useful for visual content marketing. The big challenge for marketing specialists is to find a creative way to display your information instead of using plain text and bullet points. Images associated with an object are interpreted at a faster rate than text associated with an object. When a visual cue is identified or when an image draws an emotional appeal, our brain is able to make rapid connections to the already-stored information within our memory. This allows our brain to retain information longer and more efficiently.

The effectiveness of advertisement today depends on visual content. For example Ariel exaggerates to communicate the message. Ariel makes the person’s shirt so white in this ad by Saach&Saachi that the shadow is blocked.

Figure 2. *Ariel*



Coca Cola provide their audience with fun, colorful and quirky visuals that are easy to like and share. There are many examples and all of them need a visual content to capture the target audience's attention.

Figure 3. *Coca Cola*



It's predicted that by 2021, video content will account for almost 82 % of internet traffic, making it an ideal format for marketers to disperse a narrative to a desired audience.<sup>4</sup> And Stanford study on web credibility found that most of users admit to making judgments about a brand's credibility based on website design.<sup>5</sup> . Visual content become a first component of strategy of many brands and publishers in sustainable way. For example, the popular brand Glamour recently redesigned its online arm and mobile app to embrace a new focus on creating a visual impact over-prioritizing the latest news. Online editions of brands as Glamour generate more audience and visual content can increase social media presence, because visual content plays much better to the social media audience.

In the ocean of information and overwhelming of that information it seems the decision is visualization, which helps us to see more structures and connec-

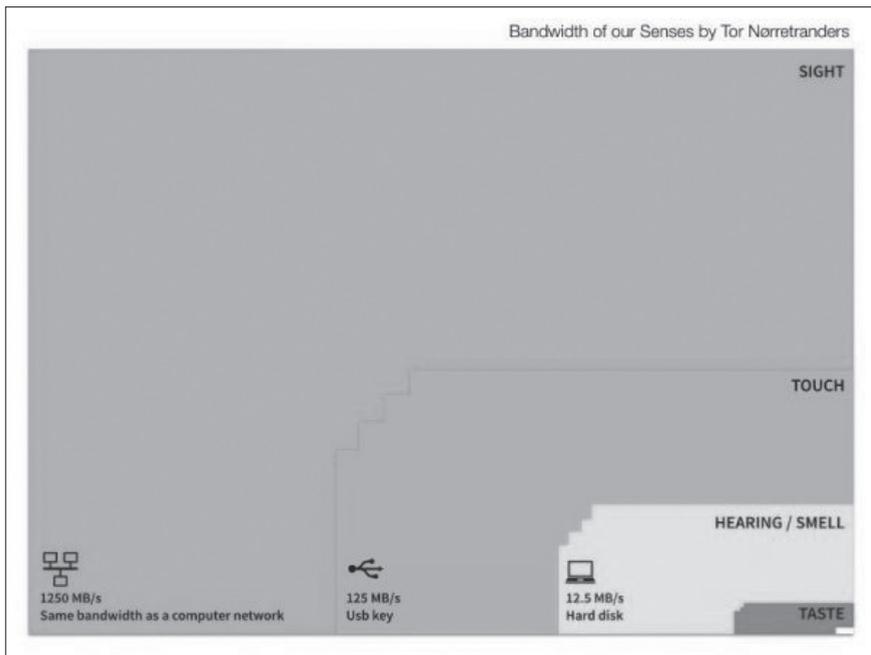
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<sup>4</sup> Zohar Dayan, , Visual Content: The Future of Storytelling, April 2, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2018/04/02/visual-content-the-future-of-storytelling/#78c-7ccfd3a46>

<sup>5</sup> Stanford Web Credibility Research, <https://credibility.stanford.edu/guidelines/index.html>

tions. The way in which we relate to information depends on how it is designed, says David McCandless, journalist, author of both bestselling info graphic books “Knowledge is Beautiful”, and “Information is beautiful”. He **makes info graphics -- simple way to tease** out unseen patterns and to **see information** that might be too complex or too big believing that the way in which we relate to information depends on how it is designed. Through visualization is possible to see more patterns. All his visualizations based on facts and data helping viewers to make more informed decisions about the dynamic world where we live. <sup>6</sup> During Davis McCandless TED Talk he concerns the relative effect of conversion of human senses to computer terms or so called “Bandwidth of Senses” info graphic .The conversion is a diagram by Danish Physicist Tor Norretranders.<sup>7</sup> It demonstrates why visualizations are so effective in conveying huge amounts of information in split seconds. The visual info has the same bandwidth as computer networks. The touch is as fast as USB. Hearing and smell are as fast as a hard drive. The good old taste is at the level of the pocket calculator. But the awareness is the smallest percentage - 0.7.

Figure 4. *Bandwidth*



<sup>6</sup> <https://informationisbeautiful.net/>

<sup>7</sup> Davis McCandless, The beauty of data visualization, TED Global 2010, [https://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_mccandless\\_the\\_beauty\\_of\\_data\\_visualization](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_mccandless_the_beauty_of_data_visualization)

Thereby, the diagram shows the power of vision compared to our other senses. It demonstrates why visualizations are so effective in conveying huge amounts of information in split seconds. Oh, and by the way, the white spot on the right lower corner is when we become conscious of what we just sensed. But one of the most important conclusions of David McCandless is that the database changes our thinking. “I feel that every day all of us now are being blasted by information design it’s being poured into our eyes through the web and we’re all visualizes now we’re all demanding a visual aspect to our information and there’s something almost quite magical.” says McCandless.<sup>8</sup>

The problem is the growing privatization of information. The world economy is rapidly becoming an information economy. Information is a commodity and can be bought and sold. There is a danger of new “rich in information” and “information poor” classes. Information also affects the standard of living and the knowledge gap is widening.

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# MEDIA ETHICS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

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*Abstract:* Ethical problems are too common in contemporary society. Media is just one of the fields where ethics needs to be reconsidered. The authors present ethical models for making ethical decisions. Some of them belong to traditional theories as Aristotelian Golden Rule or Utilitarianism but some of them are new, such as integrated model for decision making. Some theorists in the field of business ethics show that personal ethics is the most important for ethical behavior. This shows that ethical education and morality play the main role in applied ethics, too. In this paper, we present the results of two interviews. The first one is made with the students of journalism on Faculty of Philosophy in Serbia, Niš and the second is made with media workers in six on-line medias in Niš.

*Keywords:* ethical theories, models/ethical decision/ethical behavior/ethical education/ethical sensitivity

## 1. Introduction

Ethical problems in the media are the type of problems which those who are employed in the media share with their audience. The concern which exists in some portion of those employed in the media regarding these questions is completely justified. The consequences of unethical journalism are serious: spreading misinformation, production and expansion of stereotypes, undermining democracy, the rule of the powerful, etc. The current media sphere can freely be labelled as the “space of hopelessness” if we take into consideration the misinformation which circulates on the Internet, social networks, fake portals, etc.

What are the reasons for the moral downfall of journalists and media workers? Do the journalists perceive the role of ethics in journalism as a profession? Do the students of journalism see the significance of this field for the freedom of the press? With the aim of finding answers to these questions, two surveys were conducted among the students of journalism and communicology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, and among the employees in the six online media portals, among the editors and journalists of those media, to be more precise.

The moral agents (media workers) are faced with different moral problems in their line of work. The theoretician Day believes that this problem can be recognised only if we are familiar with ethics. In that sense, learning ethics is necessary, especially if we expect from workers to make fewer deliberate mistakes when they perform their professional duties.

In the paper, we put forward models and ethical theories which, according to the theoreticians, can be useful for journalists in making the right decisions. In addition, we examine which of those models is the best. In the second part of the paper, we present the results of the surveys and summarise the conclusions.

## 2. Models of Making Moral Decisions

The process of making moral decisions is a systematic approach to making ethical decisions (Day, 2004). The choice between the right and the wrong way of acting is not difficult to make, and it can happen that even what we consider to be a bad choice brings something good. The real “tough choices”, as they are called by Rushworth Kidder (2006), occur when we choose between two just actions. And that is the difference between moral dilemmas and moral challenges. In this part of the paper we will present three models of making decisions which are grounded on the application of certain ethical theories. First of all, we will show the model of making ethical decisions which is known as the DAO for-

mula. The DAO model consists of three steps: 1 – defining the situation; 2 – the analysis of the situation by using moral theories, and 3 – decision (Day, 2004). The defining of a situation implies the setting of the ethical question, the facts are listed, and the values and the principles are examined. It is not always easy to find the right values, sometimes it requires a lot of thinking. The second step implies the application of ethical theories and the selection of the best one, and, in the end, there is the act of making a decision.

The second model is Bok's model. "It is based on two premises: that we must have empathy for the people involved in ethical decisions and that maintaining social trust is a fundamental goal" (Patterson, Willkins, 1996). It consists of three steps. The first step is to ask ourselves about the "rightness" of an action. The second one implies searching for professional advice for alternative activities (advice from someone we trust; they can also be philosophers or other experts). The third step, if possible, implies conducting a discussion with the parties involved in the dispute.

The next model that has been selected is known as the integrative model (W. Edward Stead, Dan L. Vorel and Jean Garner Stead, 2001). This model is based on the idea that human behaviour is centred on the interaction between an individual and the situation, that is, that individual and situational elements affect the behaviour of an individual. Undoubtedly, the models of human behaviour are influenced by culture, family, and the customs of one's homeland, etc. Actually, the ethical behaviour of employees within an organisation is affected by many variables. The behaviour of employees is affected by: the ethics of management and the behaviour of management. Mark Pastin (2001) suggests that ethics should be observed as an integral force in the management. Although the thought of ethics often provokes disgust in employees, practice shows that making ethical decisions brings a lot of good to organisations and their employees. According to Pastin, ethical reasoning encourages questioning of one's own decisions, one's opinion about others, and the goals of the organisation.

### **2.1. Tough Choices and Solving Dilemmas by applying ethical theories**

Rushworth Kidder believes that "tough choices" can be made, when we choose between the two right ones, by using the three principles: the opinion based on the aim, the opinion based on the regulation and the opinion based on care (Kidder, 2006). The first principle is based on utilitarianism, the second on deontology and the last on Judeo-Christian ethics. Besides these theories, the theories of virtues and egalitarianism can also be helpful.

Greek theories on ethics are also called the ethics of virtues. In Ancient Greece, great attention was paid to the development of the right personality. Therefore, Aristotle suggested the Golden Mean rule as the principle according to which one could choose the best decisions. In the media, this theory can be applied when it comes to the content which is not suitable for every audience, such as pornography, and even reality programmes.

Besides the Golden Mean there is also a golden rule, which consists of the following maxim: Do not do to others, what you would not want them to do to you (Kung Fu-Ce); Do not hurt others with that which hurts yourself (Buddha); Everything you want others to be doing to you, you be doing to them (Jesus Christ). These three rules of acting, which are present in different religions, are very similar and they have a common message: respect others and do good. In this way, a journalist should respect the truth, someone else's private space and dignity.

The deontological principle (Immanuel Kant) puts duty in front of people as an important virtue. Acting out of duty is not acting out of sympathy. Also, acting out of duty is also not acting out of duties such as keeping somebody alive, doing charity, etc. It does not depend on the objective intention which the acting of this kind has within itself, and on the subject's motives, as well.

Contrary to this, the utilitarian principle states: a certain act should be given priority in relation to some of the alternatives according to the degree of the increase of success which is achieved by it, in comparison to the degree of the increase which would be achieved by alternative acts. Therefore, a certain act is good in relation to the degree it increases social gain. However, this ethics allows for a moral agent to use dishonourable means if it leads to a good outcome. Another theory which is often used by journalists is egalitarianism (John Rawls, 1998). This theory states that all individuals should be treated equally when it comes to their rights and possibilities. Rawls suggests that individuals who care about their personal interest should enter a social contract in order to reduce the damage done to individuals. The metaphor "veil of ignorance" encourages the development of an ethical system which is based on equality according to what individuals deserve and not according to special privileges.

### **3. Survey with students on journalist and applied ethics**

The survey on journalist and applied ethics included a research corpus of 60 students from the Department of Communicology and Journalism, at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Niš including thirty-five (35) students

from the second and third year of Bachelor Academic Studies of Communicology and twenty-five (25) students from the second year of Bachelor Academic Studies of Journalism, who have attended the subject called Media ethics. As far as gender is considered, 60% of the respondents are female and 40% are male. The survey was conducted during the period of two weeks.

We asked a test question on the difference between moral and ethics. The survey showed that most of the students can differentiate between moral and ethics, since 77% of them answered that they agree (Table 1).

Do you agree that there is a difference between moral and ethics?	I completely agree	I agree	I don't have an opinion	I don't agree	I completely disagree
	18.3%	76.7%	5%	0%	0%

(Table 1)

The following few questions can be an indicator of how useful theoretical knowledge is. When answering the question: Does ethical conduct lead to a good outcome? Majority of the students (67%) answered depending on the situation. The minority of students (30%) answered mostly yes (table 2).

Ethical conduct always leads to a good outcome:	Mostly yes	Depending on the situation	I am not sure	Mostly not	Other
	30%	67%	1.5%	1.5%	0%

(Table 2)

On the question: Are your private decisions and behavior based on the influence of a role model (family member, friend, public person)? more than a half of the respondents, 32 students (53.3%), answered depending on the situation. On the other hand, 30% of respondents answered mostly not. Five respondents (8.3%) answered that they are not sure and five respondents said that it is mostly true that their moral decision depend on the role model (table 3).

Are your private decisions and behavior based on the influence of a role model, family member, friend, or public person)?	Mostly yes	Depending on the situation	I am not sure	Mostly not	Other
	8.3%	53.3%	8.3%	30%	0%

(Table 3)

Certain theorists claim that thinking about ethical problems and studying ethics can have a positive influence on justified decision making. Therefore, we included the following hypothesis- Studying ethics at university helped me solve moral dilemmas in my private life. The most common answer to this claim was mostly not (36.7%). Then follows the answer -I am not sure (23.3%), which showed that university subjects have less influence when it comes to ethical dilemmas than the role model of the respondent (table 4).

Studying ethics at university helped me solve moral dilemmas in my private life:	Mostly yes	Depending on the situation	I am not sure	Mostly not	Other
	18.3%	21.7%	23.3%	36.7%	0%

(Table 4)

Given the omnipresence of media and social media in lives of young people, we included the following hypothesis: The concept of ethical behavior is significantly modified under the influence of modern media and social networks. Somewhat more than half of the respondents (53%) agreed with the claim that the concept of ethical behavior is significantly modified under the influence of modern media and social networks, while 37% completely agreed with this claim (table 5).

The concept of ethical behavior is significantly modified under the influence of modern media and social networks::	I completely agree	I agree	I don't have an opinion	I don't agree	I completely disagree
	36.7%	53.3%	6.7%	3.3%	0%

(Table 5)

The claim by which we examined the attitude of the subjects on whether the perception of ethical behavior depends on cultural background of an individual, showed that more than half of the students (55%) agreed with this attitude, 25% completely agreed, while 18% answered that they don't have an opinion (table 6). In classes, students generally think that ethics is conditioned by the culture of an individual (table 6).

The concept of ethical behavior depends on cultural background of an individual:	I completely agree	I agree	I don't have an opinion	I disagree	I mostly disagree
	25%	55%	18.3%	1.7%	0%

(Table 6)

The very last question was how often the word ethics appears in media and media discourse. The most common answer (43%) was that they rarely hear this word, while 30% of students circled the answer several times a month (table 7).

How often do you come across with the word and concept ethics in media (do you hear this word in media or can you read it in media):	Almost every day	More times a week	More times a month	Rarely	Almost never
	6.7%	10%	30%	43.3%	10%

(Table 7)

#### **4. The survey with editors in chief from online media from the South of Serbia**

The survey was conducted on the sample of 6 respondents – 6 editors in chief from 6 online media from the South of Serbia during April 2019. Since they are the most numerous type of local, and regional media with daily informative content, online media were chosen for this analysis. Among the respondents, only 33.3% of them are journalists by education, and 66.7% studied ethics at university.

The final decision on which content is going to be publicized and in which way is made by the media's editor in chief, or at least that is how it is supposed to be. Editors whose attitudes and opinions are analyzed in this research mostly agree that they are the ones who take a special care about the journalist ethics. However, two of the editors in chief said that there isn't any person who deals with the issue of ethical questions, but that that decisions are made collectively.

All the editors in chief agree that trainings on journalist ethics are important, and add that their journalists attend them whenever there is an opportunity for that, 2 or more times a year.

Ethical dilemmas are one of the components of every profession. When questioned about the way of solving ethical questions, editors in chief listed different ways of solving the dilemmas in practice: by talking with the editor or within the editorial board, by consulting the Codex of Journalists of Serbia or by contacting the members of the Press Council for counseling, if necessary. The members of the Press Council were mentioned by the two editors in chief, one of which emphasized to have their own consultant, while three media do not consult any experts outside the editorial board, but solve their dilemmas inside their media house.

5 out of 6 editors claims that their media does not have any specially developed internal mechanisms which help the employees when it comes to the ethical judgement, while one media has a special internal codex which defines the behavior in the situations which journalists encounter on daily basis.

The subjects which editors in chief notice to usually cause ethical dilemmas are society, politics, chronicle, social justice and the minority rights. One of the editors does not single out any of the subjects as the most frequent, while one of them notices that the smallest number of dilemmas appear in the field of culture.

83.3% respondents answered that their decisions are conditioned by the situation, as well as that ethical conduct leads to a good outcome. 100% of them

answered that their ethical decisions are not influenced by the superiors, as well as that the competition does not influence their ethical judgement.

## **5. The survey with the journalists of online media in the South Serbia**

The survey was conducted on a sample of 15 journalists, 60% of whom are journalists by education, and 80% of them studied ethics at university.

73.3% of them claim that their ethical judgement is conditioned by the situation, which is less than the editors in chief (83.3%).

Just as with the editors in chief, 100% of the surveyed journalists believe that acting ethically leads to the right, or correct outcome. This is an indication of the necessity of ethical conduct in the journalist profession in order to maintain not only professional level but responsibility to the public as well.

However, although they are aware of the importance of the ethical conduct, 20% of journalists admits that their superiors influence the ethics of their decision making, while 6.5% claim that their competitors are the ones who influence it.

## **6. Conclusion**

Moral challenges are based on the choice between right and wrong. We recognize wrong if someone breaks the law, if we move further away from the truth and the deviations of moral power (Kidder, 2005: 45-47). Models of making moral decisions could help professionals to choose the right way. We may conclude that integrative model of making moral decision is accepted in practice among media professionals.

In the conclusion we summarize some of the most important results in this field of research. First of all, the survey with students on journalist and applied ethics shows that private decisions and behavior of students surveyed mostly depends on the situation (53.3%) and it is based on the influence of a role model (family member, friend, public person). Studying ethics at university does not help students to solve moral dilemmas in their private life (36.7%) and (23.3%) said that they are not sure.

The survey among editors in chief shows that they recognize the importance of ethical education. In solving ethical questions, editors in chief listed different ways of solving the dilemmas in practice: by talking to the editor or within the editorial board, by consulting the Codex of Journalists of Serbia or by contacting the members of the Press Council for counseling, if necessary.

The same survey was conducted with the journalists from the media where editors in chief are employed, which enables the comparative analysis of the opinions and attitudes of the editors on ethical questions. 73.3% of journalists claim that their ethical judgement is conditioned by the situation, which is less than the editors in chief (83.3%). This information suggests that journalists perceive that in the performance of their professional duties it is necessary to assess various factors influencing their reasoning, so that by their reporting or non-reporting they wouldn't act irresponsibly and cause damage to those who are being reported about or to the public. 20% of journalists admits that their superiors influence the ethics of their decision making, while 6.5% claim that their competitors are the ones who influence it. This information is indicative and it opens ideas for further research, having in mind that editors in chief (100%) claim that neither their superiors, nor the competition influence their ethical judgements in any way. This indicates the existence of greater freedom when it comes to solving ethical dilemmas individually with professionals in their media houses who have got a higher rank in the employees' hierarchy.

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# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

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*Abstract:* Managing the communications of an organization in the 21st century is much more demanding than it used to be a few decades ago. The constant information flow and the inability to control public discussions result in a necessity for dialogic and constant connection with key publics and stakeholders. The traditional division of communication practices into categories like PR, marketing, advertising, etc. is no longer fully applicable as contemporary consumers expect a consistent messaging via a multitude of channels.

The article will focus on two key characteristics of communication management: the information flow and the experience that accompanies it. To put it simply, contemporary communication management is content and context, which corresponds to the already established theory of Marshall McLuhan that the media is the message but in the light of the prompt developments in the communication field at the dawn of the 21st century. The presented article focuses on a systematic literature review and attempts to construct a solid foundation for further research into the field of communication management, providing a conceptual framework for the phenomenon and its contemporary practice.

*Keywords:* communication management, definition, concept, strategic communication, public relations, strategic communication

## **Introduction**

The contemporary media and communication landscape presents a series of challenges for the modern professional. The most recent edition of the European Communication Monitor, the largest survey among practitioners and

academics in the communication field, outlines a number of important strategic issues for the following three years. Over 25% of the surveyed have pointed towards the following: building and maintaining trust, dealing with the speed and volume of the information flow, exploring new ways of creating and distributing content, matching the need to address more audiences and channels with limited resources, coping with the digital evolution and the social web, using big data and/or algorithms for communication, strengthening the role of the communication function in supporting top-management decision making<sup>1</sup>.

Every academic and professional field is facing issues in its development but it seems that contemporary communication is currently at a cornerstone. Modern professionals are facing the challenges caused by the rapid technological advancements (e.g. artificial intelligence, social networks' algorithms, faster information flow, etc.) and at the same time trying to establish higher level of trust within the organization (e.g. top-management) and outside of it by reaching key audiences and combating fake news. All of this has to be done within the pre-set budget constraints, which frequently leads to the need to strategically allocate resources towards priority goals.

As a result, the modern communication professional needs in-depth expertise in a much wider variety of areas than before, the ability to adapt in the highly dynamic social environment and the motivation to constantly keep improving professional skills and practice. However, is this enough to consider an impending paradigm shift in contemporary communication science? The present work tries to outline the growing academic field arguing mostly in favor of that hypothesis.

### **Paradigm shift in communication science**

The concept of “paradigm shift” in science is outlined by Thomas Kuhn in his authoritative book “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions”. In essence, the paradigm shift presents a cardinal change in the theoretical frameworks and the empirical practices within a particular field. Kuhn states that paradigm shifts “arise when the dominant paradigm under which normal science operates is rendered incompatible with new phenomena, facilitating the adoption of a new the-

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<sup>1</sup> Ansgar Zerfass et al., “European Communication Monitor 2019. Exploring Trust in the Profession, Transparency, Artificial Intelligence and New Content Strategies. Results of a Survey in 46 Countries.” (Brussels, 2019), 54.

ory or paradigm”<sup>2</sup>. The present work poses the question whether communication science has reached such a point.

The academic perspective on communication has been dominantly divided and fractured into several disciplines, including public relations, marketing, strategic communication, public affairs, etc. Each of them has developed a set of useful tools and examinations necessary for improving our understanding of an organization’s communication with key audiences. However, it is quite clear that these disciplines are in a sense interconnected and at the same time, it could be argued that they are very specific and very different in nature. Some of the earlier attempts to differentiate them is made by Kotler and Mindak as far back as 1978. Their work tries to outline a possible relationship between the dominant at the time communication disciplines – public relations and marketing. Kotler and Mindak offer five alternative arrangements for these phenomena – separate but equal functions, equal but overlapping functions, marketing as the dominant function, public relations as the dominant function, marketing and public relations as the same function<sup>3</sup>. Even as far back as 1978, the prevailing opinion was that each of these organizational functions has its merits and cannot be subverted by the other. Grunig has further emphasized the importance of keeping the functions separate by stating:

*“We learned that if public relations is sublimated to marketing or other management functions, it loses its unique role in strategic management [...] Thus, public relations, marketing, and other functions collaborated more than they competed for resources when the public relations function was excellent”*<sup>4</sup>.

In essence, most academics and practitioners in the field agree that each discipline has its own merits. However, there are significant changes in the field in recent years. Hallahan and his colleagues outline several key transformations in the communication practice, which require additional attention. Among them are the fact that the ability of communicators to differentiate between traditional communication activities and their effects is rapidly disappearing, the important changes in public communication are being driven by technology and media economics, and the use of an expanding variety of methods by organizations

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 54.

<sup>3</sup> P. Kotler and W. Mindak, “Marketing and Public Relations: Should They Be Partners or Rivals?,” *Journal of Marketing* 42, no. 10 (1978): 13–20.

<sup>4</sup> James E. Grunig, “Furnishing the Edifice: Ongoing Research on Public Relations As a Strategic Management Function,” *Journal of Public Relations Research* 18, no. 2 (2006): 160.

to influence the behaviors of their constituencies<sup>5</sup>. All of these developments correspond with the ones outlined by the European Communication Monitor 2019 even if Hallahan and his colleagues published over a decade earlier. This is a clear indication that the hurdles facing the communication practice have remained mostly constant for a long period of time and we can argue that the solution to most of these is not clearly defined at present.

As a result, we could adopt the premise that the current state of the academic investigation of communication is on the verge (if not in the middle) of an impending paradigm shift. This is provoked by several factors, including the rapid technological advancements in recent years and the significant social changes resulting in lower levels of trust among organizations and their publics. The answer to most related problems lies in presenting all key publics and stakeholders with clear and consistent messages, which are strategically outlined and positioned by the organization's representative. This is the only way to maintain and build upon the trust of the stakeholders and that is clearly an important endeavor in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The results of the European Communication Monitor 2018 point in this direction as well. "Trust, including building and maintaining it, is considered the number one issue for the field for the first time since the monitor started in 2007"<sup>6</sup>.

In the next few pages we will examine different aspects of the academic inquiry into the contemporary communication practice. The aim of the present work is not to exclude disciplines or give final answers to epistemological questions but rather to outline the current state of the field and propose a possible framework for further investigation.

## **Public relations, marketing and integrated communications**

The most dominant of the communication disciplines over the last few decades have been public relations and marketing. In recent years, the idea of integrated (marketing) communications also gained prominence. However, the question is whether these disciplines are distinct enough to remain separate and yet close enough to require a common strategic frame.

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<sup>5</sup>Kirk Hallahan et al., "Defining Strategic Communication," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 1, no. 1 (March 22, 2007): 10, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244>.

<sup>6</sup>Ansgar Zerfass et al., "European Communication Monitor 2018. Strategic Communication and the Challenges of Fake News, Trust, Leadership, Work Stress and Job Satisfaction. Results of a Survey in 48 Countries." (Brussels, 2018), 44.

It is worth noting that Grunig considers public relations as “part of the strategic management” aimed at building “quality long-term relationships with [an organization’s strategic publics]”<sup>7</sup>. However, it is clearly a distinct function from marketing since its very conception. Tedlow traced the history of corporate public relations through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and “concluded that the public relations function survived during that half century because it fulfilled the broader function” than to simply support the marketing efforts of an organization<sup>8</sup>. Seemingly, we cannot simply bridge the two functions but at the same time, both are clearly communication functions operating within the same field. As far back as 1995, White and Mazur outline three possible futures for the public relations practice, noting that they are not mutually exclusive. They point towards it becoming largely a “technical practice” or/and “helping organizations fit into their social environments” or/and “working on relationships between groups to help bring about social and economic development”<sup>9</sup>. Over 25 years later, the future of public relations is still unclear. What is evident is that the strategic nature of the term requires its compliance and support for an organization’s long-term goals and at the same time, it needs at least partial separation from the marketing function. We can suggest that this conundrum is part of the reason why the majority of the people working in the field do not regard public relations as a suitable label<sup>10</sup>.

However, some researchers have suggested that all these empirical facts facilitate the necessity of an integrated marketing communications program and propose that it should be “coordinated through the broader public relations function”<sup>11</sup>. However, a study by Hunter found that in a representative sample of 75 of the 300 largest US corporations “public relations and marketing most commonly are separate but equal management partners” with 81% of them having

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<sup>7</sup> Grunig, “Furnishing the Edifice: Ongoing Research on Public Relations As a Strategic Management Function,” 160.

<sup>8</sup> R.S. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image: Public Relations and Business, 1900-1950* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1979), 193–96.

<sup>9</sup> J. White and L. Mazur, *Strategic Communications Management: Making Public Relations Work* (Wokingham, UK: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 266.

<sup>10</sup> Ansgar Zerfass et al., “European Communication Monitor 2011. Empirical Insights into Strategic Communication in Europe. Results of a Survey in 43 Countries.” (Brussels, 2011), 18–29.

<sup>11</sup> James E. Grunig and Larissa A. Grunig, “The Relationship between Public Relations and Marketing in Excellent Organizations: Evidence from the IABC Study,” *Journal of Marketing Communications* 4, no. 3 (1998): 141, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/135272698345816>.

separate departments<sup>12</sup>. Most other scholars already presented within the current text also agree that public relations and marketing cannot and should not be submerged but rather find a way to work together on a strategic level. Can it be suggested that the integrated marketing communications present a suitable framework for that?

Scholars have argued that the merits of integrating all marketing communication functions cannot be denied as far back as the early 1990's<sup>13</sup>. The initial practice of integrated marketing communications (IMC) has been further evolved to distinguish it from the marketing discipline and many have referred to it in recent years simply as integrated communication (IC). However, in practical terms most of the companies use IMC as part of their wider marketing programs. This leaves public relations out of the empirical application of the term. Or as Grunig and Grunig note, the major hurdle that remains before communication programs can be fully integrated is that marketing and public relations scholars "conceptualize communication in very different ways"<sup>14</sup>. We can argue that while public relations and marketing offer distinct and valuable contributions to the modern practice of corporate communication another umbrella term is still necessary to unify the practices within a common strategic framework.

### **Organizational Communication / Corporate Communication**

Embracing the strategic level necessary for modern communication, the terms "corporate communication" and "organizational communication" have appeared. Harrison states that the aim of corporate communication as a field of theory and practice is to manage all communications that involve an organization as a corporate entity<sup>15</sup>. Van Riel describes it as an all-embracing framework designed and organized to integrate the corporate message<sup>16</sup>. Together with Fombrun they later develop the concept as "the set of activities involved in man-

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<sup>12</sup> T. Hunter, "The Relationship of Public Relations and Marketing against the Background of Integrated Communications: A Theoretical Analysis and Empirical Study at US American Corporations" (University of Salzburg, Austria, 1997).

<sup>13</sup> T. Hunt and J.E. Grunig, *Public Relations Techniques* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace, 1994).

<sup>14</sup> Grunig and Grunig, "The Relationship between Public Relations and Marketing in Excellent Organizations: Evidence from the IABC Study," 157.

<sup>15</sup> S. Harrison, *Public Relations: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> C. B. M. van Riel, *Principles of Corporate Communication* (London: Prentice Hall, 1995).

aging and orchestrating all internal and external communications”<sup>17</sup>. All of these definitions and approaches can be best summarized in the following way:

*“Rather than pursuing different identities vis-à-vis different audiences or letting different departments handle their communications autonomously, the vision of contemporary corporate communication, in other words, is to manage all communications under one banner”*<sup>18</sup>.

While both of these terms have certain merits, it is difficult to unify the academic community behind them as the necessary strategic term to describe an organization’s strategic framework. Corporate communication is not a perfectly suitable term for this phenomenon due to its quite narrowed target. Namely - the corporations, as this would exclude NGOs and governmental structures from presenting a clear and consistent umbrella narrative towards their audiences. The alternative “organizational communication” on the other hand has not gained traction with the international academic community, possibly due to its ambiguity. As Theis-Berglmair notes, the term in the US is more and more limited to communication within an organization as a result of its separation from the public relations function<sup>19</sup>. Hence, these terms could raise more questions than provide answers in an attempt to define the strategic framework of contemporary communication within an organization.

## **Establishing Communication Management**

Considering the information presented above, we can easily conclude that an umbrella term is necessary to facilitate the vital strategic coordination between the different departments dealing with an organization’s communication. That is part of the reason why some scholars state that the communication

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<sup>17</sup> C. B. M. van Riel and C. Fombrun, *Essentials of Corporate Communication: Implementing Practices for Effective Reputation Management* (London: Routledge, 2007), 25.

<sup>18</sup> Lars Thøger Christensen and Joep Cornelissen, “Bridging Corporate and Organizational Communication: Review, Development and a Look to the Future,” *Management Communication Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2011): 386.

<sup>19</sup> Anna Maria Theis-Berglmair, “Why ‘Public Relations’, Why Not ‘Organizational Communication’? Some Comments on the Dynamic Potential of a Research Area,” in *Organisationskommunikation Und Public Relations* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2013), 29, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-18961-1\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-18961-1_2).

field “continues to have a naming and perhaps even an identity crisis”<sup>20</sup>. One of the suggested possibilities is the term “strategic communication”, which can be defined as “the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission”<sup>21</sup>. And while this term has been prominent in the academic community in recent years, it has one possibly fatal flaw. Using the term “strategic communication” emphasizes the long-term goals, which an organization must achieve. Thus, it seems to diminish the day-to-day routine and the tactical moves, which are an integral part of managing the consistency of the brand’s narrative.

Other scholars have supported the idea of using “communication management” as the umbrella term for an organization’s communication. They have pointed out that it is inheriting the strategic frame of the broader public relations discipline while remaining a “multi-dimensional concept” within itself<sup>22</sup>. Others have noted that it carries no historical burden like public relations, which once was characterized as “hidden persuasion” and as a result it is displacing it in many ways<sup>23</sup>.

## Conclusion

It remains to be seen, which concept would dominate the strategic framework of the communications of an organization. However, it is clear that both public relations and marketing have their merits. It is also clear that the unifying concept should not exclude the tactical operational level of communication and at the same time be clear enough to be universally adopted. At present, “communication management” as a concept emphasizes the idea that this is a management function and should be viewed as one, which certainly is a step in the right direction. Furthermore, it encompasses the much needed characteristics in terms

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<sup>20</sup> Derina R. Holtzhausen and Ansgar Zerfass, “Strategic Communication – Pillars and Perspectives of an Alternative Paradigm,” in *Organisationskommunikation Und Public Relations* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2013), 73, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-18961-1\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-18961-1_4).

<sup>21</sup> Hallahan et al., “Defining Strategic Communication,” 3.

<sup>22</sup> Betteke van Ruler and Dejan Verčič, “Communication Management in Europe — Challenges and Opportunities,” in *Public Relations Research* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), 313, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-90918-9\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-90918-9_21).

<sup>23</sup> Stefan Wehmeier, “Communication Management, Organizational Communication and Public Relations: Developments and Future Directions from a German Perspective,” in *Public Relations Research* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), 225, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-90918-9\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-90918-9_14).

of clarity, framing and application. It remains to be seen whether the international academic community will embrace it.

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# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM EDUCATION

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*Abstract:* Journalism education has been a topic of discussions between academics, educational experts, and journalists and off course general public. Beyond controversial opinions in the past whether university education in Journalism is better or university level in other field and then practical training in Journalism is a better way for a carrier, education and training in journalism has always existed.

The present paper is an attempt to analyse historical background and outline some of the Educational policies in Journalism education.

*Keywords:* journalism education, media, media landscape, media content, curriculum.

## Introduction

### Journalism Education in Bulgaria<sup>1</sup>

#### **a) Framework of Journalism Education and Training. Historical background:**

There are two periods of journalism education in Bulgaria:

##### **1. Preacademic Journalism education (1804-1952)**

The main role for the training of Bulgarian journalists during the preacademic period since (1894) was given to the professional organizations – First journalists' council in Bulgaria which was called The Society of journalists from the capital (founded in 1907) and the Union of the professional country journalists (founded in 1924). The forms of professional education were seminars, languages courses, tours, competitions for best reports and articles, meetings with

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<sup>1</sup> European Journalism Education - Journalism Education in Bulgaria - Paper for the European Commission, authors: *Prof. Dr. Minka Zlateva, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Manuela Manliherova, Prof. Dr. Teodora Petrova.*

foreign journalists. The unions provided some funds scholarships in London, Paris, Berlin , Rome. The training started on professional base.

**2. University education or academic education in Journalism (since 1952/1953).** Masters Degree in Journalism was established at the Philological Faculty of Sofia University at 1952/1953 academic year. It was designed after the patterns of academic courses of Journalism in the faculties of Journalism in Moscow and Leningrad (Sankt Petersburg). The university education is in 3 programs- “Bachelor”, ”Master” and “Doctoral” programs. There are also courses on professional qualification degrees for lifelong learning programs.

### **Conceptual framework**

#### **3. Changing the curriculum.**

The first big change appeared in 1970s and 1980s. Journalism education was modernized including subjects from social sciences, media trainings – press, radio, television. The curriculums included subjects similar to subjects in the curriculums of Journalism studies in the countries of Western Europe.

The curriculums of Journalism, PR and Communication studies were changed in 1990s when the changes in Eastern Europe were fact. Journalism teaching was changed together with the social changes. There were more and more studies about the role of journalism in the society, journalism and communication studies were changed. Many of the topics were on the role of journalism in society, journalism ethics, media landscape and media ownership. Journalism and PR curriculums were set as separate university programs. Media landscape changed wwithin the last 30 years- media economy marked enlargement of foreign media group’s capitals in the country. German, American, Norwegian and Irish capitals are already in the media market. A strong wave of digital change in the audio-visual industry can be marked. Media organizations signed a code of Ethical standards in media which they try to comply with. Media outlets which are owned by foreign media groups try to cope with their professional standards. Some of those big media groups left Bulgarian media market and one of the biggest media groups are owned by Bulgarian firms.

When private universities were established after the changes in 1990s All of indicated state and private universities offer 4- year training program for journalists and the field of communication (BA) and 1 or 1,5 year for Master degree and another 3 years for the Doctoral.

The journalism education has a blooming process at state universities – Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, University of National and International

Economics, Shumen University, South-West University, Blagoevgrad at private universities – American University in Bulgaria, Bourgas Free University, New Bulgarian University and Varna Free University. BA and MA programs in the field of Journalism are accredited by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency is a statutory body for evaluation, accreditation and monitoring of the quality in higher education institutions and scientific organizations and Bologna process and introducing high standards of university education. Most of the universities in Bulgaria offer also programs in Public Relations Book Publishing, Communication and Media or similar. All programs include competences and skills and university education is blend between theoretical and practical subjects in the courses of Departments of journalism and communication. Journalism departments provide training in print online, audio-visual journalism, public relations and communication. The students can learn or develop proficiency in a foreign language and study law, ethics and the history of journalism. They have courses in investigative journalism, European processes in media field, producing, media management, and others.

*“The most prevalent and persistent issue regarding the content of journalism education has been the theory-practice division. This extends to the suitability of journalism education as a tertiary study area and the composition of its curricula, which have been debated since its inception. The earliest programs in formal journalism education in the United States consisted of teaching technical skills as well as writing and editing. This inclusion of skills training pointed from the very beginning to the gulf journalism education would have to bridge in academic institutions. Many countries, notably the United Kingdom, left the training of journalists to the industry until the 1990s.”<sup>2</sup>*

### **b) Journalism professional training<sup>3</sup>**

There is also a mid-career center - The Media Development Center, Sofia (MDC), which is a non-profit organization established in 1998 which was very active up to 2010-2015. The other Bulgarian training institutions are Bulgarian Journalists' Union and Union of Journalists Podkrepa. The mid-career center Media Development Centre offers online courses, courses in PR and journalism in print design and web-design, audio-visual training, summer courses for practi-

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<sup>2</sup> <https://oxfordre.com/communication/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-92>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.uni-sofia.bg/>, <http://www.mediacenterbg.org/>, <http://www.aubg.bg/>, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001469/146937e.pdf>, <http://www.nbu.bg/index.php?l=28>

tioners. The trainings are with the length of several days or 2-3 weeks. The other Bulgarian training institutions are Bulgarian Journalists' Union and Union des Journalistes Bulgares Podkrepa design the training programs for several days. Continuing education is offered by different institutions: universities, training centers, and professional organizations. New Bulgarian university offers Summer training sessions, there are options for trainings offer by: Universities offer one or one and half year MA programs for journalists in different fields of study for full time or part-time students. There are also individual specializing courses. Information about those programs and courses can be found on the web-pages of universities. Universities offer different training courses on agreement with out-door organizations, to beneficiaries on; Training centers. Licensed training centers offer training courses in the field of journalism. Center for development of Journalism offers distant learning courses on a pattern of BBC distant learning, Diversity Bulgaria and Radio journalism with the help of MATRA program. Courses on Election campaigns, English for Journalists, Media management, Radio management (3 -7 days) courses on different topics. Some of the courses are organized for journalists of South-East Europe the center is a member of SEENPM. Media center Pro Media also organizes professional training in R and TV Journalism, Ethnicity and diversity, Investigations and corruption other courses; In-door trainings. WAZ group, Economedia, ReTV, Bulgarian National TV, BTV, National radio others organize short-term indoor training; Short-term trainings. Union of Journalist and other professional and media organizations offer 2-3 days seminars and trainings. Some of those seminars are organized by the professional organizations, others in cooperation with other institutions or foreign foundations. EU Institutions, World Bank, Bulbank and other national and international institutions organize short term training for journalists covering a certain field.<sup>4</sup> Softuni is an open university and does nowadays a lot of open online trainings.

### **c) Technological and social changes. Shaping the new curriculum.**

Transformed by use of technology the use of media has changed. Media content is mobile, open 24/7. The user is a publisher and can comment. Social networks have increasingly great influence as channels for dissemination of information. We have diversification of sources and distribution through various platforms. The information is aimed at different users, content is personalized.

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<sup>4</sup> PETROVA, T. /MANLIHEROVA. M – Journalism, Its Education, Training and Development in Bulgaria, Tri-Medial Working in European Local Journalism, Edited by Hans Paukens/Sandra Uebbing, Verlag Reinhard Fisher , Munchen, 2006

Media content consist of text, audio, video and animation. We have transformation of understanding of “information and media content”. Media content is a mixture of “media and art”. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected through new forms of communication, the role of strategic communications is to help organizations understand how to effectively deliver their message to key audiences.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time Journalists should be feeling responsible for the freedom of expression, respecting the integrity of individuals, critical of sources and independent of vested interests, using ethical standards. They should have capacity to work for Online media , Social media and social networks, manage User Content, create content in real time and understand what Fake news is.

Much of the information in the net has no social value; social networks are new advertising markets; new players in the advertising business.

#### **d) The competence we build reflect on journalism’s role in society**

Journalism education is focused on acquiring know ledge on the legal and ethical framework of journalism profession, understand the values that underlie professional choices, work in the local with the national and the global media world, and be able to evaluate sources be able to interact with the public.<sup>6</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

Journalism education is the key to skills and professional knowledge. Journalism courses include disciplines and practical training classes.

“In times of digital journalism, the challenges for journalists come from many sides. Not only the precariousness of employment, but also the diminishing of authority is affecting the profession. Professionalism is again emerging as a vital concept, although it remains as contentious as ever. At a time when journalistic authority is under attack, professionalism is seen as a tool in the boundary-work taking place between journalists, a public participating in news creation and distribution, tweeters, and bloggers. Journalism schools are using various ways to train journalists for a new, shared world. This includes teaching “entrepreneurial journalism” in order to prepare their students for an anticipated de-institutionalized future”.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/stratcommwriting/chapter/what-is-strategic>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ejta.eu/tartu-declaration>

<sup>7</sup> <https://oxfordre.com/communication/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-92>



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