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YEAR
MONTH
ISSUE

Volume 62 (LXII) 2017
DECEMBER
2

PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2017-12-20
PUBLISHED PRINT: 2017-12-30
ISSUE DOI:10.24193/subbeph.2017.2

S T U D I A
UNIVERSITATIS BABEȘ-BOLYAI
EPHEMERIDES

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BINGE-WATCHERS. BEHAVIOR PATTERNS AND EMOTIONS

IONUȚ PAUL BOCA¹

ABSTRACT. TV series' consumption patterns drastically changed with the advent of online streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu or Amazon Prime Video, which give users unlimited access to a huge media archive on a monthly subscription basis. Changes in the distribution system of TV series entail the emergence of a binge-watching cultural phenomenon. Since 2013, when the term 'binge-watch' made it on the Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year shortlist, binge-watching has become the new norm of TV series' consumption for many fans and casual watchers.

This paper aims at analyzing how people relate to their own binge-watching consumption habits and what are the most common behaviours and affects related to binge-watching. For this purpose, the paper considers a corpus of 6951 Facebook comments mentioning the habit of binge-watching, which were extracted from the official Facebook pages of 108 popular TV shows. The content analysis shows clear correlations between different types of behaviours and emotions related to binge-watching, and it shows a connection between the type of distribution and the affects experienced by consumers. Consequences and implications of these outcomes are further discussed.

Keywords: binge-watching, netflix, tv series, Facebook, online social networks, TV, streaming

Introduction

Binge-watching has been a behavioral model related to the consumption of TV series for a long time, but it has never reached such a wide spread among media consumers as it did in the last few years. The

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phenomenon is amplified, on the one hand, by the distribution system practiced by services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video or Hulu. On the other hand, however, the explanation for this phenomenon lies in the psychology of consumers, who are drawn towards binge-watching through complex narrative structures (Gaines Lewis 2014). Technological developments, along with changes in the discursive construction of TV series and the emerging video-on-demand (VOD) industry have all lead to a media landscape where binge-watching is adopted as a mainstream media practice (Jenner 2017, 1-3). According to recent surveys, upwards 75% of American and 85% of Chinese consumers who use VOD services engage in binge-viewing TV shows (ARRIS, 2015).

In addition to choosing VOD platforms because of their low prices – the most popular Netflix subscription plan costs \$10.99 per month, whereas the average cable TV subscription costs \$103.10 per month (Leichtman Research Group, Inc. 2016) – people also embrace them because they prefer to engage in scheduled viewing practices. While most of the history of television falls under the category of ‘appointment’ viewing, requiring the consumer to be in the front of the screen in certain timeframes in order to be able to watch his favourite shows, with VOD services, users are no longer tied to the broadcast schedule and can actively decide about their viewing schedules and timing (Horvath et al. 2017; Lotz 2007, 132). One of the main consequences of this new freedom is the rise of binge-viewing, which was previously associated with DVD box sets (Jenner 2017, 3).

Another important factor leading to a raise in binge-watching consumption patterns is the disappearance of temporal gaps between different segments of the productions in digitally distributed TV shows. While a clear temporal division between parts of the media product is considered to be one of the main criteria for serialization itself (Allen 1994, 16; O’Sullivan 2006, 115), VOD platforms cut out traditional commercial gaps and blur the lines between consecutive episodes through features such as the Netflix post-play and through the very mechanisms of binge-publishing (Ede 2015, 49). Commenting on binge-watching and the Netflix ‘all-at-once’ release strategy, Beau Willimon, creator of the original series “House of Cards”, said that “We always talked about ‘House

of *Cards*’ as ‘the movie’; we thought of the first season as a 13-hour movie” (Buder 2014). These new narrative strategies, along with a distribution system that encourages consumers to watch more than one episode of a series in a sitting give birth to a culture where binge-watching is the new norm and TV shows are invested with some features of ‘quality’ or ‘cult’ (Jenner 2017, 1).

In addition to this, the abundance of lists of “binge-worthy” TV shows in the media encourage people to adopt this kind of behavior and associate it with quality media productions, whereas Netflix uses the same term in its own recommendation menus on the US website. In this context, digitally distributed shows start to be seen as a “new, good television, in contrast to the old television [...]. Instead of being associated with housebound women, this new television is young, smart, and on the move, downloaded or purchased to watch at will” (Brundson 2010, 65).

Whereas in contexts such as ‘binge drinking’ or ‘binge eating’ the term ‘binge’ connotes negative behaviours, in media it is usually applied to the consumption of a new ‘television’ that liberates and legitimizes users. This perspective on binge-watching goes against the old TV-driven paradigm, where people had limited choices regarding the the schedule and timing of their viewing habits (Jenner 2017, 3-4).

In this context, the digital distribution of TV shows, along with streaming services and the habit of binge-watching have drawn a lot of attention from scholars in recent years. Several studies (Conlin, Billings, and Auverset 2016; Merikivi et al. 2016; Pittman and Sheehan 2015; Walton-Pattison, Dombrowski, and Presseau 2016) describe the underlying psychological features of binge-watchers through uses and gratifications approaches, following the analysis framework developed by Katz and others (Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch 1973). Researchers have examined the role that fear-of-missing-out (FoMO) – “the apprehension associated with the fear that other people are having a pleasurable experience that one is not part of” (Conlin, Billings, and Auverset 2016, 151) – plays in binge-watching and the results indicated that FoMO is an important factor in determining the pace at which people choose to watch TV. Another study (Pittman and Sheehan 2015) shows that pursuing a higher level of en-

agement is the main reason why people choose to binge-watch, while another important motivation is using binge-watching as a restorative experience, where the individual is removed psychologically from his obligations and daily life. Binging an entire season in a day or two provides them with the narrative immersion they need for achieving this purpose. Shannon-Missal (Shannon-Missal 2013) showed that people choose to binge-watch because they enjoy it (81%), because they can't wait to find out what happens next (53%) or because they don't want to get behind and risk plot points being spoiled (37%).

Along with the motivation behind choosing to binge-watch, the duration of media consumption is also an important factor in order to determine what binge-watching really means for the consumers. According to the same study, 25% of the respondents watched an entire 13-hour season in two days, while some of the users see this as a mindless activity and others relate to it as a restorative experience. Feeney (Feeney 2014) has suggested that consumers often use binge-watching as some kind of a reward that they feel they deserve after a hard day at work.

Although researchers have previously studied binge-watchers' behaviors and motivations related to this consumption model, as well as the frequency and duration of their media usage, few of the studies (Buschow, Schneider, and Ueberheide 2014; Pittman and Tefertiller 2015) take into account the relation between TV series consumption and social network sites (SNS) as a means of self-expression and self-representation for the users. 'Social TV', or the use of social media such as Facebook or Twitter triggered by TV consumption (Buschow, Schneider, and Ueberheide 2014) can be an important indicator on how people relate to their media consumption patterns when they are not faced with the task of responding to an academic survey. In this regard, SNS content research has proven itself to be a useful tool when trying to examine how people relate to different aspects of reality such as politics, news coverage or current events (Asur and Huberman 2010; Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Hille and Bakker 2014; van der Meer and Verhoeven 2013). In this context, SNSs content analysis can become a powerful tool in examining how people think, feel and relate to media consumption patterns such as binge-watching.

Methodology

This study aims to examine behaviors and emotions linked to binge-watching, as well as to determine the correlations between different behavioral models and the affects users express towards them. For this purpose, the primary research method used in this paper is content analysis, doubled by individual data examples, in order to further understand the relation between binge-viewing and certain variables resulted from the study. Most of the operations conducted on the dataset are automated and use tools for data analysis and visualization.

The corpus this paper analyzes comprises of 6951 Facebook comments that mention binge-watching posted by users on 108 popular TV series' official Facebook pages between February 1, 2013 and February 1, 2016. The comments were filtered out from a total dataset of 50112 messages posted by users during the period of the study. The dataset was extracted using API (Application Programming Interface) interrogations. All the analyzed comments contain the word 'binge' in its recurrent forms: 'binge', 'binge-', 'binged' or 'binging'. The comments that referred to other types of behavior, such as binge-drinking or binge-eating, were manually removed from the dataset.

The present study used inductive coding (Stuckey 2015; Thomas 2006) to categorize the behaviors and emotions expressed by users in a manageable number of variables. After setting the codes, all the comments went through a manual qualitative analysis, as well as an automated analysis, which was performed using KH Coder, a free software for quantitative content analysis and text mining. The study also used Sketch Engine, a language corpus management tool, to generate word and expression lists from the corpus in order to develop the coding file used in the automated quantitative analysis. The corpus also went through a sentiment analysis performed using Text Analysis, a Google Sheets add-on for Natural Language Processing. The data visualizations were generated using Tableau Public and KH Coder.

Behaviors and emotions

In order to be able to visualize behavioral patterns in the corpus, a coding grid describing recurrent types of messages was needed. The grid was created by manually coding the comments from the corpus and it comprises of two main categories (Behaviors and Emotions) and several subcategories, as seen in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Coding of identified recurrent behaviors

Behavior	Meaning
Past	Comment referring to a past binge-watching session (e.g. “I binge watched season 1 on Friday and Saturday and burned through the first 4 episodes of season 2 yesterday.”)
Currently	Comment referring to a present binge-watching session (e.g. “binge watching now :-D”)
Future	Comment referring to a planned binge-watching session (e.g. “I’ve missed 3 episodes so gna binge watch tonight w the wife after the kiddies are in bed lol”)
Binge re-watch	Comment referring to binge-watching a media product that the user has already viewed (e.g. “I need a binge re-watch to prepare for the upcoming season.”)
Want to binge	Comment expressing the desire to be able to binge-watch a show. (e.g. “ABC, Netflix or Hulu Plus!!! To tide us over until then, we need the whole season IN ITS ENTIRETY so people can properly binge watch!”)
Wait to binge	Comment expressing the decision to wait until the season or several seasons have already been released by the network, in order to be able to binge-watch several episodes at once using streaming services or a DVR (e.g. “I feel like I’m going to have to just DVR the whole season and binge-watch them all in one day. This whole ‘wait a week’ thing isn’t good for my blood pressure...”)
Interaction	The user interacts with one or more members of the community (e.g. “What is your favorite TV show to watch other than Outlander ??? And do you binge watch Netflix like us?”)
Habit	The user defines himself/herself as a binge-watcher or refers to his/her constant engaging in binge-watching sessions (e.g. “I have binge-marathons of mad men all the time!!!”)

BINGE-WATCHERS. BEHAVIOR PATTERNS AND EMOTIONS

Behavior	Meaning
No binge	The user tries to avoid binge-watching the show (usually) in order to have something to watch over a longer period, to avoid spoiling the experience or as a critique towards binge-watchers (e.g. “I would never “binge watch” this show. I stretch them out and savor each and every episode. I want you to know how much this show means to us.”)
Catch-up	The user expressed the desire or the ‘need’ to catch up with a show (e.g. “How did I not hear about this before? Binge watchin' on Netflix to catch up.”)

Table 2. Coding of identified recurrent emotions

Emotion	Meaning
Enjoyment	The user displays positive affects towards the show and/or his/her behavior. Usually related to statements about the show, the casting, the acting, etc. (e.g. “That was amazing!! Just binged watched the 6 episodes.”)
Engagement (particular case of Enjoyment)	The user clearly states a high level of engagement as a motivation for binge-watching (e.g. “Awesome!!!! Fell behind a couple episodes....so binge watched this morning. I am so freaking hooked!!!!!”)
Bragging	The user mentions watching several episodes, an entire season or several seasons of the show during a very short period of time. Usually associated with past or current behaviors (e.g. “Already binge-watched it in one sitting lol”)
Frustration	The user expresses frustration towards the show, his impossibility to binge-watch or the fact that he has to wait for a long time between different segments of the show (e.g. “I wish the whole current season was on demand. I am so behind and went to binge watch this weekend and it started on episode 5. Sadness....”)
Neutral	The user doesn’t express any particular emotion towards the show or binge-watching it (e.g. “Right now, I’m binge-watching Season One.”)

Emotion	Meaning
Desire	The user expresses his/her desire to binge-watch, either alone or with other members of the community. Usually related to the planning of a future binge-watching session (e.g. “This is awesome news!!!! I can finally finish watching the first season... Hell, I'll binge the whole thing happily!”)
Impatience (particular case of desire)	The user clearly states his impatience for the next segment of the production to be released (e.g. “Can't wait!! I spent this last weekend binging the last part of last season to be ready for tonight.”)

The automatic analysis approach performed using KH Coder was based on recurrent text patterns observed in comments during the manual coding. In addition to this, the coding file was developed with the help of Sketch Engine, which was used to find repetitive word associations or structures in the corpus (examples of coding in Table 3). The automatic coding also included items of interest such as the mention of certain technologies used to binge-watch, time of the binge-watch or the segment of the show which was subject to binge-watching.

Table 3. Examples of coding

Behavior, emotion or item of interest	Code
E.g. 1 Enjoyment	great show awesome show amazing show good show favorite+show love absolutely love great great acting great binge good binge excellent show great cast great writing great job great season incredible show excellent incredible awesome best near(thank-netflix)
E.g. 2 DVR	dvr dvring record recorded tape taping recording

Analysis

Digital vs. linear distribution - number of comments

Out of the total number of 6951 comments, 3528 texts were posted on digitally distributed series’ pages and 3423 were posted on the pages of lineary distributed series, although only 24 out of 108 pages belonged to digitally distributed productions. This shows a strong connection between digital publishing and people referring to binge-watching on Facebook.

The Facebook pages where people posted the most about binge-watching were House of Cards (726 mentions), Longmire (555), Trailer Park Boys (299) and The Killing (265). All of them are digitally distributed TV series produced by Netflix (Fig. 1).

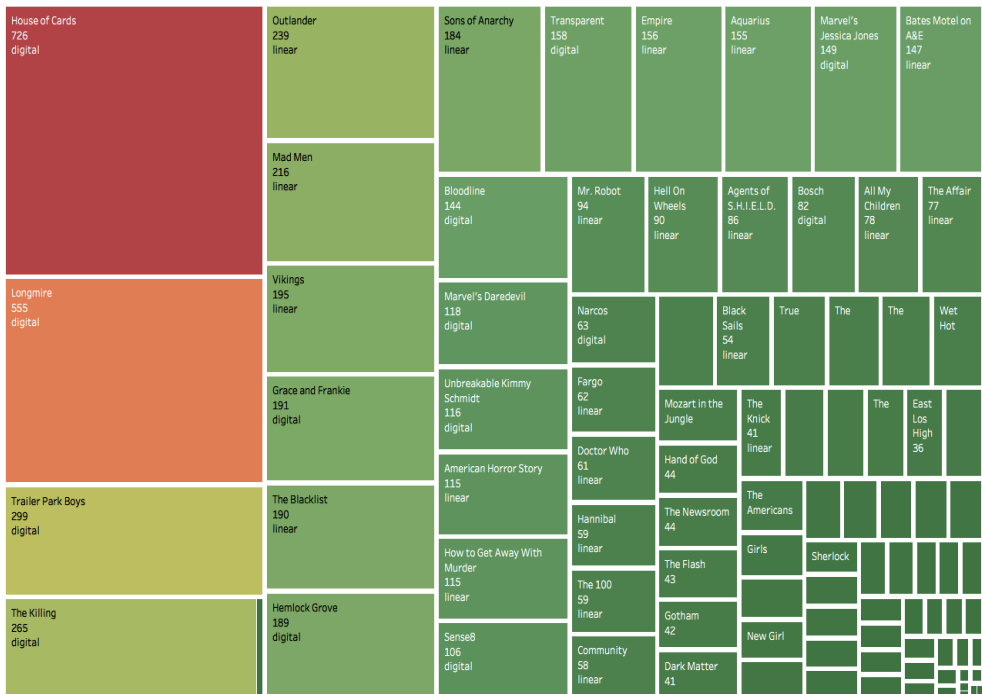


Figure 1. Relation between number of comments mentioning binge-watching and distribution system

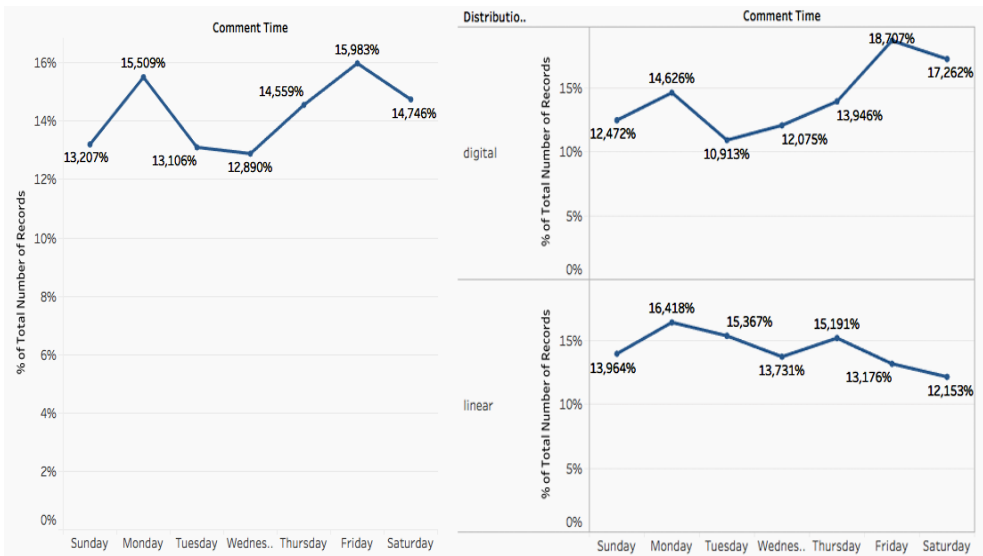
Binge-watching as a weekend activity

The analysis showed that most of the comments which mention binge-watching are posted on weekends. The peak of binge-related comments is on Fridays, with 15.98% of the comments being posted during this weekday, whereas Mondays come second, with 15.5% of the comments (Figure 2). This result is related, on one hand, to the large number of comments predicting future binge-watching sessions (comments posted on Fridays), in particular cases such as the following:

- “Planning to binge watch the show this weekend!”,
- “Going to binge on the show this weekend!”,
- “binge waching with the wife this weekend”, etc.

On the other hand, the Monday peak is a result of comments related to past binge-viewing sessions that took place during the previous weekend:

- “We just binge watched this this weekend”
- “I watched the entire season this weekend and now I’m hooked!”,
- “Binge watched it in one weekend!” , etc.



Figures 2 & 3. Posting weekdays / Posting weekdays in relation to the distribution system

When analyzing the posting weekdays in relation to the distribution system, it becomes clear that there's a strong connection between digitally distributed TV series and binge-viewing during weekends. Comments on digitally distributed series' pages register a significant increase between Friday and Monday, whereas the ones about TV shows with linear distribution are more equally spread across the week. On one hand, this shows a connection between an increasing in binge-watching behaviors during weekends, which was previously observed by Trouleau and others (Trouleau et al. 2016, 2). On the other hand, the strong connection between digitally distributed content and its consumption during weekends can also be explained through the fact that Netflix releases most of its original content on Fridays. This could also indicate the fact that the VOD platform encourages the practice of binge-watching.

A similar result was shown by the automatic analysis of the corpus. 561 records (8.07% of the comments) showed a correlation between binge-watching and weekends.

Binge-watching related behaviors

After all the records were manually coded, the corpus went through a analysis which showed the frequencies of different types of behaviors, as seen in Figure 4. The vizualization shows interesting behavior patterns, especially when comparing comments about digitally distributed shows to those about linear shows.

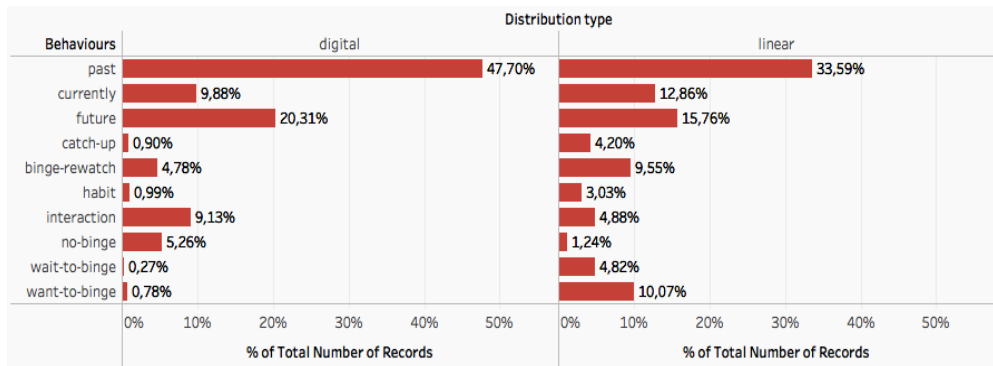


Figure 4. Behavior frequencies and distribution type

With 40.75% out of the total number of comments referring to a binge-watching session that took place in the past, this is the most prominent type of behavior found by the study. The percent of ‘past’ comments is even higher when people are talking about digitally distributed shows, with 47.70% of the comments. Two of the most common types of comments are the ones where the user has watched a show and wants to express his or her enjoyment regarding this experience (e.g. “Just binged on the show this weekend. Awesome”) and the ones where the user ‘brags’ about his experience (e.g. “Binged all 10 episodes last night!”). Another interesting finding was the fact that users also talk very often (20.31% for digitally distributed shows, 15.76% for the linear ones) about their future plans to binge-watch. In many cases, this finding can be linked to the correlation between binge-viewing habits and weekends (e.g. “I’ve been binge watching! Season 1 & 2 this weekend, 3 & 4 next!”).

The study also underlines some other recurrent habits when it comes to binge-watching. Users who watch lineary distributed shows talk about their need to catch up with the show more often (4.2%) than the ones who watch shows using VOD services (0.9%). This reflects the fact that VOD platforms, with their time-shifting possibility, reduce the risk of frustration because of users’ fear-of-missing-out, an aspect of binge-watching that was previously studied by (Conlin, Billings, and Auverset 2016)).

Also, a significant percent of users binge-watch a show two or more times. 9.55% of the users who post on lineary distributed series’ pages engage in binge re-watching after they have already consumed the show on a weekly basis. Many of them engage in this type of habit because they want to relive the experience (e.g. “What a run! Will enjoy binging again on Netflix...”), while the users who post about digitally distributed shows usually rewatch (4.78%) to fill in the one-year gap between the release of two seasons (e.g. “I can't wait another year for season 2.....I'm gonna have to repeat binge on season 1!!”) or to remember the storyline before the release of the next season. Researchers (Horvath et al. 2017) have already adressed the relation between binge-watching, memory and comprehension, stating that binge-watchers usually forget more details about the storyline and the characters than people who watch shows on a weekly basis.

Another interesting finding is the fact that 5.26% of VOD users clearly express their desire not to binge on a show, but rather to watch it over a longer period of time. In many cases, they state their fear of spoiling the show by watching it in a single sitting or the fear that if they engage in binge-viewing, they will have nothing left to watch afterwards (e.g. “Love this program! Rationing our binge watching so as to savor it. May rewatch before the second season.”).

10.07% of the users who watch lineary distributed shows express their desire to be able to binge-watch. This comes as a great source of frustration for the users and many of these comments mention fans’ desire for shows to be picked by VOD services (e.g. “Why oh why did I start watching this now and not when the season is over so I can binge watch? The wait for next ep is keeeeling me!”).

In addition to this, 4.82% of the same category of users state their decision to wait until several segments (episodes or seasons) of the show are released by the network so they can binge-watch on VOD platforms or by DVR after that (e.g. “I will wait until they are all released and binge watch on Amazon...”).

Another result of the study points to the fact that 9.13% of the users who watch digitally distributed shows posted comments with the specific intention to interact with other members of the community or with their friends, whereas just 4.88% of the fans who watched linear shows expressed the same desire. Through many of these comments, users plan binge-watching sessions with their friends (e.g. “Marisa Britow omg!! Is it out?! We should binge watch it!”), ask questions about the storyline or the cast or recommend a show to their friends on Facebook (e.g. “Sadie Palma, do you watch How To Get Away With Murder? I love that show. I just binge watched the first season this past weekend. I have to catch up.”).

Binge-watching related emotions

Binge-watching does not only imply a specific set of behaviors, as seen before, but also a set of recurring affects. By performing a qualitative analysis on the corpus, several interesting patterns were found.

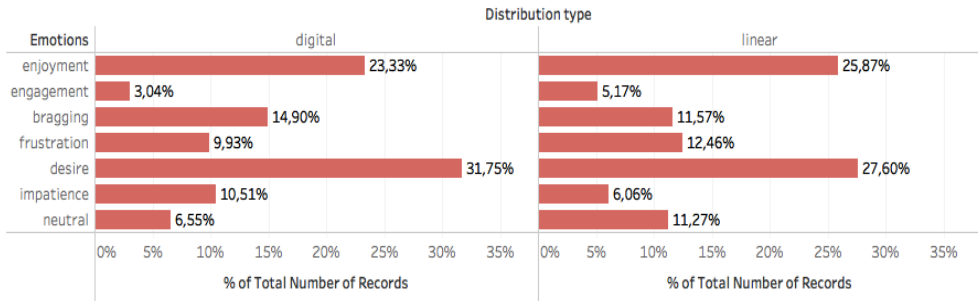


Figure 5. Emotion frequencies and distribution type

The most common emotion identified in the corpus was ‘desire’, with approximately 30% of the records fitting into this category. Comments like these usually express the desire to have an individual or collective binge-watching session in the future.

An interesting find is the high number of comments where users ‘brag’ about their binge-watching habits or about a long binge-viewing session that occurred in their recent past (14.9% of the users watching shows on VOD platforms and 11.57% of the users posting on the pages of lineary distributed shows). The link between ‘bragging’ and binge-watching has already been observed by researchers (Snyder 2016, 2; Pittman and Sheehan 2015) in previous studies and it represents a clear indication that binge-watching is seen as habit which carries a positive social connotations. Having watched large segments of the show over a short period of time gives users some kind of ‘bragging rights’ that can be used to assert a higher status in the community. ‘Bragging’ is mostly prevalent among users who watch series on VOD platforms, as the distribution system gives them the possibility to watch all the episodes immediately after the release of a season and to decide on their own viewing schedules.

Another emotion commonly expressed by users is frustration (9.93% of the users watching digitally distributed shows and 12.46% of the ones who watch lineary distributed productions). Although the prevalence of frustration does not seem to be too different between the two types of distribution systems, the sources of frustration tend to be quite dissimilar. Users who watch linear shows usually express their frustra-

tion towards having to wait for a whole week between two episodes of the show and state their desire to be able to binge-watch the show (e.g. “Love this show! Shame I can't binge watch it and have to wait! :(“). On the other hand, users who watch digitally distributed shows usually complain about the long temporal gap between two seasons of the show (e.g. “Sooooooo good.... Problem is I binge watched.... When is next season? If it's next year I'll just scream”). VOD websites users express a higher level of impatience for the next segments of the show to be released (10.51%), which is closely connected to the longer pauses between installments.

Another interesting observation is that around 4% of the users reported high levels of engagement during their binge-watching sessions. This connection has been also observed in other studies (Pittman and Sheehan 2015).

Sentiment analysis

In order to get a more clear image about the general attitude towards binge-watching, a sentiment analysis of the corpus was further necessary. The automatic analysis was performed using Text Analysis, a Google Sheets add-on for Natural Language Processing and Machine Learning based on the AYLIEN Text Analysis API (Figure 6).

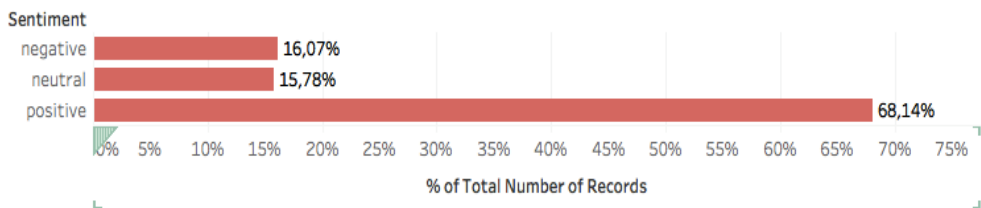


Figure 6. Sentiment analysis

The results showed that people generally have a positive attitude towards binge media consumption and their binge-watching habits (68.14%). Only 16.07% of the records are negative, which clearly points out that binge-watching is viewed as a constructive experience which no longer holds the negative connotations of binge-drinking or binge-eating.

Further behavior patterns in binge-watching

In order to observe how different types of behaviors, emotions and other elements of interest identified in the corpus relate to each other, the comments when through a process of automatic coding which was performed using KH Coder. In addition to the relevant behavioral categories and emotions that we’ve already analyzed, the coding took into consideration some other elements of interest related to the corpus: the fragment of the show specified (season or episode), as an indicator for the size of the segment that people usually associate with binge-watching, some of the main technologies and habits associated with binge-watching, which were previously identified in the corpus (Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, DVR, cable marathon), weekends as a prevalent time when people engage in binge-watching, and a series of terms related to addiction.

The co-occurrence network in Figure 7 is based on the Jaccard Index and offers a visualization of the similarities between different codes of interest. The visualization was generated using KH Coder. Darker lines between the different codes show a stronger connection between them, while clusters of a certain color indicate high levels of co-occurrence.

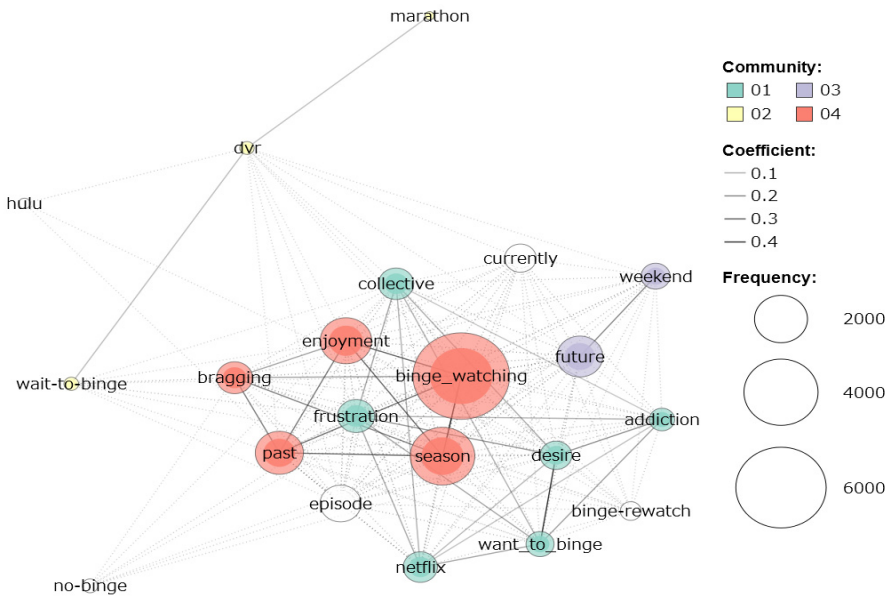


Figure 7. Co-occurrence network visualization of the corpus

Cluster 1: desire, want to binge, netflix, frustration, collective, addiction

The visual representation shows us a close relation between ‘desire’, users who express their wish to be able to binge-watch, frustration, and Netflix. As we saw before, the impossibility of people who watch lineary-distributed series to binge-watch generates a lot of frustration, which they express through their comments. In many cases, they state their desire for the show to be picked up by Netflix or another VOD website, which explains the presence of Netflix in the cluster. The link between Netflix and frustration can further be explained through the large number of users who express their dissatisfaction with the long breaks between the releasing of two consecutive installments, which is specific the all-at-once release model. An interesting element of the cluster refers to the comments that mention collective binge-watching experiences, which usually express one’s desire to binge-watch together with a friend, a member of the family or with his/her partner. Another element of interest is the relation between comments which mention elements usually related to addiction (e.g. “I’m going through withdrawals”, “I’m addicted”, “I need my fix”, etc.) with behaviors such as ‘want to binge’ or emotions such as ‘desire’ and ‘frustration’. The similarity coefficient between ‘addiction’ and ‘Netflix’ can be explained through comments where a user who has just binge-watched a season of a show on Netflix realizes that he or she has to wait for a whole year before the next season will come out (e.g. “I binge watched the whole series in two days on Netflix and I’m having Titus withdrawals! Thank goodness for the Facebook page. Does anyone know if there will be a second season?”).

Cluster 2: wait to binge, DVR, marathon

The explanation for the strong link between mentions of the DVR technology and a ‘wait to binge’ behavior lies in the fact that a certain group of users usually record the show on their DVR, wait for all the episodes in the season to be released by the network and then binge-watch them over a short period of time. The same type of behavior is associated with marathons that run on TV networks after all the episodes of a season have been released on a weekly basis.

Cluster 3: future, weekend

As stated before, there is a close link between binge-watching and weekends. Many users express their desire to binge-view their favorite over the upcoming end of the week (e.g. “Great casting! Sissy Spacek rocks! Will start binge watching this weekend.”).

Cluster 4: binge-watching, enjoyment, season, past, bragging

The high level of co-occurrence between the elements of the cluster shows that a lot of the comments refer to a binge-watching session that took place in the past. Users whose comments fall into this category usually express their feeling of enjoyment about the show and their experience or brag about their binging session in order to assert a higher status in the community. The same cluster shows us that there is a closer connection between mentions of one season or several seasons of a show than mentions of one or several episodes.

Technologies for binge-watching

Another interesting aspect of the comments refers to the mentions of specific technologies used for binge-watching. Figure 8 shows the number of records in the corpus mentioning each specific technology.



Figure 8. Number of records for each binge-watching technology

As expected, the main technology that people associate with binge-watching is Netflix (800 records). On one hand, binge-watching is made very accessible by the very model of distribution practiced by Netflix. On the other hand, there's also a strong connection between Netflix and binge-watching that lies in the collective consciousness of Western society, which is constantly endorsed by the media (Jenner 2017, 1-2).

The second technology used for binge-watching is the DVR (119 records), followed by Hulu, Amazon Prime Video and cable marathons.

Other significant results and further research

According to the data obtained from the corpus, binge-watching is usually related to the mention of a season. The code 'season' was found in 3017 records, whereas mentions of specific episodes were more scarce, with only 1175 records. This could indicate the fact that people usually associate binge-watching with consuming an entire season of the show and it could be linked to the all-at-once distribution system. A future study may investigate this specific aspect of binge-watching.

There were 422 records in the corpus that mentioned words or expressions related to addiction. This could also be the starting point of a further study.

851 records in the corpus reflected collective binge-watching experiences. The relation between binge-watching as an individual practice and as a collective experience could also be investigated in a further study.

Other studies could be developed around the relation between the distribution system or binge-watching as a whole and specific affects: bragging, fear-of-missing out, etc.

Conclusions

The present study showed that there's a strong connection between digital distribution and binge watching. People talk more about binge-viewing and oftenly engage in binge-watching sessions when they have the ability to time-shift and decide their own schedule.

The research also showed a correlation between binge-watching and weekends. Many people plan to binge-watch during the following weekend as a kind of restorative experience. They also refer to their weekend binge sessions that occurred in the past as being enjoyable or even express their pride about having binge-watched a certain show.

The study also pointed out a set of specific behaviors and emotions related to binge-watching. Many users express their delight about the binge-watching sessions they had in the past, whereas others plan ahead to make sure they will have the perfect bingeing day or weekend. People also engage in activities such as binge re-watching a show, in order to relive the experience or to remember the storyline of the show before bingeing on the upcoming season. Another important habit is binge-watching in order to catch up, a behavior which is often determined by users' fear-of-missing-out. Other interesting behavioral patterns refer to the users who express their frustration towards the weekly distribution of episodes and wish they would be able to binge-watch, while others wait until all the episodes of a season have been released by the network and then watch them all over a short period of time. Bragging about consuming a big media chunk in a short period of time has also been pointed out to be a prevalent type of behavior. Another interesting finding shows that the levels of frustration stay pretty high, no matter what is the distribution system. Most of the frustration grows from the fact that users have to wait between different segments of the show. When it comes to linearly-distributed series, they are frustrated about the week-to-week wait between two episodes and their inability to binge-watch. On the other hand, when they refer to digitally distributed shows, their frustration comes from the long breaks between the release of two consecutive seasons.

The sentiment analysis performed showed that the majority of users see binge-watching as a positive experience, no longer holding the negative connotation carried by binge-drinking or binge-eating. On the contrary, binge-watching seems to be an activity invested with social capital, that people use proudly in order to represent themselves in their interaction with other members of the online community.

Furthermore, the research showed how all the behaviors, emotions, technologies, habits and patterns can be connected together in order to get a bigger picture of what binge-watching means for the people who engage in this type of activity.

The present study also pointed out that analyzing user-generated content from SNSs can be a key element in understanding how people relate to different media consumption patterns or habits. In addition to research conducted through surveys, the analysis of data extracted from social network sites can be a useful tool in decoding today's media consumption habits.

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TWITTER AND U.S. POLITICIANS: STYLE AND SUBSTANCE*

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ABSTRACT. The current, nearly ubiquitous, use of Twitter by U.S. politicians makes important the question of how politicians capitalize on this social media platform in order to have their messages spread to other media both on- and off-line. This paper explores the role of style in helping U.S. politicians to achieve massive attention on Twitter through the use of case studies of two prominent national politicians: U.S. Senator Charles “Chuck” Grassley and U.S. President Donald J. Trump. These two politicians were selected for their success in getting their Tweets spread via other social media and picked up by more traditional media outlets. They are also known for their unique, distinctive styles, which may be part of the reason for the attention they have garnered.

The discussion of the style and substance of the Tweets of these two U.S. politicians is designed to be suggestive rather than conclusive. It is an exploration of the attention their Tweets have garnered and the analyses their Tweets have engendered as evidenced by recent research published online by data scientists and supported and illustrated by my own examples and observations regarding their individual styles.

This piece suggests the importance of style in the effective use of Twitter and other social media by politicians. Style is an aspect of Twitter use that deserves much more attention, from both researchers and practitioners.

Keywords: Twitter, style, U.S. politicians, social media.

* This paper is based on Kay M. Losey’s plenary presentation at the Digital Media International Conference, Media Culture Days, at Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, on 25 May, 2017.

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José Van Dijck (2013) makes the point in her book *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* that political causes use social media with the goal to “go viral across online and offline media in order to accumulate massive attention” (p. 87). If this is the case, then there can be little doubt that politicians use the social media site Twitter also with the hope of accumulating “massive attention.” In fact, the 2008 election of Barack Obama in the U.S. is often, in part, attributed to his effective use of social media, particularly Twitter. And many politicians in the U.S. became Twitter users early in 2009 as a result. The current, nearly ubiquitous, use of Twitter by U.S. politicians makes important the question of how politicians can garner the “massive attention” discussed by Van Dijck.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of style in helping U.S. politicians to achieve massive attention on Twitter through the use of case studies of two prominent national politicians: Senator Charles “Chuck” Grassley and President Donald J. Trump. These two politicians were selected for their success in getting their Tweets spread via other social media and picked up by more traditional media outlets and for their distinctive styles and for their distinctive styles, which may be part of the reason for the attention they have garnered. It is important to note that in examining the success of their stylistic choices, I am in no way supporting the content of their Tweets.

The term *style*, in the context of this work, is used in the manner of Ben Yagoda, Professor of English and Journalism and former director of the journalism program at the University of Delaware, in his book *The Sound on the Page*. Yagoda (2004) distinguishes the clear, “transparent” style of journalists and textbooks (p. xx), where the goal is to impart information with little if any noticeable “voice” – or individual style-- from what we read for pleasure, the authors we return to again and again, those that we read not only because of *what* they write, but also, importantly, because of *how* they write it. We return to these authors, our favorite authors, because we enjoy how they write. And we have authors we abhor, also because of *how* they write. These individual styles Yagoda (2004) finds akin to an author’s “fingerprint” (p. xvii). Like a detective, those who read carefully can recognize authors by their individual styles,

which are “unique and identifiable” based on vocabulary choices, turns of a phrase, preferred sentence structures, etc. (Yagoda, 2004, p. xvii). One does not have to like a style to be able to recognize it. Yagoda (2004) points out that substance or the content of authors’ works can also help to identify them (p. xv). Authors tend to repeatedly return to certain topics, so “substance” is also part an author’s stylistic fingerprint, and, hence, its use in the title of this piece.

The importance of written style for politicians on Twitter is made apparent by the former manager of Journalism and News for Twitter, Mark S. Luckie, who stated in a radio interview about politicians, government officials, and Twitter that “the best tweeters are those who tweet about their professional experiences in a personal way. At Twitter, we always encourage people to talk in their own voice, not just to put out press releases or links back to their [web]sites” (Clark, K., Kurtzleben, D., & Luckie, M.S, 2017). Luckie’s call for the use one’s “own voice” by politicians using Twitter is clearly a call for the use of what Yagoda (2004) would call one’s individual style. Luckie emphasizes that it is important that the voice be authentic to the tweeter, not a persona created for Twitter.

This discussion of the style and substance of two U.S. politicians is designed to be suggestive rather than conclusive. It is an exploration of the attention and analyses their Tweets have garnered as evidenced by recent research published online by data scientists and supported and illustrated by my own examples and observations regarding their individual styles.

Twitter, Style, and Politicians

Peer reviewed publications about politicians, style, and Twitter, are somewhat limited, given the relevantly recent adoption of Twitter by politicians and the length of time it takes to get peer reviewed works published. From what is available and relevant to this project, there is support for the notion that the differing Twitter styles of public officials can

lead to potentially differing outcomes. In an experimental study comparing university student reactions to two differing styles of Tweets from the imaginary head of an environmental organization, those with a style that was deemed “powerful” by the researchers, because of the direct and assertive discourse versus those that were deemed “powerless” because of their ambiguous or indirect style (Alvídrez & Rodríguez, 2016, p. 90). Researchers found that subjects were only likely to take action (e.g., attend a meeting or post positive comments about the organization) in response to the Tweets of a male with a “powerful” Twitter style (succinct with direct requests, e.g. “Enter the site and support our initiative.”) as opposed to a male with a “powerless” style (e.g., use of hedge words, such as “very,” or “kind of” and use of tag questions, e.g., “Isn’t it?”) (Alvídrez & Rodríguez, 2016, pp. 93-94).

In addition to differing Twitter styles potentially leading to differing reader responses, it has been learned that politicians’ Twitter styles may vary depending on the relative prominence of their candidacies. A study of the use of Twitter in the last two months of the 2012 U.S. House of Representatives election identified differing approaches to using Twitter between 1) incumbents vs. challengers, and, most interesting to the topic of this paper, 2) major party vs. third-party (e.g., Independent or Green party) candidates (Evans, Cordova, & Sipole, 2014). This study focused on the number of followers, the frequency of Tweets, and the content of Tweets in their understanding of style. Incumbents had many more followers than their challengers, but they tweeted notably less (Evans et al., p. 459). And, as one might expect, third-party candidates had far fewer followers than the major party candidate average, but, interestingly, they tweeted much more frequently. They sent more attack tweets, more personal tweets, and more tweets in response to other Twitter users than the major party averages. In addition, they were more likely to tweet links to media stories about their campaigns, a form of self-promotion (Evans et al., 2014, pp. 457-458).

Research on the Twitter accounts of the two, leading party presidential candidates in the Spanish General Election of 2011, found that as has been assumed by journalists (Clark et al., 2017) and documented in

analyses (Lazer, Ognyanova, & Robinson, 2016; Robinson, 2016), few politicians, especially of the major parties, write their own tweets. Those Tweets that they do write themselves, they tend to sign with their initials, to distinguish them from those written by their staff. Medina and Muñoz (2014) conclude that this tendency to have staff designated to write Tweets interferes with a campaign's ability to show the candidate "as a person rather than as the spokesperson for the party platform" (Medina & Muñoz, 2014, p. 91), and is counter to what Twitter recommends, as noted earlier. So even with the best of intentions, campaigns that do not use Twitter to reveal their candidates "as individual citizens versus politicians" fail to use Twitter effectively (Medina & Muñoz, 2014, p. 101), essentially filtering the candidate's style when they filter the message (Clark et al., 2017).

Exceptions to what Medina and Muñoz (2014) call the "corporate style" of political Twitter use, which uses primarily "an official, impersonal type of discourse focused on political messages" and which does not allow for much interaction with other Twitter users (p. 99), are rare and worthy of discussion and analysis. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore two exceptions in U.S. politics at present with the goal of describing their unique styles that have made them so attractive to their followers and garnered much attention as a result. In the midst of presenting the styles of Senator Charles "Chuck" Grassley and President Donald J. Trump, I will refer frequently to analyses and descriptions of their Tweets that have recently been published online.

Grassley's Twitter Style

Charles "Chuck" Grassley is a Republican U.S. Senator from the state of Iowa. He started out in state government in 1958 and became a U.S. Senator in 1981. His years of seniority in the Senate have led to powerful positions on key committees, most notably chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee. He is also a farmer, in this state which is famous for and proud of its role as an important corn producer in the U.S.

Grassley was a fairly early adopter of Twitter among U.S. politicians, with his first Tweet occurring November 26, 2007. Grassley, at the time of this writing, has approximately 127,500 followers of his Twitter account. While that may not seem like many, one needs to consider it in context. Compared to the other Republican senators, he is fourth in Twitter followers among those who have not run for president (“Look up United States Senators”, 2017). Also, the state of Iowa has a relatively small population and few urban areas. It is important to note, too, that the number of followers one has does not necessarily equate to massive attention to one’s Tweets. For example, former U.S. President Barack Obama has the most followers of any politician in the U.S. right now, but even when he was president, one rarely read about any of his Tweets in the mainstream media. In other words, his Tweets did not receive massive attention.

Grassley’s Tweets have been variously described by journalists who cover the U.S. Congress and others as “minimalist poetry” and “haiku-like” (Weber, 2013), a form of “code-meshing”, a mix of formal and informal language (Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, & Lovejoy, 2014, p. 81), “colorful and personal,” and written by a “Twitter genius” (Izadhi, 2013). Hefernan (2012) describes him as a “virtuoso” on Twitter. As a result of his unique style, Grassley has gathered something like a cult following, especially among journalists, which is the ideal group to have follow a politician if the goal is “to go viral across only and offline media” (Van Dijck, 2013, p. 87).

The most obvious stylistic features of Grassley’s Tweets include the:

- Use of SMS abbreviations,
- Use of non-standard abbreviations (often leaving out vowels),
- Unmarked ellipses (missing words and phrases),
- Grammar errors,
- Lack of punctuation, and
- Words in all capital letters.

These simple stylistic features do not require individual elaboration, however, the way he uses several or all of these features in a Tweet creates a unique and identifiable style. I will provide three examples here:

Example 1

“Seen dead deer on way church. They didn’t hit my car Unsafe if u drive in area where deer congregate Iowa needs longer season to kill more” (18 Nov 2012).

Before discussing the style, I will provide my best translation (or elaboration) of Example 1 and some context for understanding it. I read Example 1 as follows: “I saw some dead deer on the way to church. They didn’t hit my car. It is unsafe if you drive in an area where deer congregate. Iowa needs a longer deer hunting season to kill more deer.” This Tweet describes a rather typical occurrence in the rural Midwest of the U.S. Deer get killed by motorists along highways and their carcasses are often litter the roadside. As deer have no natural predators in these states, the state government designates a deer hunting season in the fall when licensed gun owners may hunt for deer in specific areas to help cull the herd of wild deer and prevent overpopulation.

In Example 1, readers can find a number of the stylistic features listed above: a grammatical error: “seen,” the use of the SMS abbreviation “u,” a lack of punctuation, and many unmarked ellipses (missing words), including missing articles, prepositions, verbs, and pronouns. Although there is much left out of this Tweet, Iowans are familiar with the issues Grassley raises and, to them, this Tweet would be quite understandable. It reflects a sentiment that might be regularly shared among neighbors in the state.

Two additional noteworthy characteristics of Grassley’s Twitter style are his indirect method of attack and his use of metaphorical language. For examples of these, see Examples 2 and 3.

Example 2

“Whoever monitors twitter at WH for President Trump read my previous 2tweets and hv this businessman understand TRANSPARENCY=ACCOUNTABILITY” (11 Feb 2017).

Like Example 1, Example 2 also requires a fair amount of interpretation on the part of the reader to understand. As he references in the Tweet, this Tweet was part of a series of Tweets that Grassley sent in response to a book that he was reading. He calls upon someone at the White House (“WH”) to inform President Trump (“this businessman”) that transparency equals (or is a form of) accountability.

In Example 2, one notices that Grassley specifically avoids using any of Trump’s Twitter account handles (@realDonaldTrump or @POTUS). In fact, he does not directly address his concerns to Trump at all. Rather he indirectly calls upon “whoever monitors Twitter for the White House” to read his Tweets. In addition to this indirect method of attack, one also can find in Example 2 Grassley’s use of unmarked ellipses, non-standard abbreviations, lack of punctuation, and the use of all capital letters.

In Example 3, Grassley is again indirect in his attack, this time on then U.S. President Obama. This attack is still indirect because he does not include Obama’s Twitter handle in his message, however, unlike in his Tweet to Trump in Example 2, Grassley does directly address Obama by name.

Example 3

“Pres Obama while u sightseeing in Paris u said ‘time to delivr on healthcare’ When you are a “hammer” u think everything is NAIL I’m no NAIL” (7 Jun 2009).

In Example 3, Grassley also uses “hammer” and “nail” metaphorically, language use that caught the attention of Composition Studies scholar Vershawn Ashanti Young, who found this example indicative of a type of code-meshing found in African American communities in which African American dialect is combined with other dialects the writer knows, calling upon all the linguistic resources available to the writer to create a unique style (Young et al., p. 81).

As noted earlier, the topics that writers repeatedly return to can also serve to identify their writing and may be considered part of their unique style. For Senator Grassley, regular topics include both the personal and the professional. Whenever he is home from the nation’s capital, Washington, D.C., he is busy touring the state of Iowa, visiting with

his constituents. He records these visits on his Twitter account, often linking it to Instagram, so that followers can see pictures of themselves and their friends with the Senator. When in Washington, D.C., Grassley documents meetings in the Senate and expresses opinions on policy matters. He advertises important interviews with the mainstream media. He also does quite a bit tweeting that one would classify as personal. He tweets regularly about deer problems, the sports scores of his alma mater, the University of Northern Iowa, complains about what is on television, especially the History Channel's failure to have enough history content, and comments on places that he has stopped to eat as he tours the 99 counties in Iowa.

In sum, his style, is a bit odd by the standards of typical political Tweets, but completely unique, and easily identifiable. He effectively combines the professional and the personal with an "old school and earnest" appeal that leads Elahe Izadi, formerly a journalist for the *National Journal* now of the *Washington Post*, to write that "if you aren't following him, you aren't using Twitter correctly" (Izadi, 2013). Grassley's Tweets show that he takes his position as representative of the people of Iowa seriously and that, although he has great seniority and power in Washington, D.C., he is a humble Iowa farmer, just like his constituents. His personal life (as he presents it on Twitter) revolves around what it does for many Midwesterners: sports, television, deer, and dinner. Midwesterners are often thought of as taciturn compared to those from other parts of the country (for example, New York City). Virginia Heffernan (2012) described him as "pithy" on a telephone interview with her, so the 140-character format seems to fit him and his constituency well.

Trump's Twitter Style

U.S. President Donald J. Trump owns the real estate business he inherited from his father and was a television celebrity for over a decade as the star of the show *The Apprentice* from 2004-2015. Although he made brief forays into politics in the past, his first public office is the U.S. Presidency, for which he was inaugurated January 20, 2017. He is 71 years

old, and as of this writing, he has nearly 33 million followers on Twitter. For comparison's sake, former U.S. President Barack Obama has over 91 million followers. Trump, like Grassley, was a fairly early adopter of Twitter, with his first Tweet on May 4, 2009.

The most notable characteristics of Trump's Twitter style are:

- Adjective-noun combinations (e.g., "crooked Hillary," "Fake News"),
- Taglines (one word or short phrase at end of Tweets, such as "Sad"),
- Extensive use of all capital letters and exclamation points,
- Self-referential (heavy use of "I" and "me"),
- Limited vocabulary (e.g., "Great," "big," "new"),
- A preponderance of negative messages, including
- Attack messages.

Two analyses of Trump's Tweets during the 2016 pre-election period that have been published online support these observations. Crockett (2016) compared 2000 of Trump's Tweets and 2000 of Hillary Clinton's Tweets from the six months before the November 8, 2016 election using the Python Sentiment Analysis with Natural Language Toolkit. His analysis found that Trump's Tweets were much more self-referential and negative than Hillary Clinton's, with 60% of the sentiments he expressed classified as negative as opposed to only 20% of Hillary Clinton's. Crockett (2016) also found that Trump had a limited vocabulary of positive words compared to Clinton, with "great" being by far his most common positive word, followed by "new" and "big."

An analysis reported in Lazer, Ognyanova, and Robinson (2016) and Robinson (2016) compares 762 Tweets sent from the Twitter handle @realDonaldTrump from an Android phone (in Trump's possession) to 628 Tweets sent on the same Twitter account from an iPhone IP address (presumably controlled by his staff). The analysts employed the National Research Council of Canada's Word-Emotion Association Lexicon for this comparison. They found that there were stylistic differences between the Tweets. The differences they discovered tend to confirm that there were at least two different people authoring the messages sent from the @realDonaldTrump Twitter handle. These results support the claim that Trump himself – an Android phone user at the time-- is more likely to be

negative than his iPhone impersonator (staff member). They also support that he is highly self-referential and regularly uses adjective-noun combinations and taglines (Lazer et al, 2016; Robinson, 2016).

Illustrations of all these stylistic characteristics can be found in Examples 4 and 5 below, which are quite typical of Trump’s Tweets.

Example 4

“The failing @nytimes has been wrong about me from the very beginning. Said I would lose the primaries, the general election. FAKE NEWS!” (Jan 28, 2017).

In Example 4, one can find many of the classic markers of a Trump Tweet: the adjective noun phrases, e.g., “failing @nytimes” and “FAKE NEWS,” and the tagline “FAKE NEWS!”, which also includes the words completely capitalized and the sentence concluding with an exclamation point. In addition, the negative sentiment, the use of Twitter to attack a perceived opponent, and the reference to himself are also typical.

Example 5, below, provides another Trump Tweet, where again the typical characteristics of his style are apparent.

Example 5

“Despite what you have heard from the FAKE NEWS, I had a GREAT meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Nevertheless, Germany owes....” (Mar 18, 2017).

In Example 5 one again sees examples of the adjective-noun combination, of words in all capital letters, of self-reference and a negative, attack message (about Germany).

In addition to the highly identifiable features of Trump’s style mentioned above, the typical content of Trump’s Tweets can also serve as part of Trump’s stylistic fingerprint. As recommended by Twitter, he combines personal and professional topics in his Tweets. His content is often self-promotional, which is not unusual for politicians running for office. But Trump takes it further Hillary Clinton (Crockett, 2016) and most major party candidates in similar situations (Evans et al, 2014). In the tweets analyzed by Crockett (2016), Trump used the phrase “I will be interviewed” almost as much as his campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again”, his most commonly used phrase.

And, Trump's Tweets are often media-focused. Cockett's (2016) analysis found that nine of the top ten accounts that Trump tweeted to were media outlets whereas Hillary Clinton tweeted the most to other politicians. On the traditional political topic of policy issues, Trump's focused on only four major areas: immigration, economy/jobs, terrorism, and guns whereas Hillary Clinton discussed also health, education, housing, veterans' affairs, and foreign policy (Crockett, 2016). Trump also tweets about his family, defending and praising his children, and he is openly controversial and personal in his attack Tweets.

In sum, Trump, like Grassley, has a unique and authentic Twitter style. And also like Grassley, he combines the personal and the professional. But Trump's style is closer to what has been called a celebrity Twitter style than Grassley's in that it is more self-referential, promotional, and, especially, controversial (Clark, et al., 2017). This similarity is not surprising, considering that Trump started tweeting as a television celebrity, not as a politician. As Kurtzleben, a National Public Radio political analyst stated during a radio interview, "Trump's Twitter...account is an extension of his real-life personality. He breaks norms on Twitter and he breaks norms in real life" (Clark et al., 2017).

Discussion

Most politicians send Tweets that have been "sanitized" by their staff (Clark et al., 2017), even when they try to be more informal and transparent (Medina & Muñoz, 2014). However, U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley and U.S. President Donald J. Trump have Twitter feeds that are stylistically different because they lack any sense of a "filter" (Clark et al., 2017) on their Tweets. They appear to write their own Tweets, which leads to strong, individual styles and strong responses from others on Twitter. As Kurtzleben notes, "People love him [Trump] because he's authentic" (Clark et al., 2017). Similarly, Izadi (2013) and Heffernan (2014) attribute Grassley's success on Twitter to *his* authentic style.

Trump's style, in particular, is most unusual for a politician, perhaps because he started his Twitter account while a celebrity, not a politician. His use of a celebrity style, which has much in common with the style of third party candidates as described by Evans et al. (2014), has taken politicians, the media, and the general public by surprise. Because Twitter users seem to respond differently to different styles (Alvídrez & Rodríguez, 2016), style is an aspect of Twitter, and social media use in general, that deserves much more attention, from both researchers and practitioners.

This discussion of the Twitter styles of U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley and U.S. President Donald J. Trump is, as mentioned earlier, intended only to be preliminary and exploratory. It is not in any way generalizable. However, it is suggestive to those interested in how Twitter and other social media are used, and its effective use for politicians. There is plenty to study with regard to the myriad differences between a traditional campaign on Twitter (for example, Hillary Clinton's) and a less traditional use of Twitter by a politician (e.g., Donald Trump). Furthermore, the question of the competing interests and tensions between successful Twitter strategies and the traditional desires of campaign staff to provide a filter between the candidate and the public needs exploration. The question of the relationship between political and celebrity Twitter styles is also raised in this work. In short, the topic of Twitter, style, and politicians is ripe for further study.

Conclusion

Ben Yagoda (2004) concurs with George-Louis Leclerc, *Compte de Buffon's* maxim that "*le style c'est l'homme même*" (p. xvii). Similarly, Twitter supports the notion that one's Twitter style should reveal one's true self (Clark et al., 2017). Although Grassley and Trump have very different styles: one is a celebrity, an outsider in the political realm; and the other is a homegrown, Midwesterner who works hard for his constituents and hasn't forgotten where he came from despite his powerful positions in Washington, D.C., both are successful in the getting their Tweets spread

beyond Twitter to “accumulate massive attention” (Van Dijck, 2013, p. 87). Their Twitter styles illustrate the former Twitter executive, Mark S. Luckie’s point that “the more organic your tweet is, the more likely people are to respond to it” (Clark et al., 2017). Having and using a Twitter account is not a guarantee of successful use. *How one Tweets* is what is important. As Yagoda (2004) succinctly puts it: “Style matters” (p. xvii).

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#PHOTOJOURNALISM IN THE AGE OF INSTAGRAM

ANDREEA ALINA MOGOȘ¹

ABSTRACT. As digital technology developed over the last decades, photojournalism experienced both opportunities and threats. Thus, digital photography opened a whole range of opportunities for the press photographers: they were able to take more photos, to check instantly their quality, to briefly edit and quickly send images to the newsrooms. But, on the other hand, as the cameras and the photo gear got better and cheaper, amateur photographers started to challenge the status of professional photographers. Media organizations increasingly went on publishing user-generated-content (UGC), partly under economical pressures. Nevertheless, there were several differences between the photographic content produced by professional photo journalists and the user-generated content. Due to these differences, even if the photo-sharing platforms allowed both professional and amateur photographers to share and promote their photos, people were more inclined to share a pro's photo as they were user-generated content.

Starting from these premises, the present paper examines several Instagram dimensions of the photojournalism concept, in order to identify *who are the visual elites on Instagram and how professional networks work; which are the most prominent photographic genres that are associated with photojournalism; and how amateur photographers behave and how they promote themselves on Instagram.*

Key words: Instagram; photojournalism; photographic genres; photo-sharing platforms; user-generated content, automated content analysis

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Introduction

The evolution of the digital photography over the last two decades confirmed that some of the cultural conventions used by the traditional photography remained intact and shaped the reception and use of digital image-making technologies, whereas other aspects have been completely transformed and introduce new modes of creating photographs which rely on interactions between software, file formats and protocols for information exchange that contribute to the meaning and use of photographs. (Hand, 1994:142) Photographic meaning is found in the technical, cultural and historical processes in which photographs are used (Tagg, 1993:118).

Digital photographs could be assessed using concepts like *media convergence*, *connectivity*, *ephemeral* and *performed*. (Bushey, 2014:36) Thus, Bushey refers to the smartphone as an example of media convergence. Most smartphones now combine a camera, a phone and a personal computer, which enables the user to transmit and receive data as audio, image and text. Media convergence affects the routine use of different devices and processes at each stage in the creation, management and storage of digital photographs. Photo-sharing and management sites are encouraging individuals and organizations to share and manage their digital photographs. In the context of photo-sharing communities and online image making practices, members acting as producers do not aim to create a complete product. (idem: 39). The social networking platforms encourage visual production that can be tagged, rated, shared. Digital photographs have a short life-span (they are ephemeral), because new technologies and social practices are changing the temporality of images, resulting in photography as a form of visual communication, but without any expectation of permanence (Van House cited in Bushey, 2014:41). Images can be made any time, any place and they can be instantly uploaded and shared. But digital images are often seen as both fragile and of short-term interest.

The idea of this paper originates in the assumption that there is a considerable overlap between Instagram and other “amateur” mobile photo apps and “professional” photojournalism. For example, *Getty Images*

and the *Associated Press*, two major providers of editorial photos, currently sell exclusive professional photographer's Instagram photos of high-profile fashion and sports events (Reinsberg, 2012).

Instagram is a photo-sharing platform launched in October, 2010, designed to run on a smartphone through which the social media user can convey both visual and textual meanings, and the viewers can interact with those meanings. In September 2017² Instagram reached 800 millions of users, who actively participated in the dissemination of their and other's photographs. These 800 millions Instagram users range from traditional media organizations to individuals who are trying to gain more visibility by posting and promoting their own or others' visual productions. This is why Instagram could be regarded as a kind of *social awareness stream* (Naaman, Boase, and Lai 2010), where the social network is asymmetric.

Categories on social media

The intensive use of the social media sites opened a new age to the digital photography. The number of the shared images increased exponentially, which lead to the need to categorize them. But the diversity of online photographs or other images and visualisations arises from the multiplicity of their contexts of use. Therefore, categorization of online visual content is often treated as a tag suggestion task; tags can be generated by individuals or by machine classification. Instagram use human-created hashtags and it lets the user add up to 30 hashtags to every photo, which makes it one of the most hashtag-rich SNS. But the copy and paste habit of many Instagram users also helps the proliferation of meaningless hashtags on Instagram. On the other hand, professional communicators use hashtags for certain stories, thus using community-generated classifications to enter existing conversations.

Whiteside (in Rahimi, 2015), describes bad hashtag etiquette by the media like this, "A lot of media organizations jumped in, and lot of

² According to <https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/> (October, 2017)

people who didn't understand hashtags were using them thinking it was a magic bullet to get ideas across. Now, people have gotten a lot closer to using them for their original purpose – classification used to group overarching topics with lasting impact. It's really about cataloguing conversation.”

If tagging refers to a type of classification that allows the user to enter certain conversations and communities, including the media content in a genre category is a different type of classification. Yew & Churchill (2011) suggest that this type of categorization can be determined socially, based on people's interactions around media content without recourse to metadata that are intrinsic to the media object itself: “The social consumption of media can alter the way content is perceived and categorized. Media content that we believe to fit a particular genre is both constituted by, and constitutive of, the changing social contexts in which that content is produced, shared and consumed; genres are socially constructed.”

Amateurs versus professionals on social media

As the cameras and the photo gear got better and cheaper, amateur photographers started to challenge the status of professional photographers. Solaroli (2015) argues that the rise of new digital technologies and new amateur practices of photographic production have critically destabilized but also productively challenged professional photojournalism. But studies (Greenwood & Thomas, 2015:625) found out that there were several differences between the photographic content produced by professional photo journalists and the user-generated content, in terms of presence and number of people in the frame, distance to the subject, candid or posed moments, action or static activity and the use of composition techniques. Due to these differences, even if the photo-sharing platforms allowed both professional and amateur photographers to share and promote their photos, people were twice as likely to share a professional's photo as they were user-generated content, as NPPA study showed (cited in Hare, 2015).

Amateur photographers are seizing the promotion opportunities offered by the internet. “Microcelebrity” (Senft, 2013:346) is a new form of identity, linked almost exclusively with the Internet. People have now access to audiences that were only available to politicians and celebrities, and this affect the identity presentation and the social interactions of the individuals. As a social practice, microcelebrity changes the game of celebrity. In this case, audiences and communities, two groups traditionally requiring different modes of address, blend. Senft (2013:350) considers that “audiences desire someone to speak at them; communities desire someone to speak with them.”

Research questions

RQ1 Which are the most prominent photographic genres associated with photojournalism? RQ2 and RQ3: Who are the visual elites on Instagram and what structure do these professional networks have?

RQ4: How do amateur photographers behave as *microcelebrities* and how do they promote themselves?

Method

To answer the four reasearch questions, it was used a data set consisting of 21.806 Instagram entries featuring the hashtag #photojournalism, created by 9882 authors. The data was collected from October 13 to October 22, 2016 using Netlytic³, a text and social networks analyzer that can automatically summarize and discover social networks from online conversations on social media sites. This tool allows data capturing from social media sites (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, RSS Feed); buiding, visualizing and analyzing online social networks using social network analysis.

³ www.netlytic.org

Text analysis

A total of 355.055 unique words were found with the aid of the Netlytic keyword extractor, which first removes all common words such as 'of', 'will', 'to' from a list of stop-words in 18 different languages (Arabic, Catalan, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish) and then counts the number of messages where each word appears. Several manual categories of words and phrases were created by the researcher to represent broader concepts such as: photographic genres, emerging photographers communities, and professional photographers communities (press/photo agencies and mass-media).

RQ1 Instagram redefinition of photojournalism genres

Instagram allows the users to add up to 30 hashtags to every photo, which makes this SNS one of the most hashtag-rich networks. If traditional photojournalism genres are well defined and established (newsphotography, feature photography, portrait, sports photography, photostory), Instagram users are free to attach the hashtags that they consider relevant for the content, for their lived experience or hashtags that give them access to professional communities and offer them recognition, and eventually monetization of their visual productions.

The most widely used hashtags in the *#photojournalism* corpus are *streetphotography*, with its derivatives (*streetphoto*, *streetphotos*), followed by *documentaryphotography* and *travelphotography*, which shows a different hierarchy, where the focus is not necessarily on events, but on the user daily experiences.

A brief comparison with the most popular photojournalism genre related hashtags shows that the three most popular hashtags on the internet are, in fact, related to photography genres that transcend the specific area of the photojournalism: *travelphotography*, *portrait* and *streetphotography*.

#PHOTOJOURNALISM IN THE AGE OF INSTAGRAM

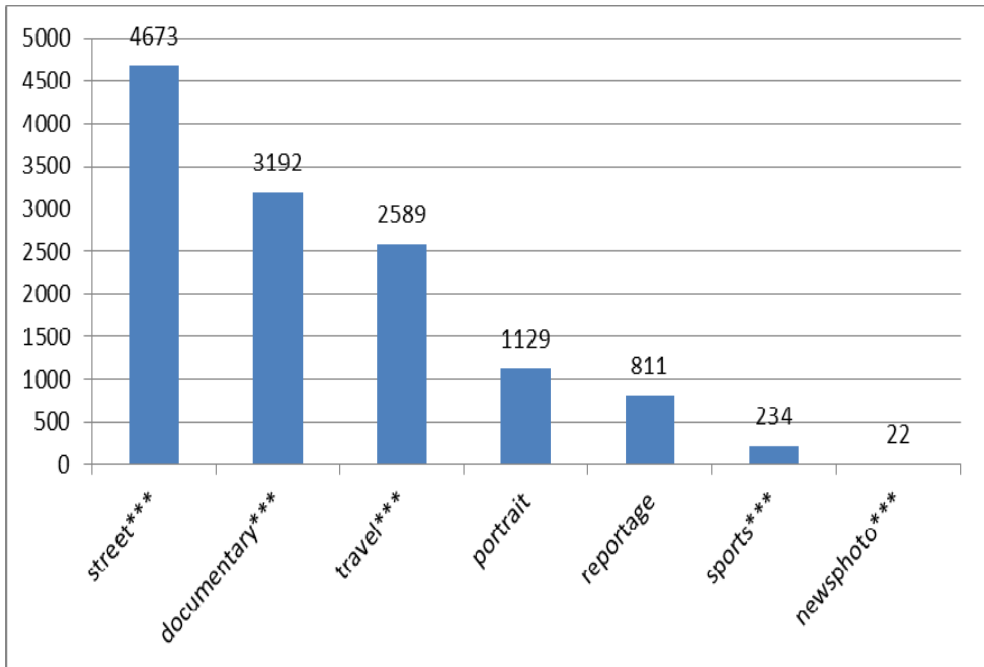


Figure 1: Genre related hashtags co-occurrence with #photojournalism

Rank	#	Statistics ⁴
1	#travelphotography	5.793M
2	#portrait	29.05M
3	#streetphotography	16.02M
4	#featurephotography	2.810K
5	#newsphotography	1.005K
6	#documentaryphotography	403.1K
7	#reportage	270.8K
8	#sportsphotography	229.3K

Figure 2: The most popular genre related hashtags on the internet (October, 2016)

⁴ Source: <https://top-hashtags.com/> data processing as of October 21, 2016.

The popularity of these three photojournalism genres related hashtags is related to the amount of user generated content on Instagram, which overpasses by far the professional productions. Though, the professional photography production outlets and the professional photojournalists who carefully stick to the quality standards still gather most of the likes on Instagram.

RQ2 and RQ3: Who are the visual elites on Instagram and what structure do these professional networks have?

The popularity of the Instagram accounts, measured by number of followers, can offer an image of the perceived elites (*media, photo and press agencies*) in the photojournalism world. According to the data available⁵ on the Instagram public accounts, among the photo agencies and image divisions of the press agencies that are producing high quality visual content, the most popular are *The Photo Society* (a collective of over 170 *National Geographic* photographers), *Magnum Photos* (a photographic cooperative owned by its photographer members, founded in 1947), *Reuters* (an international news agency headquartered in London, UK, founded in 1851), *Getty Images* (an American stock photo agency founded in 1995), *Agence France-Presse* (AFP photo is a division of the international news agency headquartered in Paris, France, founded in 1835), *AP Images* (a division of the Associated Press, an American multinational not-for-profit news agency, founded in 1846), *NOOR* (a collective uniting a select group of highly accomplished photojournalists documenting, investigating and witnessing our world, founded in 2007).

Data provided by the research corpus shows that out of the 9882 accounts (authors), only 27 gathered over 1000 likes for their posts. As the chart below presents, *natgeo* leads this group by far, with a sum of 84.370 likes for the posts using *#photojournalism*. *National Geographic* is one of the top leading brands by the number of Instagram followers⁶. By

⁵ According to the data available on Instagram as of December, 2017, *thephotosociety* has 5M followers, *magnumphotos* has 2.6M, *reuters* has 1.3M, *gettyimages* has 773K, *afpphoto* has 314K, *apimages* has 287K, *noorimages* has 173K, *epaphoto* has 6112 followers.

⁶ Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/253710/leading-brands-ranked-by-number-of-instagram-followers/>

#PHOTOJOURNALISM IN THE AGE OF INSTAGRAM

October 2016, National Geographic account reached 63,1 millions of followers, a number that is constantly increasing⁷.

Other authors featuring popular posts are: *World Press Photo* (an independent, non-profit organization based in Amsterdam, Netherlands, founded in 1955, known for holding an annual press photography contest); *The Photo Society*, *Getty Images* and *Ami Vitale* (an American photojournalist and documentary film maker whose photographs have been published in international magazines including National Geographic, Adventure, Geo, Newsweek, Time and Smithsonian and won World Press Photos awards, POYi awards, and the Magazine Photographer of the Year award by the National Press Photographers Association).

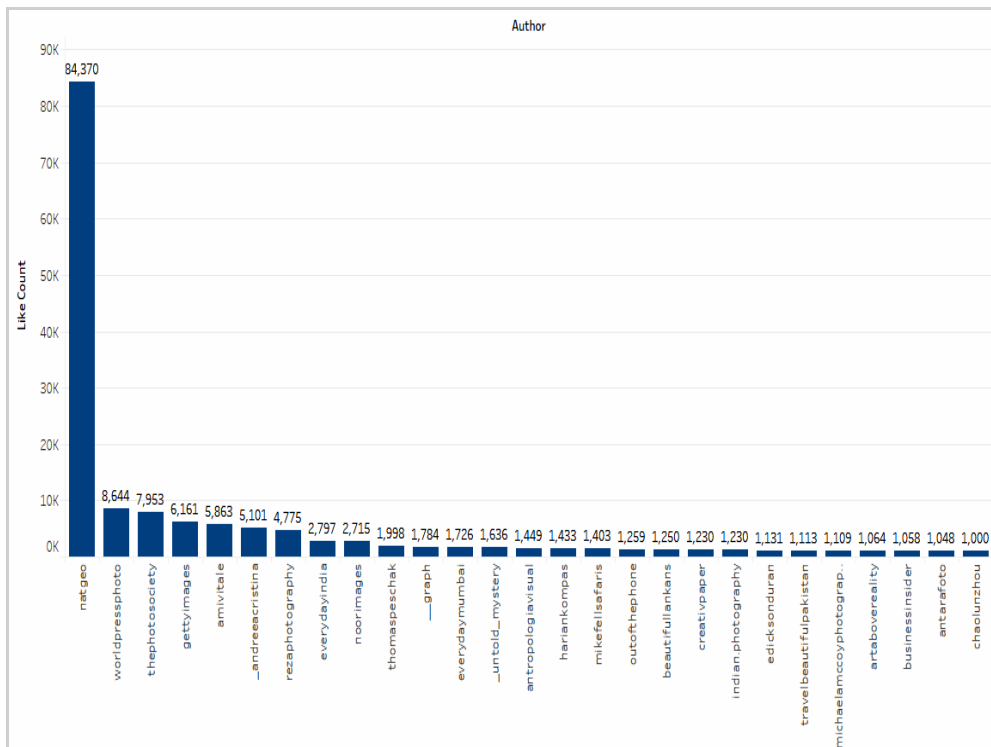


Figure 3: The accounts (authors) with over 1000 likes for their posts

⁷ In December 2017, *natgeo* reached 84.7M followers, being the leading brand on Instagram.



National Geographic's most successful post, authored by Ami Vitale (66.386 likes)



World Press Photo's Geographic's most successful post, authored by Matic Zorman, an independent photojournalist based in the Balkans. (1.869 likes)



Ami Vitale's most successful post (2.584 likes)



The Photo Society's most successful post, authored by [@rezaphotography](#) (7.953 likes)

Figure 4: The most successful posts of the first four authors

But, in order to better understand the structure of the network that have as a common feature the use of *#photojournalism*, a brief analysis of the name network, respectively of the chain network will be performed.

Who mentions Whom

The name network for Instagram is a communication network that connects each commentator to any user (author) mentioned in their post or comment. The network's size has a 41 nodes diameter (the number

of nodes it takes to get from one side to the other). The density measurement (0.000167461176917) shows that almost no one is connected to others in the network. The low centralization (0.006002970339977) suggests a decentralized network, where information flows more freely between many participants. Also, the high modularity (0.952545980776612) shows the existence of clusters that represent distinct communities in the network.

Our discussion will focus on two distinct clusters, which will be named *the elites cluster* (C1) and *the natgeo cluster* (C3).

Within cluster 1 the nodes representing photographic elite organizations with the highest centrality values are: *lensculture* (31), *visapourlimage* (23), *thephotosociety* (21), *gettyimages* (21), *magnumphotos* (16) and *noorimages* (13). In all of the cases (except *visapourlimage*), the indegree (the number of ties directed to or received by a node) is significantly higher than the outdegree, showing thus organisations that are most frequently mentioned by other users.

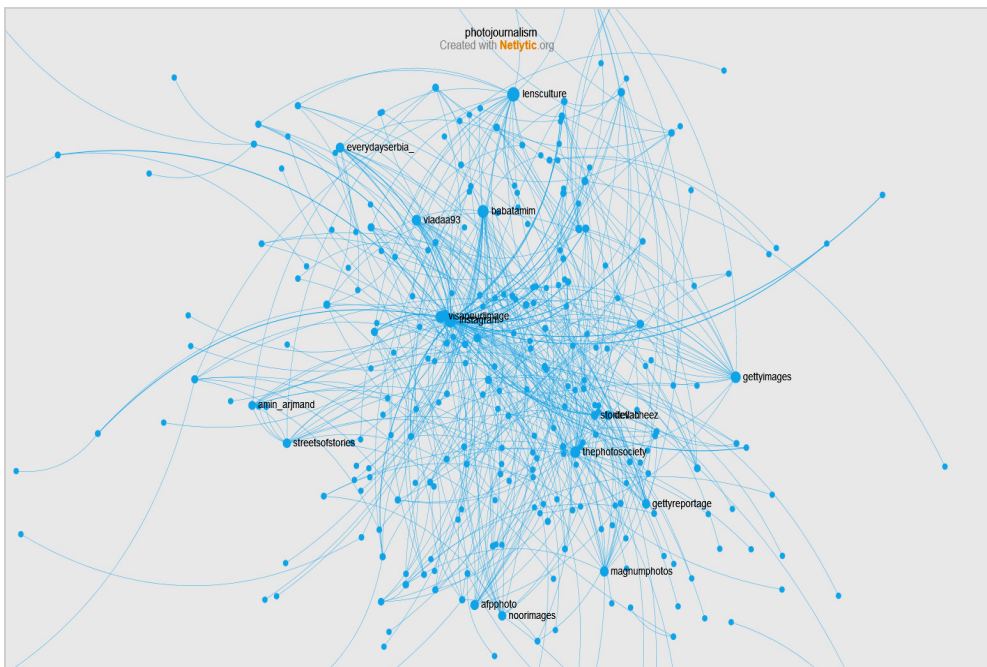


Figure 5: C1 – The elites cluster

In cluster 3, the nodes with the highest centrality values are: *natgeo* (50), *amivitale* (39), *natgeocreative* (33), *sararacamp* (15), *nrt_kenya* (14). This cluster features posts centered on nature conservation issues in Africa.

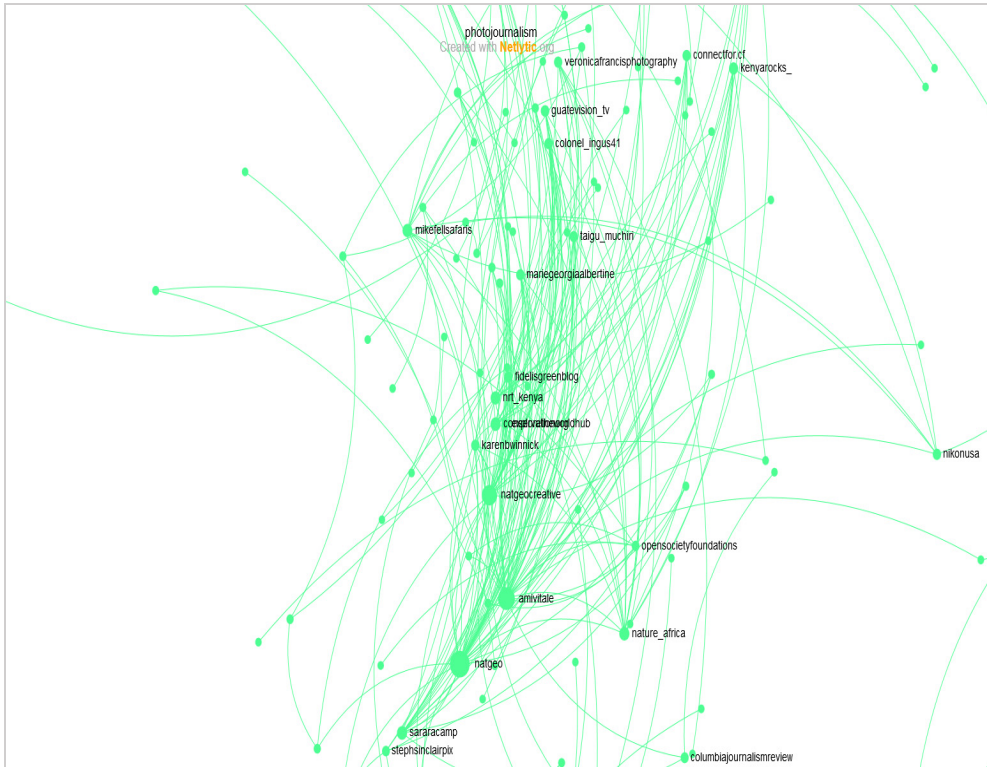


Figure 6: The natgeo cluster

Who replies to Whom

The chain network map, for Instagram, is a communication network that connects each commentator to the poster of the image. In comparison with the name network size (Diameter: 41), the size of the chain network is smaller (Diameter: 10). The density measurement (0.000115792830649) shows again that almost no one is connected to

others in the network. The reciprocity (0.000898876404494) shows a weak two-way communication, with few reciprocal ties. The low measurement of centralization (0.013125282921279), closer to 0, suggests a decentralized network. The high values of modularity (0.957268003571983) indicate clear divisions between communities as represented by clusters in Netlytic.

Cluster 1 is dominated by *anthony_gale* (107 posts, 6,873 followers, 1,928 following) Anthony Gale describes himself as a *Former archaeologist, former parliamentary bag carrier, now working as a media officer for @mercycorps_europe. All photos are mine, obv.*

The *anthony_gale* node has an outdegree of 86, that shows a particularly active communicator in comparison with the other nodes of the cluster.

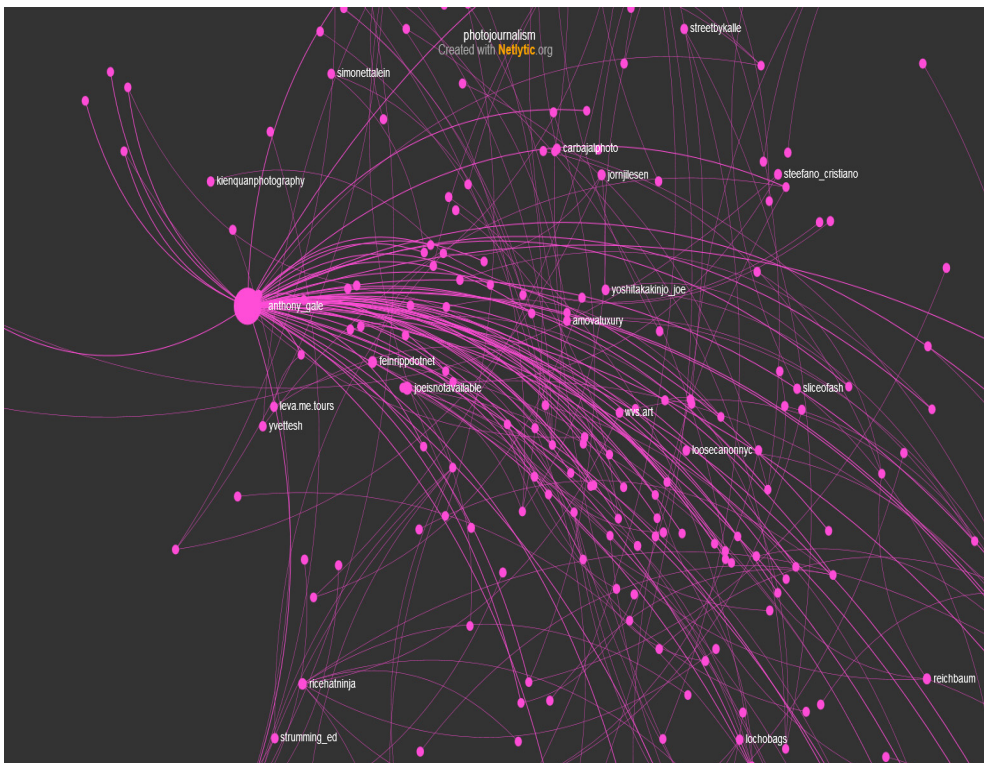


Figure 7: The anthony_gale cluster

Cluster 2 presents a radically different structure, clearly dominated by *natgeo*, with an indegree of 201, which shows the prominence / popularity of this particular author, who is the target of communication or interest.

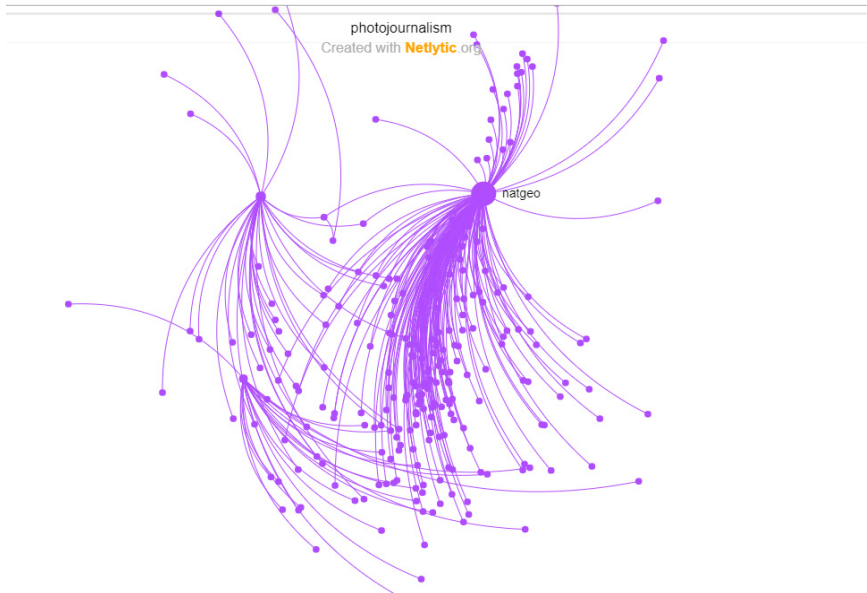


Figure 8: The *natgeo* cluster (chain network)

The clusters analysis shows that not only the elite photo outlets have the force to form clusters, which raised the RQ4: *How amateur photographers behave on Instagram and how they are promoting themselves?*

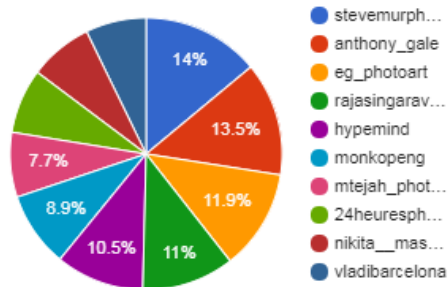


Figure 9: Top ten posters

In the #photojournalism corpus, the user *stevemurphy101* has 89 posts, but in spite using tags such as #photographer #photo #photographer #photography #photojournalism his post are almost exclusively inspirational quotes. User *anthony_gale* has 86 posts, all of them featuring a photojournalism genre. The user *eg_photoart* has 76 posts, focused mainly on portraits and street photography. Edwin García's Instagram account description is: "All the photos are originals by me. (c) I AM INTO STREET PHOTOGRAPHY AND CINEMATIC I do not take pictures, I make photos 📷 But, All the Glory to God."

A special attention need the user *andreeacristina*, who's post placed her on the 4th position on popularity list presenting authors with over 1000 likes. Andreea Cristina Stan⁸ (username: *andreeacristina*; 1,681 posts, 1.3m followers, 1,086 following; Instagram account description is: "SimplyAndreea BEAUTY • FASHION • TRAVEL Romanian in LAus") is a fashion blogger. Her post gathered 5101 likes and is present in the #photojournalism corpus due to the (abusive) use of hashtag *photojournalism* for a posed group portrait in front of the Berlin Wall, tagged with: #Berlin #berlinblogpost #andreeacristina #germany #tourism #traveling #travel #europe #art #artwork #travelblog #blogger #photojournalism #berlinwall #friendvacation #vacation #holiday. In this case, the user posts her own portraits made by someone else. This *microcelebrity* profile is an example of how the well marketed online presence, doubled by personal branding, leads to monetization.



Andreea Cristina's (fashion blogger) only and most successful post (5.101 likes as of October 2016)

Figure 10: Andreea Cristina Stan's most successful post

⁸ According to the data available on Instagram public profiles as of December, 2017.

A clear mark of the amateur photographers is the use of the Instagram filters (Clarendon, Gingham, Lo-Fi, Amaro etc.) for 10.81% out of the 21.806 photos in the *#photojournalism* corpus.

In terms of successful individuals, visible photographers are usually connected to one elite media outlet or agency (National Geographic, The Photo Society) or major event (World Press Photo).

Conclusion

The rise of new digital technologies and new amateur practices of photographic production and distribution have productively challenged professional photojournalism, in terms of .

The most prominent photographic genres associated with *#photojournalism* are *streetphotography*, followed by *documentaryphotography* and *travelphotography*. This result should be carefully examined, because the tags are not solely used to objectively describe the visual content. Instagram tagging practices are determined by promotion strategies and subjective descriptions of the user experience.

The photo agencies and image divisions of press agencies that are producing high quality visual content are still the elites of the digital photojournalism world: *The Photo Society*, *Magnum Photos*, *Reuters*, *Getty Images*, *Agence France-Presse - AFP photo*, *AP Images*, *NOOR images*. *National Geographic* is undoubtedly one of the the most popular brands on Instagram and its posts obtain large numbers of likes in a short span of time.

Photographers whos posts are the most popular are usually connected to one elite media outlet or agency (National Geographic, The Photo Society) or major event (World Press Photo). On the other hand, popular *microcelebrities* who are using hashtags pertaining to the photojournalism vocabulary are not necessarily photographers and how they are promoting themselves.

The current analysis, based on a limited corpus of posts from Instagram, tried to identify and explain how the development of digital photography technology and of social media platforms have been changing the definition of photojournalism over the last years.

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ION AGÂRBICEANU'S BEGINNINGS AS JOURNALIST

ALEXANDRA ORMENIŞAN¹

ABSTRACT. Witness of the most important key-events in Romania's history, the Romanian writer Ion Agârbiceanu couldn't be anything else but one of the most important journalists of Transylvania, a region with a tumultuous history and a lot of unsettled periods. During almost 60 years, Agârbiceanu published more than 2.000 articles, in about 80 newspapers, like *Patria*, *Tribuna*, *Transilvania*, *Glasul Ardealului*, *Unirea* or *Luceafărul*. This paper aims to analyze the articles that Agârbiceanu wrote in his first years as a journalist, in order to understand the way he reflected the social reality and the historical facts. Also, another point of interest was to see if he tried to educate through his articles and to help people adapt to the changing society, considering that he was a writer, so he had the skills to make himself understood and to capture interest. As a further research, this study can help to understand the way his ideas changed during the years and also for a better interpretation of his literature.

Keywords: Ion Agârbiceanu, Transylvania, Ardeal, newspapers, Unirea, press, press history.

Ion Agârbiceanu – a brief biography

Ion Agârbiceanu (September 12, 1882 – May 28, 1963) was a Romanian writer, priest, politician and academic. As the majority of the writers in that era, he was also a journalist. Even if the collaboration with newspapers began when he graduated high school, his most intense press activity took place when he was director of *Patria* (1919-1927) and *Tribuna*

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(1938-1940), two newspapers from Cluj. Developing a career as journalists was, for the Romanian writers, an opportunity to get in touch with more readers, to speak up even more and to earn some extra money as well. In the same time, they were the most educated people of the society, genuine opinion trendsetters, who had the cultural level for addressing to masses. Writer's journalistic activity is an interesting material to be studied, because it indicates which were the ideas that they thought that the population needs and this, indirectly, describes the society at that moment.

Agârbiceanu was born in Cenade, a village from Alba County, in a family with eight children. In 1889, he started primary school and then he went to Blaj, for gymnasium and high school. After graduation, he joined the Theological Seminary of the University of Budapest and graduated in 1904. Between 1906 and 1910, Agârbiceanu lived in Bucium-Șasa, a commune from Alba County, where he was a priest. For his literature, this was one of the most productive periods; he wrote his most appreciated short-stories, inspired by peasant's life style and their stories. During this time, his journalistic activity was considerably reduced. He maintained his collaboration with newspapers, for publishing his opera².

In 1910, Agârbiceanu moved in Orlat, Sibiu County, where he was priest as well. He stayed there until 1916, when the events during the war forced him to flee with the Romanian army, in Râmnicu-Vâlcea. Then he ended up in Russia, in Elisabetgrad, until 1918. This was an extremely difficult time for him and his family, because they were extremely poor and with children to raise and feed. In 1918, he returned to Romania, back to his parish, in Orlat. In 1919 he moved to Cluj, where he became director of an important newspaper: *Patria*³. The experiences from the Carpathian villages influenced a lot his opera; the struggle during the war and the experiences as a refugee only taught him to be even more patriotic and to fight for his dream – the unitary state: “The study of his wanderings

² Ion Agârbiceanu. *Works. I. Short stories and stories*. Edition made by Ilie Rad. Chronological table, edition note, bibliography, notes and comments, critical references by Ilie Rad. Introductory study by Eugen Simion, Romanian Academy, National Foundation for Science and Art, Bucharest, 2014, p. LXXV-LXXVI (originally in Romanian).

³ Mircea Zăciu, *Ion Agârbiceanu*, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, p. 127-128.

shows that he knew closely the vicissitude through which the country passed during the years of the First World War and, in contrast to so many of the politicians of the time, he stood by his nation in the most difficult circumstances"⁴. As Al. Ciura, a Romanian literary critic, said, "Before Agârbiceanu, the writers limited themselves at writing about the idyllic surface of village life; Agârbiceanu's quill broke this lying canvas and his writing tells us, like a unbelievably true and painful revelation: «don't dress up the poor nation's life in the sweet coat of poetry! Look at its bleeding wounds. This is the state of people in the country side. I've seen it and I've known it in its painful width! »"⁵. The rural themes also impressed Mihai Beniuc, a Romanian poet, who wrote, in 1941: "The local coloring is rendered with so much artistry, that the ones from county side can't help to startle and the ones in the cities are stunned by its abundance"⁶.

February 1919 was the moment when Agârbiceanu's journalistic activity gets new dimensions. He became director of *Patria* (until 1927), one of the most important newspapers in Transylvania. As the writer himself said, during this years, he focused so the press, that he neglected his opera.

After leaving *Patria*, he resumed his literary activity and wrote well-known novels: *Legea minții. Povestea altei vieți, Biruința, Răbojul lui Sfântu Petru, Licean...odinioară, Sectarii* etc. Also, between 1938-1940, he was the director of *Tribuna*, a cultural magazine in Cluj.

In 1940, Agârbiceanu departed to Sibiu, when the Northern Transylvania was ceded to Hungary. There was even an expulsion decision on his name, as we find out from a letter⁷. During the next five years, spent in solitude, he wrote some of the most appreciated novels: *Jandar-mul, Domnișoara Ana, În pragul vieții, Vremuri și oameni. Lumea nouă*.

In 1945, Agârbiceanu returned to Cluj, where he continued his journalistic activity and the literary one too.

⁴ Dimitrie Vatmaniuc, *Ion Agârbiceanu*, Albatros, Bucharest, 1970, p. 15.

⁵ Ion Brad, *Ion Agârbiceanu. Holy father of Romanian literature*. The Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007, p. 48 (original in Romanian).

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 49-50.

⁷ Mircea Zăciu, *Ion Agârbiceanu*, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, p. 182.

The Romanian society, at the beginning of the 20th century

The beginning of the 20th century was marked by several important events for Romania, which were to change its destiny. After the Balkan wars (1913), the Cadrilater returned to Romania; the First World War started and, after two years of neutrality, Romania takes Entente's side, after which it succeeds to become a unitary national state⁸. But before that, the Romanian society was facing a dark period, because of the economic crisis. Like Florin Constantiniu observed, "around 1900, Romania appeared – and the situation will continue over the next four decades – as a country of contrasts: refined luxury, elites living in western style, middle eastern standard of living and poverty for the middle class"⁹.

While Europe was filled with *la belle époque* euphoria, the Romanian peasants and workers were protesting against their difficult conditions. In 1904, over 5.000 peasants protested and the intervention of authorities ended with 33 deaths¹⁰. The climax was in 1907, when the revolt lasted for three months.

Considering the situation of rural society, the modernization was way behind at that time, comparing to the rest of the Europe, given the fact that the overwhelming majority of the population lived in the villages. For the writers, this was an inexhaustible source of topics for their literary works and articles. Agârbiceanu was one of these writers.

Research design

Ion Agârbiceanu's journalistic work has not been deepened yet. Except for *Meditation in September (Meditație în septembrie)*, which is an anthology that reunites a few articles, there were no studies on this subject.

⁸ Ilie Rad, *Incursions in the history of Romanian written press*, Accent, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 76 (original in Romanian).

⁹ Florin Constantiniu, *A sincere history of the Romanian people*, 3rd edition, revised and added, Encyclopedic Universe, Bucharest, 2002, p. 240 (original in Romanian).

¹⁰ Constantin C. Giurescu (coord.), *Romania's history in data*, Romanian Encyclopaedia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, p. 277 (original in Romanian).

The purpose of this research is to bring to light the first problems that have concerned the Transylvanian writer. This particular paper treats the first three years of his press activity. The period 1903-1905 could be considered the beginning of Agârbiceanu as journalist, because in 1906 he moved in Orlat, so his life changed and his press activity as well, that moment marking another level of his career.

Research questions:

- Which were the first topics Agârbiceanu wrote about in his first articles? Which were the problems that preoccupied him?
- Did the fact that he was a priest influence the subjects he chose for writing about?
- Was he preachy or he managed to separate the priest Agârbiceanu from the journalist Agârbiceanu?
- Considering that he was an educated man, did he try to educate his readers too, through his articles?

Methodology

The primary research method used for this paper is qualitative content analysis, in order to understand the topics and the speech of the articles, but also quantitative analysis, which revealed the newspapers where Agârbiceanu published most of his articles and which are the categories that he preferred.

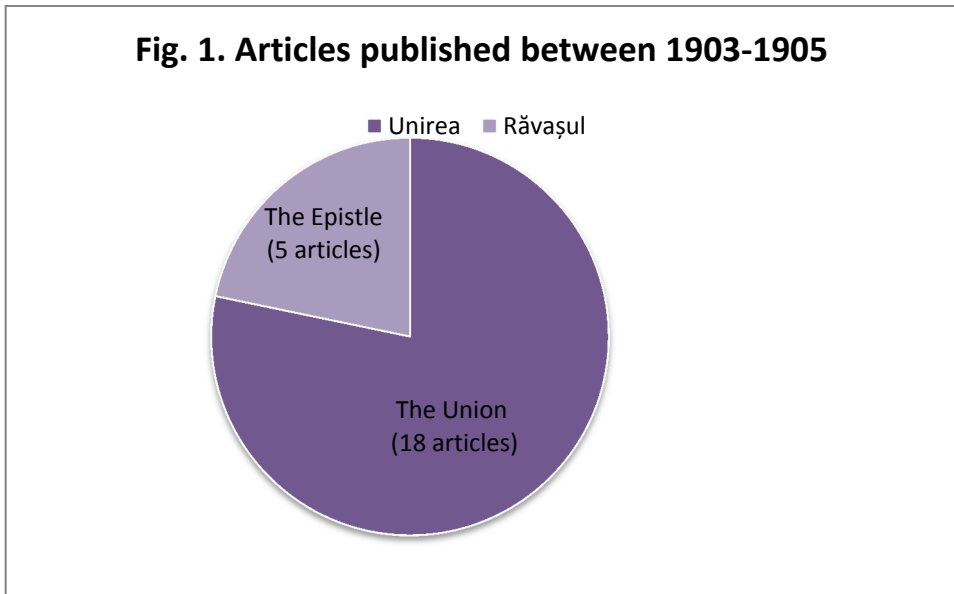
The sample includes all the articles published by Agârbiceanu between 1903 and 1905, the period chosen for this research.

The first years of journalistic activity (1903-1905)¹¹

Ion Agârbiceanu's journalistic debut took place later than the literary one, even if the last one was in the newspapers too. In 1899, Agârbiceanu published his first poem, *Memories (Amintiri)* in *Unirea (The Union)* newspaper. His first press article was also published in *Unirea*, four years later,

¹¹ Note: Ion Agârbiceanu signed his articles with different names: I. Agârbiceanu, Alfius, I.A., A., I. Agarbi., I. Agârbicean or they were unsigned. This paper respects his option. Therefore, in the footnotes, the name of author is the name he wrote at the end of his articles.

and it had an ecclesiastical profile. In that time, he was still a student of the Theological Seminary of the University of Budapest (until 1904). During 1903-1905, Agârbiceanu published 23 articles, almost all of them in *Unirea* and only a few in *Răvașul* (*The Epistle*):



*The church (Biserica)*¹² was published in the February 14, 1903 edition of the *Unirea* newspaper and it describes the sanctity that this institutions has in peasant's lives and the central place that it occupies in society and in every day activity. The church, over which the passage of years has left its mark, is situated outside the village, away from the passions and worries of the people, but watches over the whole village, from the hill on which it is situated. Written in a literary note, the article perfectly surprises the atmosphere of the traditional Romanian village, where the society is formed around the church, marked by the inherited teachings of ancestors: everything begins with "God help us!" and ends with thanking to the divinity; on Sundays, the whole village is wearing holiday clothes and taking part in the service, after the bells of the church tower

¹² Ion Agârbiceanu, *The church*, in *The Union*, year XIII, nr. 6, February 14, 1903, p. 56-57 (original in Romanian)

call for prayer, and the church rejuvenates; the peasants kneel humiliated and “their cracked hands make the cross sign, wide, complete, as only the peasants know how to do it!”; life begins and ends with God’s blessing and “no matter how sad and old the church on the hill is, it is the ideal of life, because the life lives in it!”. The end of the article has symmetry with the beginning, highlighting the role of the church to watch over the village: “On the hill with a rare, almost dry, poor grass, stands the church of the village, surrounded by graves, like a sentinel, tired because of the long-standing watching over the living and over the dead”.

The second article that Ion Agârbiceanu published is also an ecclesiastical one. Written three months later, this time he refers to faith, in a style that will become characteristic for him and it will consecrate him later: the struggle for faith in God, severely sanctioning moral and ethical deviations, always trying to educate, but without being a moralist. *The faith (Credința)*¹³ is a three-part article, published within three weeks. The first article is published in the second part of the newspaper, called *Scientific-Literary Part*, and it is, in fact, a demonstration of the fact that faithlessness is always defeated, even if sometimes just in the end. Ion Agârbiceanu considered that faith can be seen from three points of view: theologically, in its relations with revelation, where the questions about the nature, freedom, necessity and merit of faith arise; from a hermit’s point of view, when it faces its enemies; faithlessness, the third one, is considered by Ion Agârbiceanu to be a subject that has never been more present, which is noisy and affects the peace of the believing souls.

The first political articles – the problem of socialism

Although dedicated to theology and ecclesiastical activities, Ion Agârbiceanu wrote about plenty of subjects from the social-political sphere, starting shortly from the journalistic debut. Concerned, as in his literary work, about the good progress of society, based primarily on widespread morality, the avoidance of political opinion was impossible. The first political subject is socialism, a current that he always rejected, by exposing counterarguments and malfunctions. *The Socialists and the*

¹³ *The Faith*, in *The Union*, year XIII, nr. 18, May 9, 1903, p. 188 (original in Romanian).

*Romanians (Socialiștii și românii)*¹⁴ is an article published in *Răvașul*, written in three parts, which starts from a clear idea: equality, justice and fraternity are concepts that arose before the 18th century, when this movement began in France. Fundamental ideas, repeated now, come from the moment of the emergence of Christianity and are values that have been promoted with the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles, Agârbiceanu considers.

The writer disagrees with the new current of thought, which requires separation of the state and church, referring here to the French Revolution, which marked the moment when the state stopped being dominated by the monarch and the Church, the idea of equality becoming more important: “These people want to detach from the church and Christian faith; they write [...] that the church is the one keeping people in the dark and not allowing them to see the injustice in the world; that the priests, the ones who preach and drink wine, they fool people with their teachings [...] only to be able to live on their backs, to take advantage of them. And these people also say that they are the best friends of humanity that they want all men to know the troubles in which they live in, to enlighten them and to bring freedom, equality and fraternity to the world”.

It was inevitable that an article about socialism would not bring into discussion the vehement attitude against Marxist ideas, which Agârbiceanu has repeatedly expressed. Although he does not mention the scientific socialism founder’s name, the allusion is clear, in phrases like “they [the socialists] are enemies of Jesus Christ, enemies of any people other than the Jewish one”, given the Jewish origin of Marx. Agârbiceanu used to call the Jewish people *jidovi* or *jidani*, terms which were considered offensive. The criticism of the proletariat, another idea exploited by Karl Marx, is no less gentle. Large factories and industrialization are not considered by Agârbiceanu to be solutions to poverty alleviation, but on the contrary: the represent the submission of some social strata to the owners, who will establish the economic condition. This, Agârbiceanu says, is also a kind of serfdom.

Of course, the views are not the same regarding the followers of Christian Democracy, a doctrine formed as a defensive of the Catholic Church and which is based on the Christian values, which are meant to be applied in the social life. It is, however, the result of the loan of ideas

¹⁴ I. Agarbi., *Socialists and Romanians*, in *The Epistle*, year I, nr. 5, May 2, 1903, p.17-18 (original in Romanian).

from other current policies. Although they aim at a common goal, the general well-being of society, especially of workers, the difference between Christian Democrats and Social Democrats is, according to Agârbiceanu, in the way they treat people. The main reason for which he pleads in favor of the Christian Democrats, beyond his profession and personal beliefs, which automatically place him in this group, is the attention given to the spiritual component of human beings, whether they are workers or patrons.

In Agârbiceanu's opinion, the idea that "every man matters as much as his work values" ("fiecare om plătește cât muncește") turns workers into robots and even into animals, that do not involve themselves emotionally in what they do. This is the consequence of the fact that the sure thing that is expected from them is physical strength. But the Social Democrats are trying to educate people by virtue of creating a society based on morals and religious principles, says Agârbiceanu. Also, he claims that they know that they cannot bring heaven to earth, as the Social Democrats promise, but "they believe in a fate improvement, which is possible only if people will be better, and people become better only by learning about God. That is why Christian Democrats begin by teaching those who have forgotten Jesus", which is their noble purpose and supreme care. Agârbiceanu calls the Social Democrats pagans and he addresses to them: "Man is not valued, dear ones, according to his body, to his animal powers, but to the divine ones. The right thought, the pure heart and the diligent work on these give the price of man not only in front of the word, but also in front of God".

Even if Agârbiceanu was a supporter of Christian values, so, among other things, of the well-being state of people, Agârbiceanu does not condemn the rich ones: "They say that the wealthy people are tyrants, they are the leeches that swallow the blood of the workers, they are not worth living, have no value, because the price is counted considering the amount of work and they do not work. Here I will draw your attention: they say that the wealthy people do not work. They do not work with my arms, maybe, but they work in another way, more difficult things, many times". This opinion may be influenced by the fact that he was a priest and in those times priests were wealthy people, so he feels like he needs to give an explanation, to make sure that the readers understand that just because someone doesn't physically work, it does not mean that he does not do it at all. Moreover, Agârbiceanu considered that the social-democrat

were wrong when they said that the result of the work is not the property of the business owner, but of all those who contributed to obtaining the assets, which would lead to a division of the fortunes among those who are not right to receive those goods.

In the second part¹⁵ of the article *Socialists and Romanians*, which was published a week later, Agârbiceanu continues the comparison between Christian and social-democratic socialists, emphasizing the importance of the spiritual dimension of human beings. The Social Democrats believe that the primary need is to have food, but Agârbiceanu believes that men are put together with animals, whose lives are limited to physical nourishment. In his opinion, people need more, and Christian-Democrats are the ones who best understand this need. They see in man, first of all, a soul, which needs attention. This is the key, Agârbiceanu considers, for the whole society to become better: caring for the spirit, feeding it with God's words, educating it, infusing the principles of the Bible and preparing the soul for eternity. Once these things are a priority in ordinary human life, society will gain new valences, build on solid principles, and material welfare will come from itself, for honest, laborers and conscientious men.

In the last part of the article¹⁶ *Socialists and Romanians*, published on May 16th, 1903, Agârbiceanu analyzes the possibility that socialism will grow in Romania too. Although the Social Democratic Party of Workers was established in our country since 1893, when this trend was in full growth in Europe, and the program of socialist measures, drawn up by Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, existed since 1886, the organizations that supported the current having a lot of followers, Agârbiceanu still believed that this doctrine would not succeed in Romania. According to Nicolae Jurca, in the *History of Social-Democracy in Romania*, "in 1888, The Ground Workers Guild, in Iaşi, had about 700 members and The Workers Party had 2.000 men"¹⁷, but Agârbiceanu does not even take in consideration this numbers. In order for socialism to succeed, "we should have, on the one hand, very wealthy people, and on the other hand people without a cure of wealth, we should have a

¹⁵ I. Agarbi., *The Epistle*, year I, nr. 6, May 9, 1903, p. 21-22 (original in Romanian).

¹⁶ I. Agarbi., *The Epistle*, year I, nr. 7, May 16, 1903, p. 26-27 (original in Romanian).

¹⁷ Nicolae Jurca, *The History of Social-Democracy in Romania*, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1994, p. 16 (original in Romanian).

non-clerical priesthood, richer than the Jews and more deceptive than them, we should have no churches in the villages and no schools”.

In the end of this series of articles, Agârbiceanu puts his trust in the country's leaders, who will know what is best for Romania and leave socialism aside. In a somewhat idealist style, it even urges the Romanians to wonder whether socialism has already covered Romania, if our leaders considered it beneficial. In his opinion, Romania is capable of leading alone, without needing help from strangers, even less of an *Itig* (also referring to the Jews) and invokes illustrious figures of the Revolution of 1848, who managed to lead Romania on the right path, through patriotism and love for their country: Avram Iancu and Axente Sever.

A week later, Agârbiceanu gets published again in *Răvaşul*, with another text about socialism, with the article *The Romanian socialist's sheet (Foaia socialiștilor români)*¹⁸. This time, he writes about *Voința (People's Will)*, a newspaper supporting this policy, which he criticizes. Initially, there was an intention that the article would be published in two parts, because the first one ends with *to be continued*, but the second part was never published.

At the beginning of the article, Agârbiceanu makes a confession, by which he wants to show that this newspaper has a very low importance, calling it a handbill (*fițuică*): “At first, I wanted to write only about the socio-democratic handbill, which is called *People's Will*. I thought, however, that is not worthy to waste so much paper and ink only to write about it, which is why I first wrote extensively about the socialists”. In this article, Agârbiceanu removes, with examples from the Bible, the self-proclaiming of the Social-Democrats as descendants, in ideas and ideals, of Jesus Christ.

The recurrence of religious articles

The next article is also an ecclesiastical one, published in *Unirea*. *The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pogorârea Sf. Spirit)*¹⁹ is, as can be deduced from the title, about Whitsuntide, when, according to the *Bible*, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, who began to speak all the languages

¹⁸ I. Agarbi., *The sheet of Romanian socialists*, in *The Epistle*, May 23, 1903, year I, nr. 8, p. 30-31 (original in Romanian).

¹⁹ Alfius, *The descent of the Holy Spirit*, in *The Union*, year XIV, nr. 22, May 28, 1904, p. 201-202 (original in Romanian).

of the earth, in order to be able preach all over the world. It is only at the end of the article that we can understand what is to point of detailing this biblical scene: “Teaching only has a purpose if it illuminates your mind, if it makes you better. All our instruction, not only the religious, but also the pragmatic one, must have this goal; otherwise, we cannot become useful members of human society. But this goal will never be achieved if we are forced to work our mind with a language we do not understand, which is alien to our nature. Speaking our native language is a psychological necessity for people with healthy thinking, because it is planted by the Creator himself in us”. This passage occupies less than one paragraph of the article, but it is obvious that the reference is to Magyarization. In 1904, it began to take on an increasing scale, followed three years later by the Apponyi’s law, which led to closure of more than 300 Romanian schools. Agârbiceanu was vigilant about everything connected with the threats of other nations. Also, he was always against the Hungarians in those tumultuous times, through his articles and opera. In this case, the message is hidden behind this example, in which the will of God that everyone can be taught in his own language has a clear significance.

The articles on social topics

On July 2, 1904, in *Unirea*, Agârbiceanu publishes *Marian societies (Societăți mariane)*²⁰, referring to Vasile Lucaciu, one of the most important Transylvanian politicians. By the time he arrived at speaking about him, which happened only in the second half of the article, Agârbiceanu wrote again about foreigners who are attacking Romania’s security.

*Mother (Mama)*²¹ is the last article that Ion Agârbiceanu published in 1904 and it is about the emancipation of women, the feminist movement in general, which has begun to grow in Romania too. Agârbiceanu looks at this new trend with skepticism. Not because he would consider that women are inferior, but on the contrary, because he sees them as the

²⁰ Alfius, *Marian societies*, in *The Union*, an XIV, nr. 27, 2 iul. 1904, p. 252-253 (original in Romanian).

²¹ Alfius, *Mother*, in *The Epistle*, year II, nr. 40, November 1, 1904, p. 167-169 (original in Romanian).

image of sensitivity, gentleness and tenderness: “[...] the health, liveliness and happiness of a family hangs from the way that the mother is that family. With her tender temper, with her praying eyes, with her actions of true love, a woman can – if she does not have boys in her family to bring along the right path – help to get up even the most fallen man”. She understands that times change and spending is higher, especially for child care, but Agârbiceanu thinks that she forgets one essential fact, that the woman’s goal in the world is to be a good mother, which is an obstacle in the way of emancipation: “When the little ones surround her and goggle two words, she begins the planting, thread by thread, all the good and holy, in the bright and young soul. [...] If, however, the will and the pleasure of praying is not taught to a small child, later no teacher in the world will be able – even if he wishes – to teach him to pray with joy and not only on command”. Agârbiceanu believes that because of her gentleness and unmeasured love, the mother has to teach the child all these things, to allocate as much time as possible. This justifies his skeptical view of women’s empowerment. Her work within the family will influence future generations, so the society at a time.

In 1905, Ion Agârbiceanu spent half a year in Budapest, where he established relationships around the *Luceafărul* magazine, to which he would later collaborate with various articles and became a member of the “Petru Maior” Society²². He also focuses on literary and journalistic activity, especially in the second half of the year. In June 1905, the first article wrote in that year, he reviewed a study wrote by Ioan Rațiu, about Vasile Cârlova, a Romanian poet and officer, who died in 1831, when he was only 22 years old.

The June 24, 1905 edition of *Unirea* has the mention „festive number” on its first page. Almost the whole newspaper (25 pages) is dedicated to Timotei Cipariu²³ (except for the last page, where the advertising is placed), because in February 1905 would have been celebrated 100 years since his birth. The front page of the newspaper has a photo of the great Transylvanian

²² Ion Agârbiceanu. *Works. I. Short stories and stories*. Edition made by Ilie Rad. Chronological table, edition note, bibliography, notes and comments, critical references by Ilie Rad. Introductory study by Eugen Simion. Romanian Academy, National Foundation for Science and Art, Bucharest, 2014, p. LXXIV (original in Romanian).

²³ Romanian cleric and academic, founding member of the Romanian Academy.

scholar and a poem dedicated to him. A text by Agârbiceanu on this subject was expected, given the admiration for him, which he manifested on several occasions. This time he wrote about his poetic work, in the article entitled *Versifications of T. Cipariu (Versificări de-ale lui T. Cipariu)*²⁴, although this part of his work was the least complex and exploited. However, “*The epitaph is not much inferior to the best poems of Eliade Rădulescu*²⁵ – except his *Sburătorul* – and *Dorul*, not the one translated from Schiller, is a composition in beautiful folk verses”, wrote Agârbiceanu about “The most erudite Transylvanian man we have ever had”.

Next, he analyzes the poems *Ecloga*, *Dorul* and *Bătrânul* and he appreciates them. Agârbiceanu considered that an analysis of Timothy Cipariu’s poetic activity was welcomed, although, he says, “certainly his merits would have been the same, even if wouldn’t have written any verse, because his poems does not make its aura of scholar any brighter”. But he confesses that he felt obliged to bring to the knowledge of the younger generation this part of Cipariu’s work too.

Other letters – a series of social and religious articles

In the period July-December 1905, Agârbiceanu published a series of articles, entitled *Other Letters (Alte scrisori)*, which were addressed *To a friend (Unui prietin)*. The way these letters are structured, like any other articles, indicates that they do not address a specific person, that friend being a generic term. Although they have different subjects, Agârbiceanu militates in the eight letters for the personal contribution of each citizen to the development of society, through culture, solidarity, altruism and education.

According to Dimitrie Vatamaniu²⁶, the first letter was published in *Unirea* and it is about intellectual’s role in the village. A detailed analysis was not possible, because the newspaper could not be found.

²⁴ I. Agârbiceanu, *Versification of T. Cipariu*, in *The Union*, year XV, nr. 25, June 24, 1905, p. 209-211 (original in Romanian).

²⁵ Romanian writer, philologist and political man, founding member of Romanian Academy and its first president.

²⁶ Dimitrie Varamaniuc, *Ion Agârbiceanu. Bibliography*, Romanian Encyclopaedia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1974, p. 87 (original in Romanian).

The second letter is called *Our nation (Nația noastră)*²⁷ and Agârbiceanu highlights here the need for well-done work. He advises people to be more ambitious and fulfill their obligations with enlightenment. “You have heard so many times, my beloved friend, our people, even when they start doing a good job, they leave it so soon and they are no longer interested in it. [...] It is not enough, dear friend, to ignite the fire and believe that only by this the polenta boils well and, by doing nothing, it is done in about half. No. You have to put some more kindling from time to time, for the fire to be refreshed and the flames keep on constantly”, explains Agârbiceanu, with the mastery of a teacher. Such advice shows his continuing attempt to educate all people, a purpose that needs the ability to speak in a way that even the people with low educational level understand.

The insistence on enlightenment is intensified in the *Reading in villages and cities (Cetitul la sate și la orașe)*²⁸, the third article from the *Other Letters* series. The article is, as it can be deduced from the title, about reading, as a form of knowledge enrichment, for the development of thought and for the creation of an enlightened mind and spirit. The issue of cultivating young people from the villages was caused by the obligation they had for physical work, on the infield, their source of income. Because of the low development potential, young people built their lives around their houses and farms, their main occupation being the agriculture.

In the fourth letter, entitled *The temper (Characterul)*²⁹, published in two parts, Agârbiceanu treats the individual's ethical dimension, in relation to others. The temper is not a matter of heredity, he says, but it forms in the environment in which one lives. Above all, however, is the moral power, the principles and the laws upon which a person lives: “A high moral fund, the most sublime principles, the most sacred, the ones that lead to the target, and yet the purest. These principles must illuminate”.

²⁷ Alfius, *Other letters. Letter II (Our Nation)*, in *The Union*, year XV, nr. 32, August 12, 1905, p. 270-272 (original in romanian).

²⁸ Alfius, *Other letters. Letter III (Reading in villages and cities)*, in *The Union*, year XV, nr. 33, August 19, 1905, p. 278-280 (original in Romanian).

²⁹ *Other letters. Letter IV (The Character)*, in *The Union*, year XV, nr. 36, September 9, 1905, p. 303-304 (original in Romanian).

“Maybe no other decrease in today’s humanity is so bad, dear friend, as the lack of altruism. Those who say that the fight for food has never been so fierce are absolutely right”³⁰. This is how Agârbiceanu begins his fifth letter, published in the *Unirea*, which has as its subject altruism. His priestly vocation and preoccupation for a higher moral standard make him observe the increasing concern of men for daily cares and selfishness in the realization of their own ideals, but altruism should be at the basis of the relationships between people, the foundation of happiness and good understanding.

The cultural uplifting of the Romanian people is a recurring theme in Ion Agârbiceanu’s press activity. *Popular missions (Misiuni populare)*³¹ is an article that interrupts the series of *Other letters* and resumes the ideas about the duties of intellectuals towards the people. The so-called popular missions aim to solve the problems which society, especially the rural one, is facing: “you will see many good and useful things and good deeds, but you will see more that do not correspond to the present time of the century of civilization, of culture, you will see, among other things, a lot of people in bars, crowded playgrounds and parties [...] and you will feel that the air in the Lord’s house is not overwhelming, especially during the service”. A good pastor, Agârbiceanu says, can be recognized by the appearance of the village where he serves. Through these popular missions, people would be guided, educated and the increased level of culture would lead to a better society.

*The past’s liveliness and the present’s drowsiness (Însufletirea de odinioară și moleşirea de azi)*³² is the sixth article of the *Other Letters* series, at the beginning of which Agârbiceanu quoted *Epigones*, Mihai Eminescu’s poetic art, in which he is nostalgic about the glorious past and the disappointing present. Agârbiceanu feels angry too when he talks about the Romania’s past decades. The liveliness with which the ancestors fought for the country – even when the invading nations were ruthless and broke any hope –

³⁰ Alfius, *Other letters. Letter V (Altruism)*, in *The Union*, year XV, nr. 41, October 14, 1905, p. 342-344 (original in Romanian).

³¹ A., *People’s missions*, in *The Union*, year XV, nr. 39, September 30, 1905, p. 326-327 (original in Romanian).

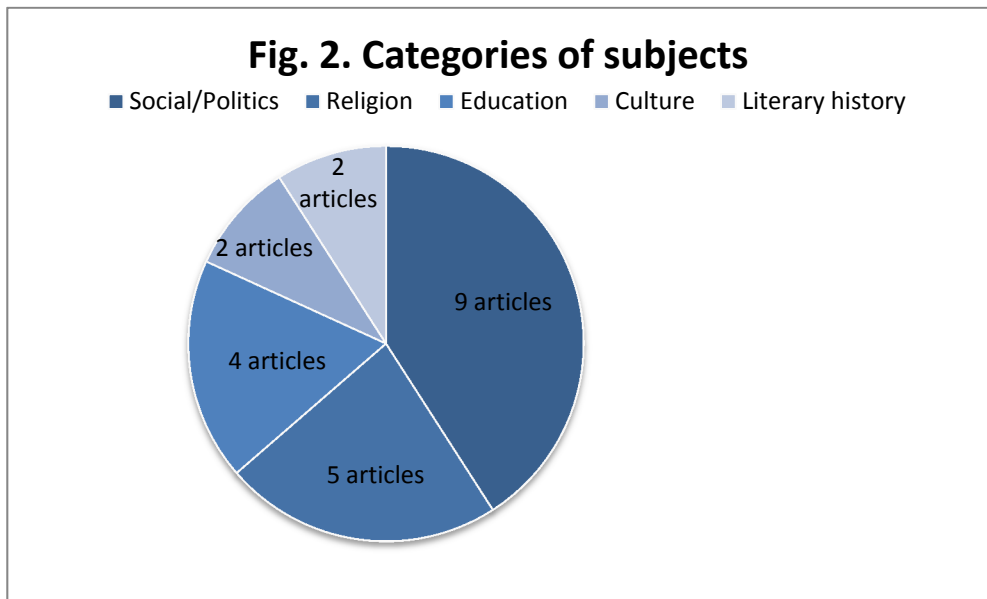
³² *Other letters. Letter VI (The past’s liveliness and the present’s drowsiness)*, in *The Union*, year XV, nr. 46, November 18, 1905, p. 382-383 (original in Romanian).

and the negligence that characterizes the people from present disappoints Agârbiceanu.

The matter of degraded present is detailed in the second part of the article, published a week later³³. The worryment about the passivity of Romanians, who are now moving away from the ideal of national unity, shows Agârbiceanu's disillusion concerning the current generations.

The last letter is also the last article published in 1905. *The beauty of Christianity (Frumusețea creștinismului)*³⁴ deals with a topic commonly encountered in Agârbiceanu's press work: the beauty of the heart opened to God. "Only Christianity, a current itself, but an absolute truth, did not extinguish, when many have left or left it, when most, as in our day, are indifferent to it".

During these years, Agârbiceanu wrote 9 social-political articles, 5 with religious topic, 4 about education and 2 for each cultural and literary history domain, as it can be observed in Fig. 2.



³³ Alfius, *Other letters. Letter VI (The past's liveliness and the present's drowsiness)*, in *The Union*, year XV, nr. 47, November 25, 1905, p. 390 (original in Romanian).

³⁴ Alfius, *Other letters. Letter VIII (The Beauty of Christianity)*, in *The Union*, year XV, nr. 52, December 30, 1905, p. 429-432 (original in Romanian).

Conclusions

The first topics Ion Agârbiceanu wrote about were religious, political and later social ones. The problems that always preoccupied him were the importance of faith and church in society, the way the politicians were doing their work and about people's morality. He was also concerned about the evolution of the Romanian society and the emancipation of the citizens.

The fact that Ion Agârbiceanu was also a priest influenced the topics of his articles. The religious subjects were his second choice, the first being the political and social ones. Even if he was a priest and he preferred this kind of articles, he was never preachy. He always explained the importance of faith and tried to educate people in order to make them understand the importance of morality.

Another important aspect of Ion Agârbiceanu's press activity is that he always tried to educate his readers, the press giving him the opportunity to have a wider audience. Just like his prose, Agârbiceanu's articles always promoted moral principles. Regardless of the topic, the journalist provides an educational function to his articles. They express opinions that evoke respect for people or deeds, militate for patriotism, respect for the country and ancestors. He has tact, so he manages to educate without making any tedious preaching.

In his journalistic style, Ion Agârbiceanu does not detach himself from the literary one. In his articles, he has the same qualities of a storyteller, which are also noticeable in his prose. This makes the articles, even the political ones, written in a colloquially, accessible register, that gives the impression of an oral story. The public clearly can understand the transmitted message, but not before their interest is captured as if they would be reading a story.

The surrounding world is an inexhaustible subject source. Peasant's lives inspire him and the Transylvanian village from his literary and journalistic work is the village he lived in, during so many years. He usually wrote about political matters, religious ones, but also about education. Considering that the religious subjects are his second choice, we can affirm that the fact that he was also a priest influenced the subjects he chose to write about.

It is interesting to note that, in these newspapers (as in most of the journalistic work), Ion Agârbiceanu's writing is more stylized, comparing to his literary work. There are no cacophonies, repetitions and his writing is not negligent, as is the case in most of his novels, for example. The explanation could be that the texts written for the newspaper were verified by an editor, most likely, who corrected the small leaks. The style mistakes usually have happened as a result of the fact that the author never double checked his texts. Even Nicolae Iorga said, in 1905, that "Mr. Agârbiceanu's greatest sin is clumsiness. [...] At this point, the self-criticism of this young person must be harsher."³⁵

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³⁵ *Evening Hours with Ion Agârbiceanu. Testimonies - Comments - Archive*. A book designed and composed by Mircea Zaciuc. Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1982, p. 299.

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MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF ARRESTED POLITICIANS. INTERPRETING THE LEGAL PROVISIONS, FROM THE- ORY TO PRACTICE

ANA-IULIANA ȘTEFĂNEL¹, SÎNZIANA JURĂU²

ABSTRACT. Former presidential candidate, former Minister of Tourism, a female politician with a presence and an impeccable style, Elena Udrea had a clear, well defined public image prior to her arrest on February 10th 2015. However, her public appearances and her public image shifted dramatically after her arrest. As stated in our previous article³, the current research intends to reflect upon one of the most well-known and ethically and legally challenging for the media case in Romanian politics: Elena Udrea's arrest. After verifying firstly the ethical dimension, in order to confirm or infirm the main research hypothesis that the monitored Romanian media outlets violated the ethical right to privacy of politicians, as well as their right to dignity and public image, we shift our focus on the second hypothesis regarding observance of the legal norms, and verify whether the legal provisions regarding the right to privacy and private life, as well as the right to dignity, honor, reputation and disposing of one's public image have been respected by the journalists.

Keywords: arrested politician, privacy, dignity, Romanian Civil Code

1. Legal standards applicable to the Romanian online media regarding the representation of arrested public figures

The relevant provisions regarding the right to privacy, private life and protecting the right to a public image of a person can be found in the Constitution (as fundamental rights) and, relevant for

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³ Ștefanel A., Jurau S., *Unethically reporting the case of arrested public officials. A case-study*, Studia UBB Ephemerides, LXI, 2, 2016 (p. 109-122)

the current researched case, in a dedicated section of the Civil Code. Both Constitution and Civil Code refer to international treaties Romania signed, aimed at ensuring the protection of fundamental rights. This is why we have introduced a third dimension of our research, verifying if the relevant provisions and the jurisprudence of the ECHR have been respected.

The following paragraphs are dedicated to the presentation of the legal theoretical framework and its main concepts.

1.1 The relevant Constitutional provisions

Article 26⁴, dedicated to personal and family privacy as a fundamental right, stipulates that:

“(1) The public authorities shall respect and protect the intimate, family and private life.

(2) Any natural person has the right to freely dispose of himself unless by this he infringes on the rights and freedoms of others, on public order or morals.”

We can observe that the right to the protection of intimate, family and private life refers only to some of the aspects regarding the obligation to respect the dignity and personality of man, as stipulated by the 1st article of the Constitution. The right is one of complex character, and the usage of three broad concepts - intimate life, family life, private life - challenges the authorities operating with them to specifically determine the content of each, as shaped by various contexts and cases. The right of the person to his / her own image also enters the dimensions of intimate, family and private life. The right to their image and respect for privacy are inseparable. No one can

⁴ Constitution of Romania available at http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?den=act2_2&par1=2#t2c2s0sba26 (retrieved 6.11.2017)

interfere in the intimate, family or private life of the person without his or her consent, which, of course, must be explicit and freely expressed. Public authorities must take all possible and reasonable measures to protect the intimate, family and private life of the person, and an example of these measures, provided for by commentators⁵ of the Constitution, is that of the judges that have the obligation to declare a secret hearing in proceedings where mediatizing them would affect these values without bringing any service to law or justice.

We've found of equal relevance and importance for the research the provisions of article 30 of Romania's Constitution, regarding freedom of expression. These state the following:

“(1) Freedom of expression of thoughts, opinions, or beliefs, and freedom of any creation, by words, in writing, in pictures, by sounds or other means of communication in public are inviolable.

(2) Any censorship shall be prohibited.

[...]

(6) Freedom of expression shall not be prejudicial to the dignity, honor, privacy of a person, and to the right to one's own image.

[...]

(8) Civil liability for any information or creation made public falls upon the publisher or producer, the author, the producer of the artistic performance, the owner of the copying facilities, radio or television station, under the terms laid down by law. Indictable offences of the press shall be established by law.”⁶

As another complex fundamental right, freedom of expression encompasses citizen's right to express thoughts, opinions, religious beliefs and spiritual creations of any kind in writing, images, sounds or other means of public communication. It enables citizens to fully

⁵ Muraru I., Tanasescu E., *Constitutia Romaniei. Comentariu pe articole.*, Editura CH Beck, Bucuresti, 2008, p245-257.

⁶ Constitution of Romania available at http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?den=act2_2&par1=2#t2c2s0sba26 (retrieved 6.11.2017).

participate in the political, social and cultural life, whilst respecting, however, the limits provided by the Constitution in order to prevent the abusive exercise of the right to freedom of expression and to protect similarly important values. Among these values deemed equally important are those regarding human dignity, honor, privacy and self and public image.

Restrictions from freely exercising fundamental rights have to fulfill the conditions stipulated by article 53⁷ of the Constitution, namely to be expressly prescribed by law, necessary for the protection of political, economic, social, human values, and proportionate to the situation that caused the measure, applied without discrimination, and without infringing on the existence of the right or freedom. Paragraph 8 of article 30 of the Constitution introduces two forms of liability, namely civil liability and criminal liability. Although after a lengthy legal debate that involved decriminalization, there currently is no general offence stipulated in the Penal Code for calumny, slander or libel, the protection of dignity, honor, privacy and self-image and public image is afforded by a dedicated chapter of the Civil Code. We will briefly present the provisions that we consider relevant for our researched case in the following paragraphs.

1.2 The relevant articles of the Civil Code

The third section of the chapter titled „Respect for human beings and their inherent rights” is dedicated to articles aimed at ensuring „Respect for the privacy and dignity of the individual” .

Article 70 (1) of the Civil Code states that “everyone has the right to freedom of expression” and in paragraph 2 reference is made to the limits of this right as presented by the provisions of article 75. Article 75 stipulates that “the exercise of the Constitutional rights and freedoms in good faith and in compliance with the international

⁷ *Ibidem.*

covenants and conventions to which Romania is a party shall not constitute a violation of the rights provided for in this section”. Specialists noted early on the fact that the notion of “good faith” is not defined in the legislation, however „in the legal literature, it is regarded as a group of elements, namely the right intention, diligence, lyceum and abstention from causing prejudice to others, elements that are a consequence of the transfer a group of psychological facts that make up honesty (loyalty, prudence, order and temperance) in the sphere of law”⁸.

Taking into consideration the suggested synonyms and dimensions of the notion of good-faith, we believe that it’s worthwhile to ponder, hypothetically, on the case of journalists overwhelmed by a high „publication quota per day”, that is, in all honesty, publishing the information obtained from one source of information, without having the time to prudently invest into further investigation of the information obtained. The good-faith, honesty and prudence of the journalists face daily inherent challenges, however the burden of proof for the absence of good-faith when it comes to the journalistic endeavours, lies with the plaintiff. A recommended standard would be verifying if the published material is of public interest, or simply aims at feeding the public’s curiosity on a topic.

Upon careful analysis of articles 70 and 75 of the Civil Code, we can conclude that “the restrictions that may be imposed on the fundamental right to freedom of expression have a dual role: protecting the personality rights and protecting society’s public interest.”⁹.

Article 71 of the Civil Code stipulates the right to privacy. Specifically, it emphasizes that “every person has the right to respect of her private life”, but also that “no one may be subjected to any interference in the intimate, personal or family life” (paragraph 2). Paragraph 3 of the same article specifies that “it is forbidden to use (...)

⁸ D. Gherasim, *Buna-credință în raporturile juridice civile*, Ed. Academiei, București, 1981, p. 34-35/

⁹ Almășan A. *et al.* (2014). *Noul Cod civil: comentariu pe articole*. București: Editura C.H. Beck, p. 75-86.

information regarding a person's private life without his consent or without complying with the limits set out in Art. 75", which we briefly introduced earlier. Potential interferences, hence, include the use of information regarding a person's private life and the use in any way of correspondence, manuscripts or other personal documents. Exceptions, that are not considered interferences, are the case of explicit consent, when the journalist introduced himself as such, or in the cases which intrusions into a person's privacy are permitted by law or by international treaties, due to the relevance and importance of the information obtained, that serves the public interest.

When defining private life, authors commenting on the provisions of the Civil Code suggested that the notion „is determined by opposition to public life and the public side of professional life. It includes family and marital life, home life, home alone, health, intimate and loving or sentimental life, friendship, leisure, the private aspect of work, the way and the place of funeral.”¹⁰ Some authors conclude that “the right to privacy allows the person to be the master of a secret, intimate „territory”, sheltered from indiscretion”.

However, as it is aimed to protect values that are inherently influenced by a persons' lifestyle, the right to privacy varies significantly from one person to another. The limits of privacy for politicians, for example, are defined by a different standard, as it was stated that it should be limited by either their personal choice, or by the existence of a public interest regarding their private life. A relevant standard was given in the decision *Brugemann et Schueten c. Allemagne* by the idea that if the individual himself puts into contact his private life with the his public life, he should expect reasonable intrusions and limitations of his free exercise of the right to privacy and private life¹¹.

¹⁰ *Idem*, p. 77.

¹¹ *Comis. EDH*, 12 iulie 1977, nr. 6959/1975, *Brugemann et Schueten c. Allemagne*, apud de C. Bîrsan, *Convenția europeană a drepturilor omului. Comentariu pe articole*, Editura CH BECK, Bucuresti, 2010, p. 604.

Article 72 states that “every person has the right to respect for his dignity” (paragraph 1) and that “any harm to the honor and reputation of a person is forbidden without respecting the limits set out in art. 75 “. We underline here the terms “honor” and “reputation” because any person who intends to publish information needs to ensure that that information does not affect honor and / or reputation in any way. Since the notion of „dignity” is not defined by law, we refer to its two components, namely the notions of “honor” and “reputation” as defined and clarified with the aid of the general dictionary. Thus, “honor” has the meaning of respect for the individual and “reputation” has the significance of the respect / appreciation of the community towards that person”¹². Similarly to the case of justifiable intrusions into a persons’ private life, the free exercise of the right to dignity can justifiably be limited in practice in two situations: if the person who’s right is limited or violated agrees, or if the limit or the violating is in conformity to the provisions of the international treaties or with international jurisprudence. These include, in the case of the ECHR, details that can be considered shocking or offensive, even for the general public, as long as they are provided in good faith in order to serve the public interest.

1.3 The interaction between article 8 and article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights

We have decided to introduce this third level of our analysis, and to refer to the international legislation because both the Constitutional provisions and the Civil Code provisions refer to the international treaties that Romania has signed. On one hand, the Constitution introduces them, and subsequently their jurisprudence, as being part of the internal law, and in situations in which they provide for a

¹² Almășan A. *et al.* (2014). *Noul Cod civil: comentariu pe articole*. București: Editura C.H. Beck, p. 75-86.

better enjoyment of a fundamental right, directly complementing the Constitutional provision. On the other hand, Article 75 of the Civil Code introduces, as potential limitations of the enjoyment of the right provided for under the section dedicated to Respect for the privacy and dignity of the individual, limitations that might arise from the exercise, in good faith, of the rights provided by the international conventions and treaties Romania has signed. The effect of these provisions is introducing to Romania's legislation various international treaties, and, in particular for the case that we intend to study, the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and its subsequent jurisprudence. We will therefore take a brief look into articles 8 and 10 of the Convention, and their interaction.

Freedom of expression is stipulated as a fundamental human right, under article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Article 10 states that

“1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.

2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.”

The right to respect for private and family life is stipulated by the provisions of art. 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, that state that

“1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.”

Exemptions and limitations of the exercise of this right are identical to the ones provided in the second paragraph of art 10. This text is inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹³, specifically article 12 of the Declaration that states that “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference in his personal life, in his family, at his home or in his correspondence, or at the touched upon honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to law protection against such interference or touch. “.

In order to properly understand the notions that are defining the object of protection of the article we have to analyze them separately, but, in short, it has been stated by authors that article 8 of the ECHR “generally guarantees the right to be left alone in all respects”¹⁴. It should also be noted that article 8 “offers protection only to private life, to the exclusion of public life”¹⁵. Personal privacy does not have an exact definition, but it can include the “right of a person to physical integrity” in situations in which it does not amount to the minimal degree of harm necessary for it to be protected by other articles of the Convention. Article 8 is applicable also in the case of the persons under surveillance. The physical aspect of a person is also matter of private life, as authors have pointed “while the appearance of a person is an aspect of his personality, the publication of photographs representing him constitutes a violation of his right to private life.”¹⁶.

Taking a closer look into the more recent jurisprudence of the ECHR, whilst keeping in mind the landmark decisions in the two cases *Von Hannover vs Germany* and *Sciacca vs. Italy*, we note that

¹³ Chiriță, R. (2008). *Convenția europeană a drepturilor omului. Comentarii și explicații ediția 2*. București: Editura C.H. Beck, p. 255.

¹⁴ *Idem*, p. 257.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ Chiriță, R. (2008). *Convenția europeană a drepturilor omului Comentarii și explicații ediția 2*. București: Editura C.H. Beck, p. 259.

probably the closest situation similar to the researched case is the case of *Popovi vs. Bulgaria*. In this case the arrest of a former secretary general of the Ministry of Finance's that was filmed and released to the press resulted in multiple violations of the European Convention on Human Rights, including, most importantly for this study, article 8. "The Court found that the arrest had been filmed and the recording released without Mr Popov's agreement and that this had amounted to an interference with the latter's right to his own image, which was an integral part of the concept of private life"¹⁷.

Researched case: Elena Udrea's arrest

Research method

As stated in our previous article¹⁸, the current research intends to reflect upon one of the most well-known and ethically and legally challenging for the media case in Romanian politics: Elena Udrea's arrest. After verifying firstly the ethical dimension, in order to confirm or infirm the main research hypothesis that the monitored Romanian media outlets violated the ethical right to privacy of politicians, as well as their right to dignity and public image, we shift our focus on the second hypothesis regarding observance of the legal norms.

We have structured the analysis based on the chosen form of expression and analyzed written articles as well as accompanying photographs or attached photo-galleries, in order to verify if, through their editorial decisions, the monitored media outlets disregarded the legal provisions regarding intrusion into privacy and the legal norms protecting a person's right to dignity, honor and reputation.

The investigated hypotheses are the following:

¹⁷ *Popovi vs Bulgaria*, application no. 39651/11, available at

<http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-163441>, retrieved november 2017.

¹⁸ Ștefanel A., Jurau S., *Unethically reporting the case of arrested public officials. A case-study*, Studia UBB Ephemerides, LXI, 2, 2016 (p. 109-122).

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF ARRESTED POLITICIANS.
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1. Monitored media published photos and articles that could amount to a violation of the fundamental rights
2. Monitored media published photos and articles that could amount to a violation of the provisions of the Civil Code
3. Monitored media published photos and articles that could amount to a violation of the provisions of the articles 8 and 10 of ECHR

Research design

The chosen research method that was used was the content analysis, performed on three online publications *libertatea.ro*, *gsp.ro* and *mediafax.ro*, representative for three types of online media: tabloid, niche and mainstream. The monitoring period starts on 25th February 2015, the date of Elena Udrea's arrest and ends on the 7th of May 2015, the date when she was released from custody. During this period, the politician was investigated in three separate cases.

The research will focus strictly on the written and photographic content regarding Elena Udrea's situation that was published by the three monitored publications in the same days, within the above-mentioned monitored period.

After an initial assessment of the three online publications, we've reached the conclusion that the number of articles published surpasses several hundreds, with some media outlets choosing to publish as many as 20 articles per day. Observing repetitive content, we chose the selection criteria of concomitance as a logical one, assuming either all publications reported the same event, or at least covered a similar situation, in a competitive online environment.

The final sample-size, determined based on the criteria previously explained, comprised 78 articles and their accompanying photo-galleries. We've decided that the research methods that served best our research goals were a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods, namely content-analysis and observation.

Results of the research

We've included in our sample-size a total of 73 published texts: 12 by the website *gsp.ro*, 41 by the website *libertatea.ro* and 20 by *mediafax.ro*. The 78 initial articles included 136 photographs, some of them grouped in photo-galleries. 101 photographs were published by the website *libertatea.ro*, 12 by *gsp.ro* and 23 by *mediafax.ro*.

The explanation for the disproportionately high number of photos published by *libertatea.ro* is that the online yellow paper usually includes a picture-gallery with every article, gallery that includes as many as 15 photographs. In this particular case, the gallery that was published repeatedly was that of Elena Udrea's release from arrest. We've chosen to count the pictures, in our quantitative analysis, or as many times as they were published, even if they were repetitive. The reasoning behind was that, for non-visual or less-visual persons, it is the repetition of the visual information that will form the lasting memory, amounting thus, to the infringement of private life, privacy and dignity, and ultimately damaging the politician's public figure.

Regarding the articles published, we have noticed, as initially thought given the publications we chose to monitor, major differences. *Mediafax.ro* has published in principle very long, very explicit articles containing many updates. *Libertatea.ro* wrote several short texts, and *gsp.ro* varies, depending on the subject matter.

Due to the fact that we chose to analyze articles that appeared on the same day in all three publications and to see how each one reported on the events of the day regarding Elena Udrea, we have found that all three have emphasized the facts and these have been clearly and correctly reported. However, *libertatea.ro* was the only one of the three who also published articles that did not respond to the criteria of providing with public interest information, but, on the contrary, presented elements of Elena Udrea's private life.

The analysis of the photographs and texts, based on the above-mentioned indicators, as included in their respective legal texts, revealed the following:

1: Regarding the respect afforded to the constitutional provisions:

In the first part of the article we've presented the constitutional provisions regarding the right to the protection of intimate, family and private life (article 26), as well as the fact that freedom of expression shall not be prejudicial to the dignity, honor, privacy of a person, and to the right to one's own image (article 30, ph. 6). Public authorities are held to a standard of caution regarding any potential violation of the individual's right to privacy and private life, as well as right to a public image. A similar standard should be adopted by media outlets that seek to respect the provisions of art. 30 regarding freedom of speech, as these institutions ought to use the golden standard of responding, with the information they provide with, to public's interest, rather than public's curiosity.

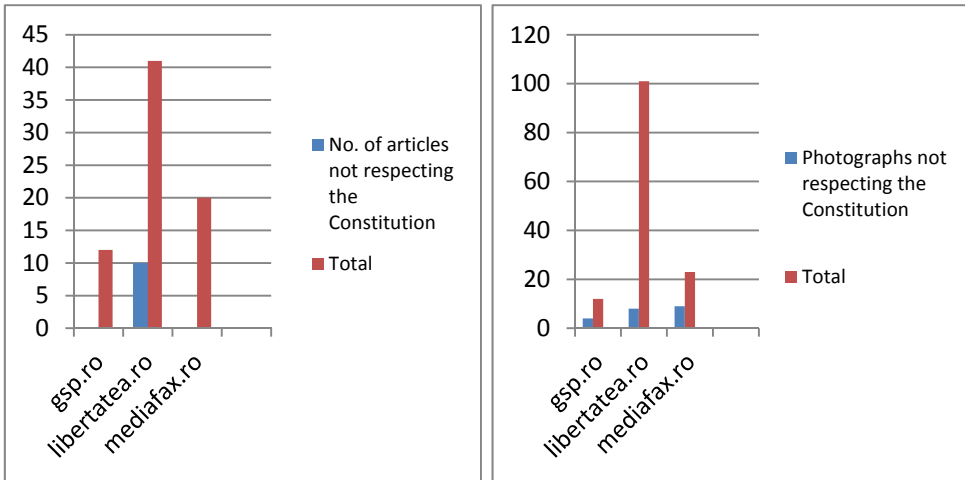
In our monitored case, the maximum caution that could have been shown by the public institutions would have translated into efforts to diminish the hype created in the media by the politician's arrest and court-hearings in various trials. The press, however, flooded all areas accessible to the public, in almost every relevant (and irrelevant) moment. The authorities, therefore, left it to the press to find what they considered to be balanced reporting in what was one of Romania's most important corruption trials to date. In a situation in which the educational role of justice, as well as, unfortunately, society's need for retribution, cannot be properly served without the aid of the mass-media, properly fulfilling its functions of providing with accurate and relevant information of public interest, it was important to see the two actors balancing each other. Thus, pictures that portray, for example, the politician wearing handcuffs, or pictures aimed at deconstructing her previous polished image, amount to an unnecessary violation of the politician's right to a public image and dignity.

Although the politician never took an official public stand, among the monitored articles we have found an answer regarding her opinion on her public image after being released from custody. “Asked by Ion Cristoiu if she agrees with the picture taken on the screen, an older image, Elena Udrea reacted: “Any picture is better than what was seen at the exit from Târgșor. The arrest of any kind, the lack of minimal conditions, changes you very much, including physically.”¹⁹

The table below offers the surprising outcome of the analysis of the published photographs, in a situation in which mediafax.ro leads in our analysis with the greatest number of published images that were not respecting legal provisions of the art 30 of the Constitution, out of the total of images published.

Table 1: Published articles and photographs that do not respect the right to a public image as a limit to freedom of expression, as stipulated by art. 30 (6) of the Constitution

Publication	No. of articles	No. of photographs
gsp.ro	-	4
libertatea.ro	10	8
mediafax.ro	-	9



¹⁹ Quote retrieved on 12th april 2016 from gsp.ro: <http://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/elena-udrea-reactie-neasteptata-dupa-ce-a-fost-criticata-pentru-imaginea-ravasita-de-la-iesirea-din-inchisoare-1146405>

The analysis of the articles published by Libertatea revealed that 10 out of the total of 41 texts published violated article 30 of the Romanian Constitution, having a significant potential to damaged the dignity, honor, the private life of the person and to violated the right to public image. These texts mainly focused on Elena Udrea's hairstyle when she was leaving the penitentiary, the "untidy" skin according to libertatea.ro, or the intimate objects she used or not. For example, in such a text the public was provided with information regarding the toilet in Elena Udrea's cell. Article 30 of the Romanian Constitution makes it very clear that "freedom of speech can not prejudice the dignity, honor, private life of a person, or the right to one's own image.". Publishing texts focusing on the analysis of clothing, skin, hair, or physical appearance is violating several fundamental rights, including the right to a public image and to dignity and privacy. Even if she was a notorious public figure in Romanian politic, there are limits to freedom of expression in this respect as well.

With a completely different approach, gsp.ro and mediafax.ro did not publish texts that would amount to a violation of article 30. The articles published by these two online publications refer strictly to events of public interest, such as the official accusations, the nature and content of the offenses Elena Udrea was accused of committing, the potential sentence and various similar topics.

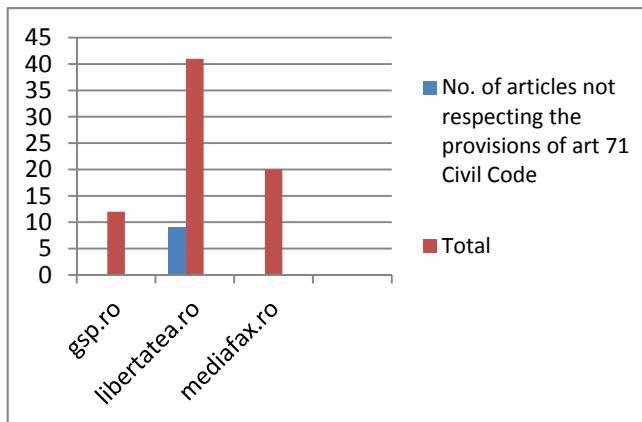
2: Regarding the respect afforded to the provisions of the Civil Code:

Upon an initial verification, we have decided to conduct only a text analysis regarding the respect afforded to article 71 of the Civil Code, and to compliment it with a full analysis (both text and images attached) regarding the respect afforded to article 72. The reason for this choice was that it is difficult to argue that, when in public, or when permitted to photograph, the photographers could be accused of committing an intrusion into privacy. We have considered however the text analysis an appropriate and needed one, due to journalists' choice of topics.

Thus, we have found that Libertatea.ro violated the provisions of article 71 of the Civil Code through their choice to publish certain texts including references to Elena Udrea’s intimate life aspects . Of the total of 41 texts, we found 9 that did not comply with the provisions of article 71 and interfered with Elena Udrea’s private life. Even though private life does not have the same limits for a politician as for a regular citizen who does not hold a public office, we believe that there was no justification or public interest to dedicate texts to the subject matter of physical appearance, clothes, hairstyle, skin and skin-care routines, tampons, bras, speculations of potential mental state and mental health issues that were not brought up on trial, showers and toilet facilities, speculations regarding insomnia due to the lighting conditions in the penitentiary, lists of goods received from home and about her other personal belongings and other aspects that were strictly related to the person Elena Udrea, rather than the accused politician or public figure.

Table 2: Published articles that do not respect the provisions of art 71 Civil Code

Publication	No. of articles
gsp.ro	-
libertatea.ro	9
mediafax.ro	-



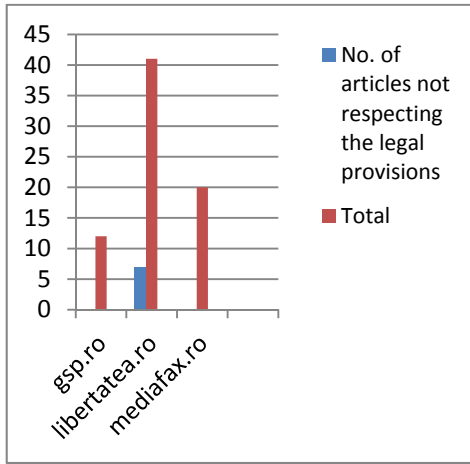
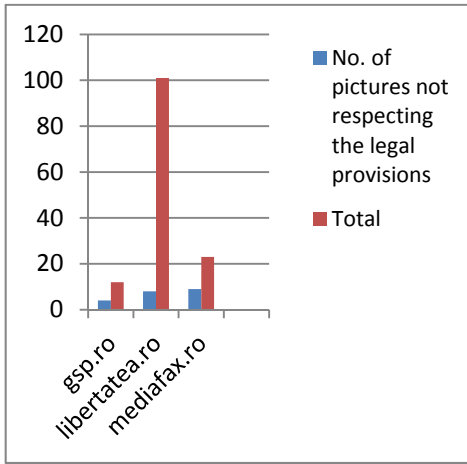
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Article 72 of the Civil Code states that “every individual has the right to respect for his dignity” (paragraph 1) and that „prejudice or harm to the honor and reputation of a person is forbidden, without respecting the limits provided by art. 75 “. The journalists must exercise good faith while reporting on aspects that have the potential to harm a person’s dignity and reputation. The extent of the requirement to exercise good faith is disputable, taking into consideration the fact that, in theory, the moments when Elena Udrea came out of prison or was transported for statements in front of court were public, considered a matter of public interest, and the journalists could argue that she should have expected to be photographed or filmed. Although fully aware of the journalistic standard, and the journalists’ duty to report reality as it is presented, we have marked in our analysis as photos that do not respect the provisions of art. 72 the images that present Elena Udrea with handcuffs, her eyes closed and her hair hurled at the exit from the penitentiary. We have also included in this category the pictures that are aimed at showing her resembling with various film characters or others alike. The reason for which we have decided to do so is that framing a picture to include or to exclude the handcuffs or to have a person with eyes closed, to aim at picturing a person „from the wrong angle” represent choices a photo-journalist makes, if not completely aware at the moment when the picture is taken, while being included in a mass of other journalists battling for the same image, back in the newsroom, when he chooses the pictures to present to the editor. Responsibility is shared, but there is undeniably a responsibility and subsequently an exercise of good, or bad faith, that can be objectively observed.

In the table below we note that again mediafax.ro has the most photographs that have damaged the honor and the reputation of Elena Udrea according to article 72 of the New Civil Code when reported to the total of photographs published, followed closely by libertatea.ro.

Table 3: Published articles and photographs that do not respect the provisions of art 72 Civil Code

Publication	No. of photographs that do not respect the provisions of art. 72 Civil Code	No. of articles that do not respect the provisions of art. 72 Civil Code
gsp.ro	4	-
libertatea.ro	8	7
mediafax.ro	9	-



We have proceeded to analyze the texts published, in order to assess if any of them had the potential to harm the honor and the reputation of Elena Udrea, hence having the potential to violate article 72 of the New Civil Code.

For a better understanding of how this article was violated, we recall that honor refers to a person’s respect for himself and reputation is the respect that other people have towards the respective person. Thus, when a woman who has always been impeccable throughout her public appearances, is the subject of articles that criticize in detail the way she looks, it is clear that her reputation was harmed. Considering her statements that hinted that she was ashamed of her physical aspect when existing Targsor jail, it is clear that the comments, along with the excessive focus on her physical

appearance harmed her sense of honor and self-respect on that matter. The information made public by Libertatea in the 7 articles that we considered to violate article 72 of the Civil Code are information that do not serve a public interest and are of no value for the general public. They merely serve to degrade a carefully constructed public image. The exception of providing with information that has the potential to shock or offend is applicable only to the cases in which such a shock or offense contributes to a debate that would be of public interest, or actually provides with information of public interest, which wasn't the case of the observed 7 articles.

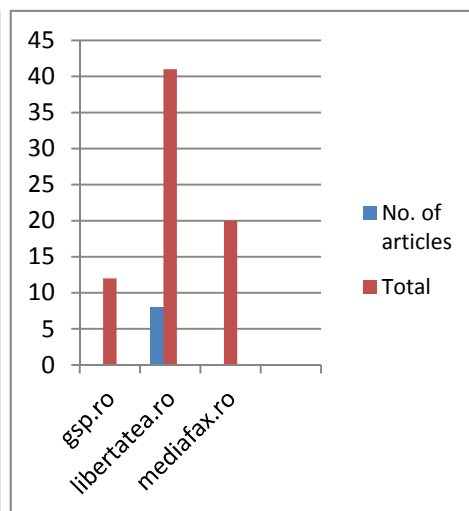
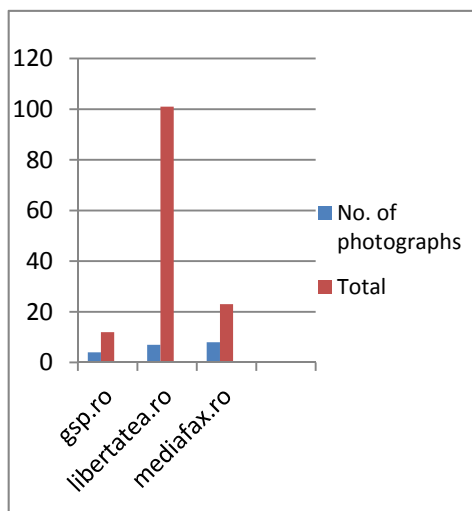
3: Regarding the respect afforded to the provisions of article 8 ECHR

In the table below, we counted the number of photos in each publication that violated the right to privacy as outlined in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. We recall the most relevant aspects of article 8, namely that “every person has the right to respect for his private and family life”, and that when the appearance of a person is an aspect of his personality, the publication of photographs representing her constitutes a violation of his right to private life. Thus, after analyzing all the photos in the three publications, we found that the 19 photos marked in the table violated this right.

Although the high number of times in which mediafax.ro published photographs that had a potentially harming effect, and would arguably breach article 8 surprised us, the result obtained when analysing the published articles did not. Libertatea.ro is leading by publishing information regarding the content of the packages Elena Udrea received from her mother during her arrest, and also running articles on details about “what happens to Elena Udrea’s tampons in jail” alongside with details and comments regarding other intimate issues. We enlist, below, the publications and the results, for a comparative perspective.

Table 4: Published articles and photographs that do not respect the provisions of art 8 ECHR

Publication	No. of photographs	No. of articles
gsp.ro	4	-
libertatea.ro	7	8
mediafax.ro	8	-



Conclusions and limits of the current study

As initially stated the current research intended to reflect upon the legally challenging case of Elena Udrea’s arrest, from the standpoint of mass-medias’ duty to observe the relevant legal norms. We have used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to study articles and photographs of 3 online publications, in order to confirm or infirm the following hypothesis:

1. Monitored media published photos and articles that could amount to a violation of the fundamental rights
2. Monitored media published photos and articles that could amount to a violation of the provisions of the Civil Code

3. Monitored media published photos and articles that could amount to a violation of the provisions of the articles 8 and 10 of ECHR

All hypotheses were confirmed, in various degrees that we've considered significant enough for a validation. However, while performing especially the qualitative research, we realized that, probably more valuable than the validation or the invalidation in absolute terms of our initial hypotheses are our doubts regarding the correct qualification of one article or imagine, in one of the two categories (respecting or not the legal provisions). We, the authors, are a team of a journalist and a lawyer, and we could easily see and argue, in relative terms, as well as in absolute terms. With a situation in which almost all legal texts lack definitions and use broad terms, along with providing with potential exemptions from application, one of our best guidelines, especially when discussing good faith reporting, turned out to be not the legal text itself, but the answer to the questions

“Does it serve the public interest?” and

“Is the potential harming impact of this information mitigated by serving correctly the public interest?”

Two important questions to be considered in future similar cases, as vectors of decision, but also to be considered in any potential lawsuits.

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CODE-SWITCHING IN THE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION OF THE ROMANIAN USERS OF FACEBOOK

ANDREI STIPIUC¹

ABSTRACT. Code-switching is a sociolinguistic phenomenon which appears frequently in the written messages (*status updates*) of the Romanian users of the most important online social platform. There is certain diversity in what concerns the foreign language used in these contributions, the switching type or the extent to which a foreign language is appropriated, depending on a series of social factors like the age, education, geographical location or marking of the affiliation to a certain linguistic community. The data gathered during many years of research tries to create categories, subtypes and strategies. These are meant to illustrate and explain, whenever possible, this sociolinguistic feature of the written communication between Romanian users speaking Romanian as their native language. This data can prove itself useful in sketching a certain language profile in asynchronous, computer mediated communication.

Keywords: Facebook, computer mediated communication (CMC), code-switching, Romanian users.

1. The studying of today's web language in computer mediated communication. Context and methodology

There is an increasingly consistent sociolinguistic concern in the study of the computer mediated communication even outside the United States, the "birth place" of sociolinguistics. This has been proven to be not only suitable to the environment (identifying of the communica-

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tion situations and language varieties, studying of online communication inside linguistic communities), but also one of the few approaches which can highlight the relevance of the data gathered from the studied texts.

As opposed to the beginning phases of studying CMC, which were focused on marking the differences between the language used on the internet and the old linguistic behavior, today the main objective is shifting towards identifying and searching certain common language features, through which the members of the global community gain a certain identity. The illustration of the degree of homogeneity of the internet as a linguistic environment still remains a shared goal, just like the illustration of the way the internet holds a collection of distinct dialects or a junction of usages and tendencies which defy classifications.

The linguistic variety used on the web is closer to written language, as opposed to the other communication instances on the internet, in the sense that its main feature is closer to oral speech than the degree of transcribing of the spoken language. Web language is identical neither to the written language nor to the spoken one; it displays characteristics of both forms, acquired through selection and adaptation. When typing by using a keyboard, users adapt their text by following the conventions of the oral or written discourse, depending on their specific needs. (Crystal 1, 2004).

Being, from its creator's point of view, a "rather social invention than a technical one", (Berners-Lee, 2001), World Wide Web is synonymous, nowadays, with its most frequent uses and popular platforms. Web is no longer only a place for studying or multimedia content consumption; it has become an interactive environment of converging daily human activities, in which language still plays an essential role in users' communication inside online communities.

In studying online communities, sociolinguistics carefully measures the degree of identity and affiliation of the members. These variables may remain purely theoretical and much more limited in online communication, as well as the systemic power of linguistic distinctive features inside the community. "Although I like the metaphor of 'global village', the internet is not, most of the times, like one. With all due respect for human interac-

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tion, the internet is rather a huge collection of distinct vicinities, in which people with common interests can share information, work together, tell stories, joke, discuss politics, play games or help each other.” (Crystal 1, 2004:59). A measurement of the linguistic identity inside online communities is provided by the degree and duration of development of an occupational dialect by the communities, dialect to which the newcomers will have to adapt.

*

The increasingly popular social networks have become the places where users post information about themselves, their interests, as well as new places for communication between entire networks of members. In the places shaped by these networks, new methods of defining an identity and maintaining the “impression management” are created, much more creatively than the old communication forms allow. (Goffman, 1967)

According to the NIS (National Institute of Statistics), almost 70% of Romanians aged between 16 and 74 years old (about 11 million users) joined the internet in 2016, 1.2 % more than the previous year. According to the latest statistics provided by ANCOM, the mobile internet access rate in the middle of 2016 was 95%, and the biggest spike is that of 4G data usage. As for broadband internet connection, it counted 14.8 million users.

In the same document compiled by Initiative Media, which measured media ratings for 2017, Romania (along other countries in the EU11 area) scored a growth in the number of new Facebook users. The document shows that 7 million Romanians access Facebook daily, and 6.2 million users access this social network via mobile devices (Media Fact Book, 2017), whereas printed publications continually decline. At the same time, Facebook is the second company in Europe after Google, managing to create approximately 5 billion virtual friendships.

Facebook is the social network with the most spectacular worldwide growth, having over 1.3 billion users across the globe. (Statista.com, 2017).

*

Studying code-switching was one of the recorded features, among other linguistic particularities, in Facebook² status updates. These status updates, no matter their nature or topic, provide information not only about users' social profile components (age, gender, intervention time, even education), but also their psychosocial state. The reasons behind the "share" are utilitarian, informational, militant and, above all, autobiographical, and the users who send the information understand it better when they repost it. It has been established that almost 80% of Facebook posts have an autobiographical content. From a linguistic perspective, there is an obvious intertextuality of the environments, a resemblance with the publishing in what concerns the idioms or phrases as a part of a repeated speech, in which there are asked questions as an interaction feature, pre-sequences which test the availability of the addressee and autobiographical writing.

The examples from the study have been gathered along many years (2012-2014; 2017). After a strict selection of the initial corpus, the examples used were the ones which show, without a doubt, the linguistic particularities of the written content produced by the Romanian users online. Aside from the published material, the corpus was compiled using texts gathered from two separate Facebook accounts, which observed weekly about 1000 unique users in total. The family names or the middle names have been censored, as to insure the authors' privacy. The examples chosen belong to Romanian users, most of them living in Romania (in Iași, Bucharest, various cities from Moldova), but also from the Republic of Moldova. A significant number of users (a small percentage of the whole, nonetheless) has left Romania for UK, Italy or France. This has been mentioned whenever necessary. About 45% of the recorded users are students (20 - 25 years old) in college (BA, MA or PhD), 30% are young, aged 25 to 30 years old, and the remaining 25% are older than 30 years old.

The present paper continues the study dedicated to code-switching in Facebook users' communication, illustrating, with new material, the texts and communication situations in which users rely to a non-native

² Andrei Stipiuc, *Cum scriem pe Facebook. Limba textelor produse de utilizarii români pe Facebook*, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași, 2016.

language. The examples belong to the users in the focus group from the initial study. Whenever possible, details concerning the intrinsic aspects of the context were given.

2. Code-switching, multilingualism, and “global Englishes” in the content generated by the Romanian users of Facebook

Multilingualism has evolved along the civil rights movements, equal rights, gender or social equality which appeared at the same time with multiculturalism, in the mid-1960s. Multiculturalism was a political movement which brought the right of maintaining the cultural heritage of the country of origin (traditions, language) to the attention of the authorities. It triggered a lot of positive changes in what concerns the rights of the minorities in countries like France or India (currently, models of forms of multiculturalism worldwide). Instead of social assimilation, multiculturalism allowed social integration based on accepting the differences – even the linguistic ones, a key element in defining group identity.

Multiculturalism’s evolution and tendencies are complex, manifesting themselves with variable competence at various levels of language. One of multiculturalism’s principles is that, at the individual level, this can manifest itself by knowing a few words in a foreign language or through a linguistic proficiency (Figure 1) (Edwards, 1994). At the same time, there are also particular linguistic competences, seen as a continuous interval, which combine listening, speaking, speaking and writing skills, at a phonetic, syntactic, lexical, semantic or stylistic level, in various forms varying from one individual to another. (Romaine, 1995). Thus, multiculturalism may manifest itself through a passive linguistic competence, meaning that an individual understands multiple languages, but cannot communicate in these languages, or through a linguistic competence in which comprehension and producing sentences are supplemented by writing talent. The example of the writer Joseph Conrad (Mesthrie, 2011:265) is often mentioned for emphasizing the way in which proficiency levels manifest themselves: Conrad was born in Poland and acquired the English language during adolescence. He spoke English fluently, but his poor pronunciation often made his message hard to get.



Fig. 1. Code-switching illustrated by using alternating codes based on the audience, in the case of multiple linguistic competences.

Another manifestation of multilingualism, which can be identified in speaking, in informal writing and in stylized linguistic performance, is code-switching, ubiquitous in the case of individuals having multiple linguistic competences. Code-switching means using linguistic elements from multiple languages in the same conversation, clause (intra-sentential) or sentences (inter-sentential), and it is not characteristic to just one age category. Characteristic to polyglot children and adolescents, as well as adults, code-switching is a communicational norm in the interactions of the individuals who know and use multiple linguistic codes. Alternating languages has stylistic functions in this case, and it emphasizes the linguistic competences and even the cultural identity of the speaker. (Figure 2).

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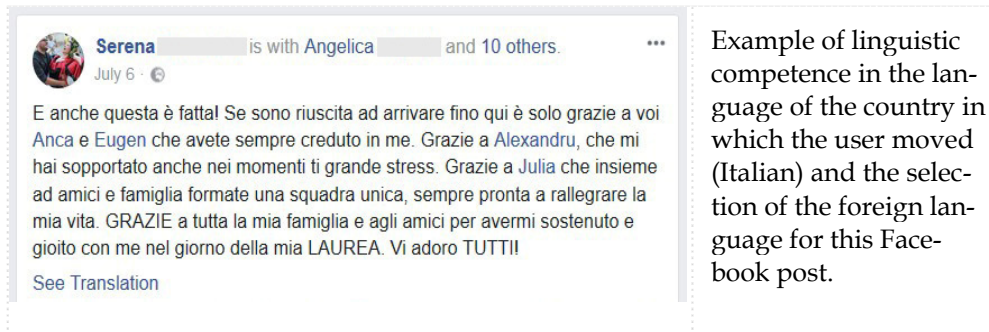


Fig. 2. Example of Italian language competence as a marking of affiliation to a new community.

When it occurs frequently in multilingual communities, language alternation is no longer seen as a mere sociolinguistic phenomenon, instead it becomes conventional, creating new identities (“spanglish”, “romgleză”) (Figure 3).

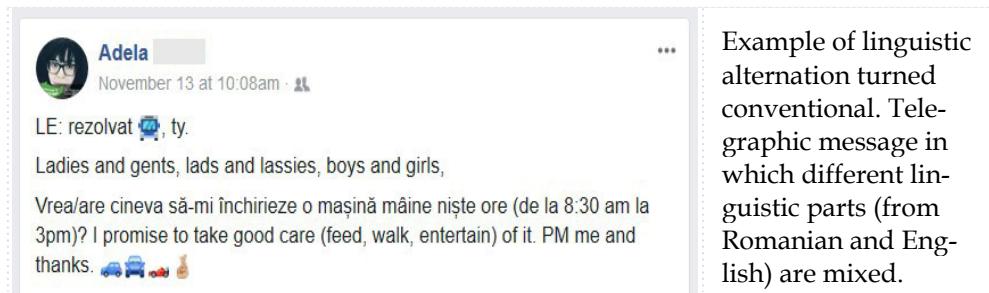


Fig. 3. Example of linguistic alternation turned conventional – “Romgleză”.

Depending on the linguistic competences of the addressees and the context, polyglots choose to use a certain language from the mastered ones, which “marks group identities and affiliations, negotiates roles and social statuses and establishes solidarity or interpersonal distance” (Mesthrie, 2011:270) (Figure 4). The choices are influenced by the surrounding environment of the speaker (family, friends, neighbors, colleagues), which may limit or enhance the possibilities of expressing in a different language, depending on how diverse it is. Also, changing the addressees could mean a change in language as well.



Fig. 4. Example of code-switching as a marking of affiliation to a new community; migrant Romanians.

No matter the manner in which they manifest themselves, code-switching meets mixed reactions, from secret admiration for these linguistic varieties seen as identity markers, to critiques accusing a deformation of the mother tongue.

Multilingualism can be societal in countries in which the linguistic diversity is accompanied by the levels of various linguistic competences the individuals have – in Tanzania or Kenya – or by itself – in Australia, the ex-British big colony – country having citizens from all around the world. However, it has been established, after a linguistic census published in 2006, that only 20% of the citizens still use one of the inherited languages (about 400 in number), while the rest show interest only for the English language. Another example is Switzerland, where speakers use one of the four national languages: French, German, Italian or Romansh.

Between these types of multilingualism, an important research topic is the issue of linguistic borrowings, in the case of the words which enter as they are in the vocabulary of a native language, when individual and societal multilingualism is relatively low. Most of the times, these lexical borrowings come from English, which is used in many national or international institutions. Borrowings from English take place as they are, in the case of the countries with an English proficiency (Figure 5). Thus, the so-called local forms of English appear, like Japanese English, which has its own lexemes.



Fig. 5. English as *lingua franca*.

2.1 Pragmatic types and grammatical types of code-switching

The issue of code-switching has been widely debated in the recent years, due to a shift in communicational focus from monolingualism to the users' ability to use multiple languages at the same time, in the same conversation. The exchanges used to happen regularly, so the researchers focused more on code-switching than on lexical borrowings or linguistic interference.

The first important aspect which appeared in the sociolinguistic sphere was when it was pointed out that studies should focus on linguistic production, not on perception. (Muysken, 2011) and that, in the case of code-switching, there is no limit of only two languages used. During a conversation – one of the many forms of communication events – there may be however many codes, not separated, whether they are dialects or languages.

Also, depending on certain criteria like the degree of multilingualism of the speaking community, the linguistic matrix, the occurrence of code-switching when the meaning of the foreign word borrowed is already found in an existing word, the quantity of the words borrowed, there is required a separation between code-switching and linguistic borrowing. At the same time, the main difference between code-switching and linguistic interference is the difference of usage in communication: code-switching is based on knowledge of the languages which are used, whereas linguistic interference means applying the knowledge about the mother tongue to a foreign language.

In language sociology, important progress has been made after defining the criteria of the “domain” in the interest zone of linguistic contact and code-switching (Fishman, 1971). The concept of domain refers to

regions depending on which language speakers plan their daily life and according to which they make their suitable linguistic choices (home, work, church, friends etc.). The distinguishing features between the situational and the metaphorical switching also had a powerful influence (Gumperz, 1972). Situational switching takes place depending on several factors not controlled by the speaker's will (like when a new speaker joins an existing conversation), and metaphorical switching is an atmosphere "diversion" created by the speaker. Based on these concepts there have been conducted consistent studies about interaction patterns in code-switching, focusing on the irregularity of the linguistic forms or the identification of the code-switching based on discourse, respectively the one based on the speaker.

There have been distinguished four types of code-switching within the pragmatics of bilingual conversations (Auer, 1999):

1. Conversational or discourse code-switching, happening separately or at the same time between language A and language B;
2. Preferential code-switching, which requires a negotiation of the linguistic choice;
3. The neutrality situation, in case there is no base language and no linguistic interference;
4. The situations based on insertion or transfer, in case there is a base language with insertions from a second language;

The study of the contact between languages led to the identification of the grammar level where these switches take place. Traditionally, switches are categorized depending on their position of occurrence:

1. Intra-clausal switch, happening in the same sentence (Figure 6);

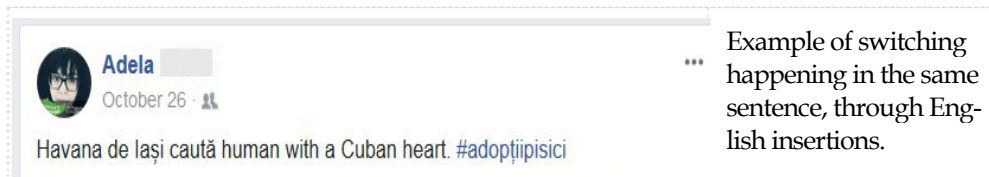


Fig. 6. Example of intra-clausal code-switching.

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2. Code-switching based on a single word – a sub-clausal sub-category, having a single switch element (Figure 7);



Fig. 7. Changing codes with a single switch element.

3. Inter-sentential code-switching, happening between two separate sentences or two coordinated sentences from the same structure. (Figure 8);



Fig. 8. Example of inter-clausal code-switching.

4. Extra-clausal, iconic code-switching, happening between a sentence and an extra-clausal element attached to it. The most common refer to using conjunctions or other discourse markers. (Figure 9);

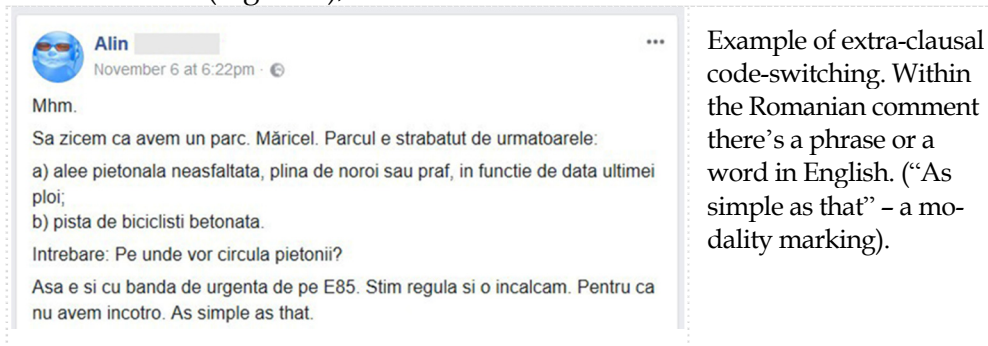


Fig. 9. Example of extra-clausal, iconic code-switching.

In the study of code-switching it is also used the principle of symmetry (Muysken, 2000), according to the amount of the linguistic material considering the quantity of base language and foreign language. When the meaning carried by the native language is not affected by the insertions of foreign material, the term “asymmetric” is used, because there is a single base language; when there occurs a change in meaning by inserting linguistic material, there is an alternation (symmetry).

2.2 Globalization and world Englishes

The last two decades of globalization required changes at the linguistic level as well, mainly because the number of English speakers increased in various countries and social contexts. Thus, sociolinguistics found new territory to explore in the dialectal differences and discourse contexts of certain world Englishes. In very many countries, English has become “a native language, a symbol of local identity, an instructional environment a cultural icon of success and Westernization, a goal which includes the promise of a better life” (Schneider, 2011:52).

From the first studies which captured the spread of this phenomenon of expansion of the English language a series of terms has been imposed, like “English World-Wide” or “World Englishes” (Bailey & Goralach, 1982; Kachru, 1992), names which besides marking the scale of the event, focus on a certain social and linguistic particularity. Still “World Englishes” can be distinguished from other terms which used to mean a certain method and study particularity, and could represent a broader, generic character in which, undoubtedly, fit all the varieties of English world-wide.

Many authors have emphasized the practical nature of acquiring linguistic competence within various cultures. The attraction of English was that globalization was taking place in English, the language of international politics and economy, media, tourism and travelling (Crystal, 2000). These ways of perpetuating English promoted it to the status of lingua franca of intercultural communication. This is also the reason why it was introduced in educational systems as the first foreign language.

English has always been favored and dominant, and it played this role ever since the technologies used in creating the internet were developed. It dominated (and still does) the majority of online and offline contexts. English is, nowadays, learned by people worldwide, more than in any other century (Graddol, 2000). It wasn't just the internet which facilitated English language's prevalence, but also the entire globalizing mechanism, consisting of political, economic and cultural forces which attributed English the role of lingua franca in worldwide affairs. People belonging to different cultures and territories have managed, through the internet, to communicate, and this could have happened only in English. The entire context nowadays encourages the continued spread of English. Overall, right now, there is the conclusion that the general tendency is to favor big languages (Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, Hindu, Russian) and English especially. Some linguists have shown that due to concentrating the resources in North America and through the economic mechanisms of the internet used nowadays, the expansion of the use of English will be encouraged (Dannet, 2007).

The globalization of English presents a huge potential for sociolinguistics, raising awareness on problems about the method and directions of research. The most conventional approach is the micro-sociolinguistic approach, which focuses the status and political role of English in any multilingual country in which the post-colonialist process of building a nation required linguistic policy and planning.

3. Conclusions and future discussions

The linguistic phenomena recorded during the Westernization of the world are always varying and it is not always in favor of the English language – the one in which all the globalizing processes begun. In most fields, the dominant linguistic form is American English, the one used by the “businessman with international aspirations” (Schneider, 2011:351), but in many non-standard fields and everyday contexts, like CMC, it is not even remotely present, being replaced by other varieties of English. The influences between English and local languages take place both

ways and, generally speaking, the influence travels faster from west to east, but the speed of expansion of the English language does not seem to be justified. Cultural and linguistic globalization means, just as much, importing values, practices and linguistic particularities from the East and shaping certain phenomena like the Bollywood film style.

Code-switching is a linguistic particularity present in online communication of the Romanian users of Facebook and it has, most of the times, stylistic purposes. As for linguistic and code-switching choice, the most important role is played by the context. In multicultural areas, lingua franca is the English language, whereas, in many other countries (like Romania), educated people or with minimal knowledge, the native language and the English language are used alternatively. In the case of the users who have left the country, resorting to linguistic codes varies according to the cultural identity of the country or countries (Figure 10).



Fig. 10. Examples of code-switching based on alternating languages (Italian, English).

Among the immigrants, the new language is used to fit in and maintain social and interpersonal connections with the new acquaintances. If this is natural, the use of the native language with compatriots is interpreted as a sign of cultural alienation (Fialkova, 2005).

Correlating the results of the analysis of the code-switching with the other linguistic particularities of online language, it remains to be seen if in Romania we will be able to speak, just like it is already done in Ukraine, a native language variety present on blogs, forums and other

online platforms (“padronkavskiy zhargon”), variety in which words are written phonetically and it is used to express discontent or disagreement with the content posted online or other users.

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