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Discursive practices
in politics and the media

Mălina CIOCEA*

Negotiation of Identity in Transnational Contexts. The Case of Romanian Temporary Workers in Italy

Abstract

This paper¹ looks at migrants' negotiation of identity in transnational contexts. Intra-EU migration has brought about changes in the nature and significance of citizenship, social relations and symbolic ties in communities. The transnational interconnectivity between homeland communities and the diaspora poses a challenge to discourses of national belonging. Under current deterritorialized experiences and technological advances, the simultaneous incorporation of migrants within and across national entities sees the advent of plural representations of identity and national societies. In our analysis of interviews carried with Romanians working in Italy we started from the assumption that temporary workforce migration is a specific type of transnational context, which generates new cultural practices and requires migrants to define ways of belonging towards the host and home countries and to negotiate identitarian attributes. Our hypothesis is that in this transnational context the migrants do not employ attributes of essentialist identity in routine discourses about themselves, but rather strategically mobilize these attributes in order to justify the dynamics of belonging to home or host countries.

Keywords: transnational social spaces; methodological transnationalism; Romanian migrants; identity; belonging.

Introduction

The diaspora, as a particular form of collective life in a transnational context, is the locus of many discourses on the significance of the homeland, identity, citizenship and ethical deliberation on good governance and society, in general. The existence of migrants forces the national state to permanently revise its hegemonic constructions of national identity. There is much negotiation of social meaning in diasporic communities, mainly because migrants have to navigate multiple allegiances towards different political systems, societies and claims on their identity.

Among the paradoxes of the diaspora is the permanent quest for the homeland, while actively engaging in the construction of transnational social fields. "Home" is unattainable, be-

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cause migrants' present lives have been allowed by this distancing. The spatial constraints "act as dialectical determinants of a moral imagination" (Quayson & Daswani, 2013, p. 18). The alienation and feeling of loss that ensue can sometimes encourage active, deterritorialized nationalism and convergence of political commitments, despite the variety of attachments to the idea of nation or, for that matter, the discontinuity and heterogeneity of diasporic experience.

The dynamics of this negotiable version of belonging depends on the relationship with both the home and host country and on the ties with the community back home or with other members of the diaspora. Recent research shows that in Romania "the topic of new migration is strategically used in the public space, determining the adoption of positions, agendas and forms of institutionalisation" (Beciu, 2013, p. 41). "The instrumentalization of the migration problem and its actors through essentialist mechanisms of inclusion" (Beciu & Lazar, 2015, p. 39) is in fact one of the staples of media discourse on labour migration in the EU.

In this context, we will investigate the dynamics of identity negotiation in a particular group, temporary workers in Italy. In our analysis of interviews carried with Romanians working in Italy we started from the assumption that temporary workforce migration is a specific type of transnational context, which generates new cultural practices and requires migrants to define ways of belonging towards the host and home countries and to negotiate identitarian attributes.

Literature review

Intra-EU migration has brought about changes in the nature and significance of citizenship, social relations and symbolic ties in communities. Early studies on migration focused on migrants' social dynamics in host countries, with analysts developing various conceptual frameworks to explain migrants' new status as either incorporation, assimilation, hybridization or multiculturalism (Alexander, 2006; Kivisto, 2005). Free circulation among EU borders, together with easy access to communication means and transportation systems, created new forms of overlapping identities, which challenged essentialist visions on bounded ethnic identities and national allegiances, highlighting the reality of transnational social spaces.

This new reality required a new theoretical framework which could account for the new social relations and new society emerging from cross-border encounters. The embedded assumptions of methodological nationalism were that nation-states are the relevant unit of analysis for social practices (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002), which was true in the 19th and 20th century, when social sciences became established as a field of study (Levitt & Khagram, 2008). "Methodological nationalism is the naturalization of the nation-state by the social sciences" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2008, p. 104), because what is essentially a political/geographic limitation (the boundaries of the nation-state) is taken as the natural unit of analysis. In this respect, "diasporas are emblems of transnationalism because they embody the question of borders, which is at the heart of any adequate definition of the Others of the nation-state" (Tölölyan, 2008, p. 233). Conceptual categories such as race, ethnicity, nation are hegemonic constructions reflective of relations of culture and power and structurally pertaining to nation-building processes; migrants challenge these hegemonic categories, which need to accommodate migrants' identity and practices: "transmigrants of all classes live a complex existence that forces them to confront, draw upon, and rework different hegemonic construc-

tions of identity developed in their home or new nation-state(s)” (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc, 2008, p. 269).

These assumptions were challenged by methodological transnationalism (Khagram & Levitt, 2008), which addresses unhomogeneous, global political communities and multiple social relations in their complexity. The transnational optic (Faist, 1998; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002) looks beyond the nation-state, the traditional place of inquiry, toward the actual dynamic of social life, to see “when and how immigrants have managed to remain connected to and involved in their homelands” (Kivisto & Faist, 2010, p. 159). Early studies on transnationalism found that transmigrants not only move freely across borders, but connect host and home countries through “multi-stranded social relations” (Basch et al., 2008, p. 263). These cross-border relationships are the rule, rather than the exception; “migrants are often embedded in multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2008, p. 284).

Opening up the analytical perspective to a global scale has forced methodological transnationalism to renounce attempts to establish the primacy of one global context over another, or even over national ties (Nieswand, 2011, p. 36). It has also acknowledged the reality of fluid identities – in contrast with both assimilation and cultural pluralism, which share a rather essentialist view of identity, in that they see it as immutable.

The transnational interconnectivity between homeland communities and the diaspora poses a challenge to discourses of national belonging. Previous analytical frameworks saw members of the diaspora bound together by territorial restrictions and a shared memory of the homeland. Under current deterritorialized experiences and technological advances, the simultaneous incorporation of migrants within and across national entities sees the advent of plural representations of identity and national societies. This simultaneous incorporation of migrants in global/local/national entities at different times can be activated by various factors and events and this heterogeneity (and unpredictability) of identity requires some innovation in the methodological tools.

The transnational optic moves the analytical focus from the cultural consequences of transnationalism (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 1996) to migrants’ social relations. “Advocates for a transnational perspective argue that we ought not confine our subject matter to the boundaries of nation states, but instead consider the impacts of immigration on transnational social spaces that penetrate into two or more nation-states” (Kivisto & Faist, 2010, p. 8). The transnational lens reveals social processes and institutions that could not be visible under “the nation-state container theory of society” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2008, pp. 284-286).

A transnational perspective on migration encourages several types of analyses (Levitt & Khagram, 2008, p. 11): analyzing one transnational form or process across space or time, various transnational activities (such as migration networks), interactions among forms of transnationalism, comparisons between transnational and bounded phenomena and the way they interact or compete with each other, as well as the circulation of ideas, symbols and material culture through networked social fields.

In a special issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Portes et al. (1999) delimited the unit of analysis of transnationalism: the individuals and their support networks (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 2008, p. 277), in contrast with earlier studies on migration, which focused on either migrant community dynamics or governmental actions to integrate migrants. They also warned of the danger of assimilating all cross-border activities to transnationalism: to qualify, they need to have reached critical mass through high intensity of exchanges and complexity and

to be stable in time. Only migrants with higher levels of social capital can develop enduring transnational ties. Portes et al. also question the transmission of transnational ties to second generation migrants and conclude by treating transnationalism as one possible outcome of the new context of migration. In this respect, assimilation and transnationalism can be simultaneous, for instance (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004).

Faist (2000) broadens the scope of the new conceptual framework by placing it in a tradition of thought. Transnationalism overlaps with the world systems theory (following the relations of power between the center and periphery) and globalization studies (focusing on the effects of deterritorialization). Early transnationalist studies used the term “social fields” in the tradition of Bourdieu and the Manchester School. Levitt and Glick Schiller define the social field as “a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized and transformed” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2008, p. 286). Social fields contain institutions, organisations and experiences “that generate categories of identity that are ascribed to or chosen by individuals or groups” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2008, p. 287). People in transnational social fields are exposed to various layers of power that force a positioning towards identity.

Faist coins a new term, “transnational social space”, which involves the circulation of ideas, symbols and material culture in the context of migration, and the social life, values and meanings that are born from a transnational context. Unlike Portes et al., in his analyses Faist includes transnational communities that share an ethnic collective identity, developing in a space that unites two or more nation states. Among transnational social spaces he includes kinship groups as well, to account for various remittances, and transnational circuits, around which various economic ties are structured. Consequently, the analyst can follow the migrant’s involvement with various civic and governmental institutions in both host and home countries. Other relevant transnational practices are transnational entrepreneurship and political/social activism.

Some analyses, however, find that there is “continuing centrality of nation-states in regulating and policing migration and perceptions of migrant populations” (Werbner, 2013, p. 120); moreover, “the dismissal of the nation-state by transnational theorists as an instance of methodological nationalism is ironically denied by migrants themselves” (Werbner, 2013, p. 109). Migrants frame their experience with nation-states in terms of visa regulations, work permits, rights and benefits, status and citizenship. In this circumstance, it is valid to ask whether migrant experiences are illustrative of rupture, rather than simultaneity, and of simultaneous attachment to two or more countries, rather than cosmopolitan engagement with a transnational social field. For instance, social remittances in the home country could then be taken as an instance of cosmopolitanization, rather than progress of migrants’ social capital. The analyst should then focus on rupture and transnational networking with a holistic understanding of migrants’ sociality: “the social universe of transnationalism is neither binary nor fixed at the moment of migration; on the contrary, it is expansive and incorporative, enabling new moral relationships in and across space as transnational migrants root themselves ontologically and experientially in their places of settlement – but without abandoning home” (Werbner, 2013, p. 120).

In this respect, Beck and Levy warned against cosmopolitanism as the analytical idiom opposed to methodological nationalism, because it is a normative concept, rather than an analytical tool, and can at best replace an essentialized notion of nationalism with a universal version of belonging (Beck & Levy, 2013). While social scientists agree on the constructed

nature of nationalism, they have not developed an equally constructivist perspective on the future of nations, under the current context of transnational migration and global experiences. Cosmopolitization (the proliferation of cosmopolitan affiliations) will be an essential process in nation-building, rather than an exclusionary force (Beck & Levy, 2013, p. 4), and cosmopolitan nations will be forged through an awareness of risks in the world society.

Methodology

In our analysis we started from the assumption that temporary workforce migration is a specific type of transnational context, which generates new cultural practices and requires migrants to define ways of belonging towards the host and home countries and to negotiate identitarian attributes. We wanted to see if the migrant defines himself in terms of essentialist national identity. When does he build solidarity with the people back home and when does he appeal to reflexive distancing? Is belonging defined in terms of responsibility towards the home country or towards other economic migrants? *Our hypothesis is that in this transnational context the migrants do not employ attributes of essentialist identity in routine discourses about themselves, but rather strategically mobilize these attributes in order to justify the dynamics of belonging to home or host countries.* In other words, the appeal to Romanianness (values and meanings, eternal symbols, cultural practices) is discursively employed when the migrants seek to increase or decrease distance from the home or the host country.

Furthermore, we expect a lack of reference to essentialist identitarian attributes in descriptions of transnational contexts. Temporary economic migration will be referred to in pragmatic, punctual terms, as economic or career opportunities, and mobility will be seen as a resource in a cosmopolitan understanding of the European economic context. In this respect, “adaptability”, for instance, which presupposes border-bound traits of character, will not be invoked by economic migrants who do not necessarily seek to integrate in the host country. They re-contextualize belonging partly because they see Europe as a continuous, fluid, cosmopolitan space, partly because of technological advances, that allow them to reconnect with the home community and lead simultaneous lives.

Another point of interest in our analysis was to follow how migrants position themselves towards the hegemonic construction of identity, either by the host or home country. The fluid identity of the diaspora allows multiple allegiances and political engagements (Drzewiecka explores the use of constitutive rhetoric to explain how “discourses of diaspora are deployed in specific circumstances in strategic enactment of cultural identities”, put to use in political action, for instance – Drzewiecka, 2002, p. 2). In this respect, it was of interest to us to see how migrants act political solidarities with the home communities and what significance they attach to the meaning of citizenship. What is their relationship with political institutions and actors? How do they create agentivity: as cosmopolitan actors, as nationals?

In order to confirm our hypothesis, we looked at 19 interviews with Romanians working in Italy, conducted in the period June, 12 – July, 9, 2014 (part of the complex investigations carried out in the research project *Diaspora in the Romanian Media and Political Sphere. From Event to the Social Construction of Public Issues*, led by Camelia Beciu). Most migrants that were interviewed come from poor areas in Romania (Piatra Neamț, Iași, Bacău); some are young, recent migrants; others are middle-aged people from the first wave of mi-

gration before Romania joined the EU. Some have managed to bring their families with them, but many have left children and spouses back home and maintain their relationships via Skype.

Methodologically, our research is guided by critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003; Chouliaraki, 2006; Wodak, 2010), focusing on the complex interrelations between discourse and society. Discourse is defined as a form of action carrying social relevance and reflecting structures of power, hierarchies, interactions, and social roles and identities. Discourse has an ideological function, which both structures and is structured by power relations among various groups.

In our analysis, we were interested in the way migrants define themselves against other diasporans and representations by the media and politicians in both host and home countries. Throughout the interviews, we followed the discursive representations of: *values* (and instances of exemplary lives/experiences); *myths and representations* about migration; *legitimation categories*; *transnational circuits and practices*; *the representation of 'home'*; *problematization of awareness of simultaneity/incorporation/rupture*; *political solidarities* and the significance attributed to *citizenship*. In order to understand how migrants perform and negotiate their status, we wanted to see what generates categories of identity. We followed representations of social identity and social imagery (*the paradigmatic other*, *status inconsistency*, and *types of social relations*).

Findings

Most migrants insist on the temporary character of economic migration: *I am convinced we will all return home* (NP19)/*I do not have a definite program. I may be going back, one never knows. But I will not stay here for good. Definitely not.*/Interviewer (I): *Have you thought about working in another country as well?*/CM: *Oh, no! I have had enough! I will do what I have to do and then return home ... If I had been young and had a house and a young family there, I would not have returned for the world. But I am of a certain age, I cannot fail to return* (CM8). It seems that for them the wish to return justifies the morality of their decision to leave; furthermore, this temporary character turns the experience of migration into an exceptional disruption, rather than a permanence in the lives of migrants.

The interviewees' insistence on using self-representations as temporary economic migrants can be interpreted as a strategy for negotiating belonging to home or host countries: unlike the decision to leave Romania (based on an economic imperative), the decision to return includes sentimental/identitarian reasons as well: *I only want to live my old age in Romania* (AR17)/[*to return home*] *is in any Romanian's mind, he never gives up hope for good ... I think it is longing, I cannot explain, it comes from within. Missing home, where you find yourself, where you feel accomplished, where you lived your childhood* (DSV5). However, appeal to nostalgia and essentialist attributes (*it is your country, your land, you need to return* – C11) is made more frequently when interviewees talk about a hypothetical return in the distant future, seldom when they talk about their integration strategies or present status as temporary migrants.

As a tendency, the interviewees define themselves as people who took advantage of a favorable context, mediated for them by friends or relatives: *When I arrived I already had a work place, my sister had arranged it for me* (IA1)/*Generally, when they leave home, Romanians have acquaintances abroad. I recommend that you have at least one very close friend*

when you leave home (DSV5). In only one instance, of a young high-school graduate, we could identify the idea of migration as adventure that brings about unfamiliar, exhilarating experiences.

Romanians working in Italy, say the interviewees, are hard-working and moral, where morality is both an “invitation” from a work-related context, and a “gift” from the migrant to the community: *I worked for a serious family ... I am satisfied with the work I have done for them, I was honest, the family are content with me, I cannot say a single bad word about this Italian family, they are a serious family, I have minded my own business, I am serious and content about my wages ... Because as long as you do honest work for a serious, decent family, you are happy as well ... here the employer works just as you and respects you, because you are a person yourself, not some kind of ...* (RS7).

The interviewees define themselves almost exclusively through work ethics: *I do not have much time to watch TV. Because I work. Until recently I worked from morning till dawn. When I arrive home at night I take care of the children. And sometimes during the day I have free time, but I am busy with the children, I have to take them to school. And then bring them back from school, get their meals ready. Every day. The same story ... Ask my husband. I have stayed the same person. I may have changed very slightly, but I speak the same, I behave the same, I do not do something different from what I did before. Just like any mother. ... a normal woman back home. She cooks, she goes to work, she looks after the children* (L9). Honest, hard work is for migrants a legitimizing category. While in Romania work is never properly paid and efforts go unacknowledged, in Italy hard work facilitates integration in work-related contexts. *Working hard, being honest and proud about your work* are both the result of a journey into work ethics (leading to self-esteem) and a proof that the sacrifice of leaving the home country was not in vain. The constant use of these pragmatic considerations shows that for our interviewees the experience of migration is an ethical category with moral significance.

There is a pronounced tendency among migrants to project the image of an exemplary life. The fact that they assume an inferior professional status is presented, for instance, as an illustration of courage and pragmatism: *In the end I accepted a job below my professional qualification, quite different from what I had done for 20 years back home ... my work experience has not served me much here* (LJ4).

There are migrants who evoke status inconsistency: *There is a bit of malice, I do not know how to call it, but ... as I said before, everybody believes we are gypsies, that we are poorly trained, we know absolutely nothing, whatever you do, however easy it might be, they ask you: “are you capable to do this?”. Their only strong point is that they were born in Italy, a rich, developed country, and that’s about it. Yet they are so much more below us. But this is it. We were the ones who came over; they did not call us. It does not matter that you have a better idea, it does not matter, if he is the boss, this is what we do, because this is the good thing to do. I have learned that you are not allowed to contradict them* (T6). Status is performed and negotiated in a work paradigm. Relationships with the people in the host countries are built and maintained, more often than not, through work. It is symptomatic, for instance, that migrants rarely have Italian friends; in their free time, they spend time with family or close acquaintances, performing togetherness through highly ritualized practices (meeting at church for religious celebrations, going out for barbecues, meeting in shops selling traditional food). Proximity with the community of Italians in work-related, rather than informal contexts, does not encourage solidarity or inclusion (*I have had an Italian friend for*

seven years. *I have left some tools with him, he helps me repair them. But he will be forever the Italian and I, forever the Romanian – IR14*). On the other hand, the perception of status inconsistency proves some critical competence and distancing. Engagement with the community of Italian nationals cannot be developed in this context; status is an element of negotiation, rather than solidarity.

Competing identities

The dialectical proximity with other migrants is relevant as well for the dynamics of belonging. What symbolic categories and boundaries does the migrant use in order to define his relationship with members of the diaspora? Certain contexts activate belonging to either the diaspora or the community of nationals back home. Interviewees do not see themselves as diasporans automatically, nor do they include others in this category unless there is some proof of worthiness. There are certain values, behaviours and statuses that allow migrants to belong to the diaspora. There is a clear gap between the migrants from the first wave and recent migrants. Migration is often represented in interviews as a moral act (a symbolic redemption of social injustice back home), and trespassing the rules somehow disintegrates the meanings of the moral journey. On the other hand, the “pioneers”, who had to deal with the hardships resulting from their status as non-EU citizens, define themselves as higher ranking migrants who project a relationship of power with later migrants, because they had to fight and they were the ones who created the favorable context that allowed later migrants to come to Italy: *I had to resist for more than three months, because our long-stay visa expired again and again. I tried to meet the legal term (DSV5). I had the possibility to arrive here without facing the problems Romanians had before, because they needed visas, they were standing in infernally long queues in front of consulates and so on (AR17)*.

There are various degrees in the evolution of the diaspora, there is a symbolic hierarchy between old and new, integrated and not integrated, worthy or worthless migrants. For our interviewees, self-diasporization is a conscientious process, a result of lessons learnt and a reward for self-worth proven in time: *The first people to arrive were somehow selected. For instance, I arrived here in 2000. Later on, when the borders opened, all sorts of people came, especially less acceptable and less civilised people came, who did not deserve it, who did not integrate that well, who did not come to work and to live a civilized life, they came in view of taking advantage of the civilization here, which is totally different from ours” (AC2)/When I came in the 90s, here were people who wanted a different life from what we had in Romania, we had Ceaușescu’s ideas, we wanted to get rid of this communist idealism, see? But now come Romanians who really need to be here, the needy who cannot manage back home (AR17)*. Migrants seem to work with very functional and exact “maps of migration”: they know what to expect if they choose England versus Italy, they know who can qualify (in terms of professional worth but also social status) for higher-ranking countries: *I had half a thought to go to the UK, but I gave up, because it is hard to start from scratch, to leave a second identity for the third, because I have already left the first at home (DSV5)/I would like to work in another country, in the UK, where you make better money, but for the moment I am good here (C11)/It would be best to work in Germany (G18)*.

Belonging to the imagined community is built through reference to organic identity. Asked to explain why she believes migrants wish to return home, an interviewee answered: *Because the place you were born in and your country are always in your soul. Here you feel forever*

the foreigner (IA1). Another says: *I believe that we, the Romanians, have the wish to return home where we were born, under the sky we grew up* (AC2). However, double allegiances appear especially in migrants with overall positive experience. We called this competing/relational identity. *I: If you were to introduce yourself today, what would you say? How would you characterise yourself?/I think I am quite integrated, I am in love with this country, I have my own country close to my heart, but I would like to stay here* (AC2).

The diasporans' moral imagination

Migrants are characters in a drama (Kivisto & Faist, 2010, p. 1) that has an underlying moral, whether it concerns a search for a better society or a better self. Migrants' reasons to emigrate are as diverse as their progress in host societies; many, however, frame their enterprise as a moral quest, an ethical journey (Werbner, 2013, p. 116). "If the moral imagination is also an important component of both diaspora and transnationalism it is because it helps produce a narrative of possibilities, hopes, and social roles of appropriate conduct as well as modes for action that are made meaningful by allowing individuals to take on the active narrative positions of migrant, victim, hero, survivor, community builder, transnational actor, and so on" (Quayson & Daswani, 2013, p. 18).

There is a strong tendency among our interviewees to describe their experience of migration as a drama with events, unexpected turns in plots and an abundance of characters. The experience of living and working abroad is frequently described as an evolution of the self: *I do not know if a country can change you as a person ... I have preserved my character, I should say ... But I suppose that we have all changed. This is a different medium, a different environment, a different society ... we have probably opened our eyes wider and adapted following one or another. I suppose it was a change for the better* (G10)/*It makes you more mature than you need to be. I am better prepared for anything, be it good or bad* (DSV5)/*I know who I can be friends with ... It makes you harsher ... You mind your own business ... What can I say, you have to be careful. It forces you to grow up* (CM8).

In the case of mothers who left their children at home, migration is described in terms of trauma. What is essentially a blamable act finds justification in economic arguments: *It is hard, it is difficult, you suffer a lot, hoping from one year to the other that you will return ... a child needs affection, to feel his parents are nearby, we know that what we do is wrong, but [we do it] in order to offer something better for them, something more than we had* (AC2)/*I could say that all these things are sacrifices for your family. It is not that easy to stay away from your husband and children, to call them: dearest, what shall I bring you? And they would never say: I want this or that, they would always answer: come home, it is you I need, not sweets or money. Family misses you very much, parents need to be close to their children ... it is my opinion that in a family children need to be raised by both a mother and a father* (CP15).

The symbolic construction of citizenship

There is pervasive awareness among migrants of their simultaneous, contrapuntal lives (Said, 2000), which is routinized in their discourses about the spaces they inhabit. It is not just their representation of space (here and there) and time (before and after the Great Journey) that carries shared social meaning, but the cultural chronotopes as well: the host country as the land of progress versus the home country as the land of political, social, economic

stagnation. Migrants become political actors because they are subjects of power in the host country – this forces positioning; on the other hand, establishing the relationship with the other is essentially a question of defining and recognising power as well.

What is firstly a step dictated by economic necessity becomes a political commentary on bad governance back home. This positioning in migration discourse can mobilize “diasporas” in the home country as well (Parsons Dick, 2013, pp. 413-415), who critically evaluate their present debased lives against various ideal identities. However, migrants’ critical discourse on the state of affairs would not, alone, create such diasporic identities in the home country, if, on the one hand, migrants did not live contrapuntal existences, and, on the other, non-migrants did not engage actively with migrant discourses.

Economic migrants do not define Romanianness in terms of citizenship, partly because of their vision of a cosmopolitan, fluid Europe, partly because of the distance they take towards what they see as bad governance at home. Symbolic Romania is more prevalent in migrants’ discourse on national feelings than the Romania of rights and social contract. The relationship with members of the diaspora is rarely enclavised and the resurgence of symbolic practices is motivated culturally, rather than politically.

In our analysis we also wanted to see how this relativised belonging to the home country ties in with a moral engagement with it. If the migrant permanently negotiates his relationship with home, does he feel a moral duty and responsibility towards it? Is the engagement with the home country constructed instrumentally (in terms of financial remittances, for instance) or is it acknowledged as an instance of responsibility and solidarity with the community of nationals? Remittances could be a way of building identity through the symbolic capital transferred back home. Do migrants see their interventions in the home society as a change in mentalities or a performance of citizenship and political engagement? Which is then the relationship between transnationalism and citizenship?

The temporary economic migrant defines belonging to the home or host country in terms of status (achieved through economic success), which does not encourage solidarity, but critical engagement with the political status-quo back home. In this respect, the migrant will negotiate reentry in the home community in terms of status preservation. The migrant uses the status gained as a financially successful national abroad in order to negotiate belonging and, eventually, citizenship. For our interviewees, civic engagement is a form of political criticism: *we talk about politics because I suppose our politicians are the ones who made us leave the country. They are the ones who simply chased us out of the country. We were employed when we left, but they still made us all leave the country, little by little. Why, I cannot say. I suppose our country has more to lose than to gain with us leaving* (G10).

Migrants repeatedly refer to the experience of living and working abroad as a cosmopolitan education, which could benefit the people back home: *If Romanians abroad, who studied here and have a university education, would one day return home, they would change politics. Their integration in political parties, their participation in local elections, this can be done, and if they go back to Romania, they could do something with their European mentality* (DSV5). Many talk about their agentivity in Romania in terms of cultural revolution: *I think [migrants] have changed things already. All Romanians returned home changed. I hope that the fact that we lived abroad will change things for the better* (G10). Yet few migrants see themselves as agents of change, and they prefer to transfer responsibility to a vague “us”: *we would like to do more for our country and work for it, instead of living among strangers, because it is not easy, but we cannot do anything from here or from Romania, because we*

have no power to change things (IA1). The lack of political activism could be explained in terms of distance, but could also be a result of weak ties among diasporans (Apart from work behaviour, passion and strong will, they will not be able to change anything. Because they cannot do all this by simply going back. Because there are no workplaces, fields to develop, you cannot do anything. As long as you are abroad, you are surrounded by another mentality, you work differently, conscientiously, responsibly ... I do not say that you cannot work like that at home, but if there is nothing for you to do in the country, your mentality from abroad will not be of help, because you will have to do a lot, quickly and well (T6). Diasporans meet as friends who keep up with news from Romania, share a meal and celebrate, not as active political actors debating the shortcomings of the political system back home. Another explanation comes from the isolated voice of a community leader (a priest) warning that migrants are intruders who do not have the competence or the status to produce change in Romania: This is a problem. It depends on the relationship built between Romanians here and Romanians in Romania ... They [the migrants] are not in a position to teach. If there is someone there to say: yes, we are open to change, it might be. But there needs to be a culture HUB for this openness. One shouldn't go there and teach" (IR 16).

When the right to vote is discussed, migrants appeal to civic essentialism. The right to vote is a privilege coming from intrinsic Romanianness, that the migrant carries within himself. *Because we live here, but one day we will return. We will go back home because everything started there. We will return, however late (CP15).* In this respect, citizenship seems to be the result of essential identity, rather than of a social contract (*As a Romanian, wherever I may be on Earth, I have my right to choose who should rule my country. I do not have 16 citizenships, to vote. I am a Romanian, I have one single citizenship, I want to vote, I have this right – C11).*

Despite appealing to essential attributes in their performance of citizenship, many interviewees accept instrumentalization of the diaspora as is performed by the media back home. *I do not believe that this [withdrawing the right to vote] is the right thing, because we are Romanians and we will stay Romanians, we are the ones who send money to Romania, we are the ones building houses in Romania, we are the ones caring for our parents back in Romania, for our siblings and nephews, this is money coming from Italy, we have all the right in the world to vote, but it does not seem right for them to oblige me to vote (IA1).* Going along with this instrumentalization may be another instance of negotiation of re-entry into the home country, via remittances.

Conclusions

Temporary workforce migration is a rich site for the analyst investigating the dynamics of identity. The dual nature of the labour migrant, living a “real” life in the host country and a “connected” life in the home country, illustrates the permanent negotiation of the meaning of identity and citizenship in contemporary Europe. Taking temporary workforce migration as a particular instance of transnational context, we followed the strategic mobilization of identitarian attributes in discourses about belonging to the home or host country.

Our analysis of interviews with migrants in Italy has shown that Romanians who went to work abroad define their situation as a temporary state of affairs, based on pragmatic reasons such as the quest for a better life. Mobility is a right gained by European citizens with the opening of the labor market. In the words of one of our subjects, “we are a people of adapt-

able individuals” (AR17). Temporality of this enterprise is eagerly stressed by all participants in the interview. Migrants negotiate staying abroad and returning home based on economic imperatives and advantages. While the reality of their present status is motivated economically, the starting and the final point of their journey are defined in terms of moral significance. The decision to leave is often a moral act, an underlying criticism of the poor state of affairs in Romania and equally a quest for a better self. Life abroad is a lesson learned about work ethics and a discovery of the migrant’s own strength, courage, determination and flexibility. The journey back to the home country is forever postponed for the vague moment when everything (politics, economy, *the healing* of the nation) will fall back into place in Romania; it is pushed back to a moment of definitive choices and old age and motivated by the intrinsic call of the mother land to its sons. Re-entry into Romanian society is, however, again negotiated in pragmatic terms: a vague diasporan “we” could change Romania for the better by teaching the lessons on work and normality that migrants learnt abroad. Their agentivity can be partly explained by the fact that they are subjects of power in both the home and the host country. Paradoxically, migrants accept instrumentalization by the media back home as a negotiation strategy for the moment of return. The dynamics of this negotiable version of belonging depends on the relationship with the home and host country and on the ties with the community of diasporans. Entrance into this category is based on self-worth; however, our interviewees employ and accept hegemonic definitions of identity by both the home and host country.

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Loredana RADU*

More or Less Europe? The European Leaders' Discourses on the Refugees Crisis

Abstract

The refugees' crisis has set the public agenda on European topics throughout 2015. Considered by many as (another) existential test for the European project, this new type of crisis has triggered frustrations and extreme disappointment, leading to a further aggravation of the already existing intra-EU cleavages, such as those between the West and the East, the "net debtors" (now labeled as the net supporters of the refugees) and the "net creditors" (now intensely recognized as adversaries of migration). Noteworthy, Angela Merkel declared that the refugees' crisis is "testing Europe's mettle" (2015), whereas Jean-Claude Juncker posed that a "blame-game" is shattering the EU, with Member States accusing "each other of not doing enough or of doing the wrong thing" (2015). This paper argues that the European leaders have tacitly fueled – through their emotional and solidarity-centered discourse – the intra-EU cleavages between the Member-States, as well as public attachment to far-right xenophobic ideologies. By means of a combined narratives' and frames' analysis, this paper focuses on the discursive means employed by the European leaders in order to tackle the sensitive topic of the migration crisis. Firstly, some background information about the causes and developments of the migration crisis is presented. Secondly, frames and narratives are approached as two different yet complementary instances of discourse analysis. Lastly, two key discourses given by Angela Merkel and Jean-Claude Juncker are investigated with the purpose of identifying how frames and narratives combine to tell the story of European integration under the pressure of the refugees' flows.

Keywords: refugee crisis; discourse; narratives; frames.

The Migration Crisis – the Missed Effect of Conspicuous Causes

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the number of internally displaced people (IDP) – understood as people who, due to extreme violence and armed conflict, had to leave their homes and move within the borders of their own countries – has been steadily increasing since 2000. Between 2011 and 2013, following the "Arab Spring", the average yearly number of IDP has dramatically raised from approx. 40 million to over 60 million, giving birth to a true crisis of IDP, which in 2014 turned into a true refugees' crisis, as the number of people fleeing conflict by passing at least one internationally recognized bor-

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der had grown by 20%. UNHCR data shows that, at the end of 2014, 53% of the refugees came from Syria (3,88 mil.), Afghanistan (2,59 mil.), and Somalia (1,11 mil.). By the end of 2015, the number of refugees in the world has reached more than 65 million, the highest level ever recorded (UNHCR, 2016). It is the equivalent of one in every 113 people on the planet, according to the UN Refugee Agency, and if considered a nation would make up the 21st largest in the world (www.independent.co.uk). One interesting development is that while the refugees flow increased with over 70% in 2014, the USA were the only peaceful regions on the globe where the number of refugees dropped (-5%).

The European Union, due to its untroubled and prosperous climate, seemed like a logical destination for many refugees. Owing to extreme military and political unrest in Syria and Iraq, it is estimated that 1.5 million migrants entered the EU in 2015, most of them after a life-threatening journey. Almost 4000 migrants were reported to have died trying to cross the Mediterranean in 2015. Dramatic images and dreadful stories with women and children desperately trying to find salvation in Europe have made the headline of most media outlets in the summer and fall of 2015. This has pressured Member States to answer to requests for humanitarian aid, asylum and integration.

2015 has become an emblematic year for the EU migration crisis. Germany took the “moral leadership” (Varoufakis, 2015) in the refugees’ question, with chancellor Angela Merkel declaring that “If Europe fails in this refugee crisis, it betrays its founding principles.” (www.dw.com) However, at the end of 2015, the EU was still not one of the “top hosts”, as five low- and middle-income countries bore most of the migration burden: Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ethiopia, and Jordan (UNHCR, 2016).

European leaders and institutions, pressured by what appears as a never-ending flow of unfortunate people fleeing violence, have been forced to advance solutions within incredible time and political constraints. No wonder that tensions rose, while technicalities – so necessary given the complexity of the migration phenomena – were set aside. The Ten Point Action Plan on Migration, issued by the Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council in April 2015, contains nothing but vague strategic directions, too wide to work as pragmatic guidelines. In September 2015, Member States agreed in principle to resettle 160.000 refugees, but failed to reach a consensus on which countries would take them in. The much-debated “compulsory quota system” brought to light dramatic differences of opinions between member states, thus delaying the response further and fueling a deep conflict inside the EU. A new divide has been created between the “solidarity-centered states”, led by Germany, and the more “reluctant states”, such as Hungary or Slovakia. However, the compulsory quota system has failed so far, not least because the centers designed to process and relocate refugees (so-called ‘hotspots’ in Italy and Greece) are not functioning (Bond, Korteweg, & Mortera-Martinez, 2016).

The waves of refugees came as a surprise for Europe, even though there they should have been regarded as anything but abnormal. According to Fischer – Germany’s former foreign minister – “all of the migration that Europe currently faces is rooted in grave crises in its own neighborhood”. In a nutshell, the main causes of the current migration to Europe are “the Western Balkans’ continuing economic malaise; the turmoil in the greater Middle East; and Africa’s civil wars and conflicts. Intensification or expansion of the war in eastern Ukraine would quickly add a fourth cause of flight” (Fischer, 2015). Looking at these rather conspicuous causes, one might say that the migration crisis did not appear out of the blue. It will not drop out of sight either. Moreover, it appears that the migration flow is intensifying and will soon be regarded as a *status quo* in the EU and elsewhere, with national governments constantly striving to find integration solutions for the refugees, amidst populist and xenophobic trends.

Two Instances of Discourse Analysis: Framing and Narratives

The anti-migration platform has proved electorally successful both at national and European levels. For instance, Grabbe counted 114 members of anti-migration parties in the European Parliament (15.2% of MEPs) with explicit xenophobic views (Grabbe, 2015). In 2016, Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, warned of a “climate of xenophobia” gripping Europe (Yeung, 2016). According to a recent study done by the Institut français d’opinion publique (IFOP), citizens embracing the far-right ideologies are less inclined to favor the refugee relocation scheme and more tempted to label the refugees as “economic migrants” (IFOP, 2015). “Beyond the opinion polls and the results of elections, the 2015 migration/refugee influx has turned extreme anti-immigration right-wing positions into mainstream positions, mobilizing right and left-wing governments and political leaders in dramatic fashion” (Balfour *et. al.*, 2015, p. 46). Anti-establishment movements have been activated at both national and European levels. Premised on the fact that the populist challenge could be partially regarded as an effect of a flawed EU communication strategy, this paper identifies the key frames and narratives employed by European leaders when tackling the refugees’ crisis. Its aim is to contribute to a better understanding of how the mainstream EU discourse on migration should be redesigned so that it could cope with increasing public resistance to refugees’ integration and xenophobic attitudes (IFOP, 2015). Discourse are essential to understanding the dynamics of human thought, for “our ways of talking do not neutrally reflect our world, identities and social relations but, rather, play an active role in creating and changing them” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 2).

One of the most cited definitions of framing belongs to Robert Entman, who poses that “to frame means select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The framing theory argues that the sender’s perspective on the message often shapes the receiver’s evaluation of the respective topic. Framing effects refer to the way in which information is presented in the public discourse and impact upon how the audience processes the message (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2010). In dedicated literature, there is a firm distinction between media frames – understood as “devices embedded in the political discourse” and individual frames, defined as “internal structures of the mind” (Kinder & Sanders, 1990, p. 74).

Wettstein reveals that there are two factors that facilitate the adoption of frames: “the accessibility of an issue, and the correlation between a subject and the audience’s pre-existing opinions” (Wettstein, 2012, p. 320). Shuck and de Vreese (2006) showed that attitudes and knowledge preceding the exposure to the message play an important role on determining the framing effects. In other words, framing effects are influenced by the receiver’s inclination to look at a debated topic from a certain perspective. Technically, these inclinations or predispositions are activated or not, depending on how the sender chooses to frame the subject. Kinder and Sanders (1990) found correlations between low levels of political information, on the one hand, and the predisposition to adopt frames, on the other one. Meyers-Levy and Maherswaran (1990) and Shah *et. al.* (2004) showed that, in general, the public is more affected by negative frames than the positive ones. Kahneman and Tversky’s (1984) experiments revealed that the type of framing directs audience’s attention to specific aspects of reality, which means that, simultaneously, the frames can distract the public from other aspects.

According to de Vreese, “the consequences of framing” can be analyzed at individual, and societal level. An individual level consequence may be altered attitudes about an issue based on exposure to certain frames. On the societal side, frames may contribute to shaping social level processes, such as political socialization, decision-making, and collective actions” (de Vreese, 2005, p. 52). De Vreese differentiates between issue-specific frames and generic frames. The issue-specific frames pertain to a specific topic and can be identified only in some contexts, having also a direct connection with the analyzed events. Generic news frames are applicable to a wide range of topics, and even in different cultural environments.

In empirical research on framing, two types of variables are often used. The first type consists of “framing mechanisms” or “symbolic mechanisms”, which are “focal points that serve to identify a particular frame” (Azpiroz, 2014, p. 77). Symbolic mechanisms are expressed, for instance, through key words and phrases, metaphors, examples, historical and cultural references. The second is made of “reasoning mechanisms” and “framing functions” (idem), which are more subtle, involving a more in-depth analysis of consequences and effects, and providing justifications or arguments for the adoption of certain frames (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, pp. 3-4).

Frames and narratives have long been considered as two key instances of discourse analysis. However, they have been rarely approached as complementary analytical tools. While framing is more concerned with what happens at the “backstage” of discourse generation, narratives could be regarded as the actual means by which frames are expressed. “Narratives are analytic constructs that unify a number of past or contemporaneous actions and happenings [...] into a coherent relational whole that gives meaning to and explains each of its elements and is, at the same time, constituted by them” (Griffin, 1993, p. 1097). Polkinghorne suggests “narrative is a meaning structure that organizes events and human actions into a whole” (1988, p. 18).

Modern approaches to narratives analysis could be grouped into three streams: the first treats narrative as a sequence of events and focuses on principles of narrative structure; the second, exemplified in part by the French structuralists, treats narrative as a manner of speaking about events (a “discourse” produced by a narrator); the third treats narrative as verbal acts constructed “between” narrator and audience (Davis, 2002).

“Narratives give external expression to assumed representations of individual, internal representations of phenomena – events, thoughts and feelings” (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2013, p. 7). Frames and narratives or story telling are interconnected, in the sense that “narrative is used to make packages of frames cohesive and compelling” (Olsen, 2014).

Over the past two decades, scholars have demonstrated the importance of narratives for understanding the social world (Somers, 1994; Andrews, 2007). In the European integration context, in contrast, the study of narratives, with some notable exceptions, is relatively new (see Gilbert, 2008; Eder, 2009). The discursive approach of Europeanization considers that this process is intrinsically linked to the *meta-narrative of Europe as a social entity*: European society (Trenz, 2014). Eder emphasized the role played by narratives in building collective identities, posing that “Europe is a space with contested stories and that it is through contestation that stories that bind can be told” (Eder, 2009, p. 17). Gilbert (2008) analyzed the implications of the supra-nationalism narrative and found that “the principal narrative accounts of European integration are impregnated with the belief that supra-nationalism is a desirable ideological goal and recount the history of European integration in terms of the progress Europe has made towards achieving this goal” (Gilbert, 2008, p. 658). Trenz (2014)

believes that narratives are used as collective imaginings that tell how society constitutes itself. Narratives of Europeanization compete with existing narratives that imagine the social bonds of national societies or postulate the bonds of a global or world society. Narratives of Europeanization are about the manner in which the social bonds that gave birth to the EU are either maintained or corrupted (Trenz, 2014). He identifies four processes (see Table 1 below) that occur in the narrative construction of the European society:

- 1. *Triumphant Europeanism*: the assertion of the extraordinary (sacralization);
- 2. *Trivialized or banal Europeanism*: expression of everyday life;
- 3. *Euroscepticism*: extraordinary contradiction (de-sacralization);
- 4. *Crisis*: disaggregation of daily life.

Table 1. Narratives of Europeanization.

Europeanization	Affirmation	Disruption
The extraordinary (heroic)	1) Triumph	3) Trauma
The ordinary (banal)	2) Routine	4) Crisis

Source: Trenz, 2014, p. 7.

“The first two variants are success stories based on the alleged integrative effects of Europeanization on the emergence of a European society. The last two variants are stories of failure, testing out the disintegrative effects of Europeanization on society” (Trenz, 2014, p. 2). When we witness glorification, the narratives of Europeanization can be linked either to triumph or to trauma. By “triumph”, Trenz refers to stories of the extraordinary achievements of Europe. By “Trauma”, the Europeanization discourse is altered through stories of lost European values and crisis. When Europeanization remains unobserved, EU is narrated as a banal entity and loses its “symbolical appeal” (Trenz, 2014).

Methodology

Drawing upon a constructivist approach, I argue that discourse becomes the core of the EU’s legitimacy (de)construction as a post-national and developing political order, and as a global actor (Crespy, 2015). Discourse on European integration contributes to the building of the European public sphere, and generates institutional and political change. The latter effect can be assimilated to the discursive dimension of Europeanization (Trenz, 2014), which forms the focus of this research.

The methodology takes into account two constitutive elements of the political discourse on the European Union: frames and narratives. The research goal is to qualitatively assess the manner in which the EU is constructed in the political discourse on the refugee crisis. More specifically, I am interested in the way in which the EU-related frames are expressed through specific narratives of Europeanization.

The discourse analysis is based on an analytical matrix combining four narratives of Europeanization and six frames (see Table 2).

Table 2. Narratives matrix (template).

Frames Narratives	Responsibility (incl. blaming)	Conflict (incl. intra- EU divide)	Economic consequences	Morality (incl. EU historical legacy)	Human interest	EU solidarity or supra- nationalism
The extraordinary (affirmation) – Triumph						
The extraordinary (disruption) – Trauma						
The ordinary (affirmation) – Routine						
The ordinary (disruption) – Crisis						

The matrix above integrates the four main narratives of Europeanization as identified by Trenz (Triumph, Trauma, Routine, Crisis) and six frames, out of which five are generic (i.e. conflict, the economic consequences, morality, human-interest, and responsibility frames) and the last one is specific (i.e. the solidarity frame). The responsibility frame has been first described by Iyengar and Kinder (1987) and originates in the need to find those accountable for actions that affect people's lives in one way or another. The "blame-game" idea, as conveyed by Jean-Claude Juncker in many of his speeches, belongs to this generic frame, as it focuses on who might be held responsible for the aggravation or the bad management of the migration flows. The conflict frame is mostly encountered in political news, especially in electoral contexts (Capella & Jamieson, 1997), and reflects the urgent need for the sender to cover events as they happen, stressing the emotional side of the stories. The intra-EU divide is a variation of the conflict frame focusing on internal cleavages or fractures (i.e. either among Member States or between the EU and Member States). The economic frame relates to the economic consequences of events on an individual, group, institution, region, or country (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The human interest frame invites to an emotional and often dramatic reading of the message, by emphasizing the human side of each event. Such frames are constructed to increase audience numbers and pertain to social topics, such as the refugees' crisis. The morality frame places the discourse in a religious, moralizing or value-oriented perspective. The historical legacy of Europe as a "spring" of democratic values is also accounted for in this frame. Finally, the solidarity or supra-nationalism frame is based on the assumed resilience of the European project and builds on Gilbert's (2008) supra-nationalism narrative emphasizing the implicit belief that EU and/or Member-States are continuously striving to achieve a greater degree of integration and are part of a joint European future.

The corpus of the research consists of two speeches delivered by two prominent European leaders. The first speech, entitled "State of the Union 2015: Time for Honesty, Unity and Solidarity", was given by Jean-Claude Juncker – President of the European Commission on the 9th

of September 2015 in Strasbourg. The second one, the Statement by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel to the European Parliament, was given on the 7th of October 2015 in Strasbourg. Both speeches tackle the sensitive topic of the refugees' and are held in a period when the migration crisis was the hottest issue on the European agenda, with thousands of refugees knocking at the EU's doors in a desperate attempt to escape violence at their home-countries. As mentioned above, September and October were the most dramatic months on the timeline of the refugees' crisis, when thousands of migrants tried to reach Europe in life-threatening journeys.

Findings

Jean-Claude Juncker's Speech: More Europe is a United Europe

Juncker's speech combines the morality and the solidarity-centered frames (see Annex 1), which are extensively expressed through narratives of Europeanization owing to the Extraordinary, be it in the form of the "Triumph" or the "Trauma". The resulting stance is highly emotional.

The morality frame is predominantly expressed through "Triumph". In some contexts, the morality and solidarity frames are intrinsically linked, as in the following fragments:

"We Europeans should remember well that Europe is a continent where nearly everyone has at one time been a refugee. Have we really forgotten that after the devastation of the Second World War, 60 million people were refugees in Europe?" (my italics)

"We Europeans should know and should never forget why giving refuge and complying with the fundamental right to asylum is so important."

"Europe is the baker in Kos who gives away his bread to hungry and weary souls. Europe is the students in Munich and in Passau who bring clothes for the new arrivals at the train station. Europe is the policeman in Austria who welcomes exhausted refugees upon crossing the border."

Narratives of disruptive European morality (or traumatic morality) are also present, though are mainly employed as a means of illustrating the "lessons learned" from our historical past and, thus, the urge to behave properly and take the right decisions – no matter how difficult or costly this might be.

"Europe has made the mistake in the past of distinguishing between Jews, Christians, Muslims."

"There is no religion, no belief, no philosophy when it comes to refugees."

"Pushing back boats from piers, setting fire to refugee camps, or turning a blind eye to poor and helpless people: that is not Europe."

The solidarity or supra-national frame is evident in the Juncker's speech and even more visible than the morality frame. Similarly to the morality frame, it is extensively expressed through narratives marking the "extraordinary", with an emphasis placed on Triumph:

"But now is not the time to take fright. It is time for bold, determined and concerted action by the European Union, by its institutions and by all its Member States."

"A truly united, European migration policy also means that we need to look into opening legal channels for migration."

The "more Europe" narrative is embedded into Juncker's discourse and is often linked to "more Union". Noteworthy, Europe stands for the European Union, thus Juncker tacitly evoking the supra-national stance. The resulting pattern is that "more Europe" means "more Union":

“We need *more Europe* in our Union. We need *more Union* in our Union.”

“We need *more Europe* in our asylum policy. We need *more Union* in our refugee policy. A true European refugee and asylum policy requires *solidarity* to be permanently anchored in our policy approach and our rules.”

The EU solidarity frame is also used to highlight the historical responsibility of the EU to act compassionately and responsively in the refugees matter.

“But when, generations from now, people read about this moment in *Europe’s history books*, let it read that *we stood together* in demonstrating compassion and opened our homes to those in need of our protection.”

Juncker tells the story of “more Europe”, implying that the EU could only succeed if all countries stand together. In his view, a triumphant Europe could be anything but a fractured Union, more preoccupied to solve its internal disagreements than to act as a whole and to ensure a solid position on the world’s map. The Trauma narratives are also present in the solidarity frame, but only to warrant the story of Triumph a better impact. As we can see below, the “more Europe” narrative is also employed as a counter-narrative, thus suggesting that not having enough Union in Europe is simply unacceptable or a senseless:

“There is not *enough Europe* in this Union. And there is not *enough Union* in this Union.”

Furthermore, the Trauma narrative of solidarity is used to justify the need for “more Europe”:

“Where Europe has clearly under-delivered, is on *common solidarity* with regard to the refugees who have arrived on our territory.”

“To me, it is clear that the Member States where most refugees first arrive – at the moment, these are Italy, Greece and Hungary – cannot be left alone to cope with this challenge. (...) This requires a strong effort in *European solidarity*. Before the summer, we did not receive the backing from Member States I had hoped for. But I see that the mood is turning. And I believe it is high time for this.”

Other frames (i.e. responsibility, economic consequences, and human interest) are seemingly represented and they are mainly employed for justificatory or illustrative reasons. Unlike the solidarity and morality, these frames are often expressed through narratives belonging to the “Ordinary” groups – Routine and Crisis:

“We tripled our presence at sea. Over 122,000 lives have been saved since then.” (Human interest – Crisis)

“Over time, migration must change from a problem to be tackled to a well-managed resource.” (Economic consequences – Routine)

“I am encouraged that some Member States are showing their willingness to significantly step up our European resettlement efforts.” (Conflict – intra-EU divide – Routine)

The responsibility frame is predominantly narrated as a Crisis triggered by the “blame-game” among Member States:

“There has been a lot *finger pointing* in the past weeks. Member States have accused each other of not doing enough or of doing the wrong thing. And more often than not fingers have been pointed from national capitals towards Brussels.”

“The attempt of *blaming others* is often just a sign that politicians are overwhelmed by unexpected events.”

In a nutshell, the speech held by Jean-Claude Juncker reveals an evident inclination to adopt a triumphalist approach to European integration and to justify the need for “more Eu-

rope” through morality and EU solidarity framing. The economic consequences and the human-interest frames are only employed as legitimizing vehicles for a United Europe. The blame-game or the responsibility frame is narrated as an ordinary mechanism of Europeanization: amid the need to tackle the migration crisis, common internal disagreements should be orderly addressed by any means. Technical aspects, such as the political, social, and economic implications are not treated at all, their very rational nature being somehow in contradiction with the emotional stance of the speech.

Angela Merkel's Speech: More Europe is a an Accountable Europe

Angela Merkel's speech bears some similarities, but also some differences as compared to Juncker's speech. The most striking similarity is that the solidarity frame is dully constructed by means of extraordinary narratives, which are even more powerful than those employed by the President of the European Commission. The emphasis is exclusively placed on stories of European triumph:

“Today we can look back with gratitude and some pride on the historic achievements that *we Europeans were responsible for over these years of continental bonding*. And now it seems a matter of course to us that *Europe is free and united*. (...) In brief, they have brought us *more Europe*, because we Europeans have learned in the course of our history to make the most of our diversity.”

“In the refugee crisis we must not give in to the temptation to fall back on national government action. On the contrary, what we need now is *more Europe*. More than ever we need the *courage and cohesion that Europe has always shown when it was really important*.”

“United Europe” is not constructed as a *sine qua non* condition for “more Europe” and maybe not even the only conceivable image of Europe, as Juncker regards it. Still, in Merkel's discourse, “staying together” is an instrumental condition for achieving success in both internal and external affairs:

“For only *together will Europe succeed* in mitigating the root causes of flight and displacement worldwide. *Only together will we succeed* in effectively combating criminal human trafficking rings. *Only together* will we succeed in better protecting the external borders of the European Union with jointly operated hotspots and manage not to jeopardize our internally border-less Europe.”

In Merkel's discourse, the rationale for “staying together” is strongly built on grounds of shared values and, importantly, shared responsibility:

“I therefore advocate the adoption of a new approach based on *fairness and solidarity in sharing the burdens*.

For Europe is a community of *shared values*, a community founded on *shared rules and shared responsibility*.

Pan-European challenges are not to be solved by a few member states on their own, *but by all of us together*.”

We will have to continue working hard to convince people of the *value of our Europe*.

The most important distinction noticeable in Merkel's discourse, however, is related to the absence of the morality frame, which is so obvious in Juncker's discourse. The Chancellor replaces the morality stance with the responsibility frame, which, similar to the solidarity one, is narrated in extraordinary terms:

“It will take a *determined contribution from Europe to solve this crisis* – by taking action against war and displacement, terrorism and political persecution, and against poverty and despair.”

"We also *have a duty to treat the people who come to us in need with respect*, to see them as human beings and not as an anonymous mass – regardless of whether they will be allowed to stay or not."

"We have *to deal responsibly with Europe's gravitational pull*. In other words, we have to take greater care of those who are in need today in our neighborhood."

The only instance when the responsibility frame is narrated as a Trauma is when Angela Merkel speaks about the need for Europe not only to "stay together", but also to behave responsibly and stand for its "shared values" that make up its identity. It is only through wise and well-coordinated actions that Europe will pass the historical test brought forward by the migration:

"Retreating from the world and shutting ourselves off is an illusion in the age of the Internet. It would not solve any problems, but would create additional ones, for we would be *abandoning our values and thereby losing our identity*."

While the human interest and morality frames, respectively, are quasi-invisible, the conflict and economic consequences frames become justifying discursive means pleading for European solidarity and accountability. For instance, in this fragment, the economic frame is often used to reinforce the need for European solidarity:

"Now more than ever, there is a need for an *economically strong Europe*, which uses the opportunities of the single market."

"If we view this challenge as a *joint European* and worldwide challenge, we will also be able to identify and seize the *economic and social opportunities* that this historic test brings."

Furthermore, the conflict frame backs the "staying together" narrative, by evoking the historical significance of a united Europe:

"The healing of the divide in Germany was ultimately followed by the *healing of divisions in Europe*."

Ordinary narratives of Europeanization are seldom employed. The Chancellor's discourse is as emotional as Juncker's, with the striking particularity that it lacks the moral stance. Merkel builds her persuasiveness by framing Europe as an extraordinary entity, which has the ultimate responsibility – in front of its citizens, as well as in front of the World at such – to stay united. The rational or technical considerations or arguments are totally eclipsed by the solidarity touch.

Conclusion: in Today's Europe, Less is More

This research reveals – through qualitative analysis is subject to limitations – some of the discursive mechanisms employed by EU leaders when referring to the migration crisis. One compelling particularity is the predominance of extraordinary narratives of Europeanization, by which a mystical Europe is re-constructed through political discourse. The Europe evoked by political leaders is an almost fantastic entity, which can use its magic in order to create de facto solidarity and genuine joint accountability. This is the political leaders' attempt to recover the lost symbolical appeal of European integration.

However, the emotional logic pertaining to EU leaders contrasts with the media, citizens', and national elites' discourse on European integration. The fact that trust in the EU has again dropped significantly in the past year (according to the Fall 2015 Eurobarometer) is an proof-based certainty. Furthermore, even in the most Europhile countries, such as Romania, national elites are not able anymore to narrate Europe in triumphant terms, and often construct it as

an ordinary or banal reality (Radu & Baragaoanu, 2015). When choosing between the mainstream European discourse, on the one hand, and the national discourse, on the other one, the public will always go for the latter. And this happens because national proxies play a tremendously important role in orienting opinions and attitudes towards the EU (Anderson, 1998; Franklin *et al.*, 1994; De Vries, 2010; Radu, 2016). In line with Gilbert (2008), we might conclude that European leaders should be more cautious when taking the supranational stance for granted. EU leaders' blind faith in the resilience of the European project could explain their reluctance to understand that "there is popular discontent with the democratic deficit in Europe and that the EU is widely regarded as a big part of a wider problem of disenfranchisement and disempowerment" (Gilbert, 2008, p. 659).

Another important characteristic of EU leaders' discourse is that the refugees' crisis has lit the flame of European integration and has made politicians – perhaps for the first time after many years – publicly and explicitly defend the supra-national reach of the European project. Put it in Habermas's words, "both, the terror and the refugee crisis, are – perhaps for the last time – dramatic challenges for a much closer sense of cooperation and solidarity than anything European nations, even those tied up to one another in the currency union, have so far managed to achieve" (Habermas, 2015). However noble it might be, the idea of a shared European future should be wisely constructed so that it could resonate with austerity-hit citizens, who need – more than ever – tangible arguments for supporting the idea of "more Europe". Habermas explains this too well: "The perception of the drastic rise in social inequality and the feeling of powerlessness [...] form the background [...] for leaving Europe behind, for hating Brussels. In an insecure daily life 'a national and cultural sense of belonging' are indeed stabilizing elements" (Habermas, 2016).

To conclude, there are at least two arguments that today's European leaders should not overstate the power of the solidarity frame and extraordinary narratives in their discourse. Firstly, there is a marked contradiction between the Brussels's discourse (i.e. supra-national stance, EU as a shared identity), on the one hand, and that embraced by many domestic politicians (i.e. raise of populism, focus on the instrumental nature of European integration), on the other one. The wider this gap, the bigger citizens's inclination to give credit to national proxies, as already mentioned. Secondly, by oversaturating the public with idealistic images of a united Europe, which need to survive despite its multiple seizures, EU leaders overshadow important public concerns, such as unemployment or wealth distribution. Naturally, citizens need to understand how and why the latest developments at the EU level impact upon their lives. It is high time for European leaders to capture in their discourse rational accounts of Europeanization, thus helping people clearly see why more integration is the solution, and not the problem. Only then EU leaders could hope that their way of constructing Europe through discourse will mobilize sentiments towards greater integration and unity. If oversaturated with emotional messages, which are anchored in an agenda they perceive as having little or nothing to do with their actual concerns, citizens will assume that Brussels does not care about their interests. In today's Europe, less is more.

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Annex 1. Table comparing the EU frames and narratives in the speeches held by Jean-Claude Juncker and Angela Merkel

Frames	Responsibility (incl. blaming)	Conflict (incl. intra-EU divide)	Economic consequences	Morality (incl. EU historical legacy)	Human interest	Solidarity or supra-nationalism
Narratives	Jean-Claude Juncker					
The extraordinary (affirmation) - Triumph		Europe today, in spite of many differences amongst its Member States, is by far the wealthiest and most stable continent in the world.		We Europeans should remember well that Europe is a continent where nearly everyone has at one time been a refugee. Have we really forgotten that after the devastation of the Second World War, 60 million people were refugees in Europe? We Europeans should know and should never forget why giving refuge and complying with the fundamental right to asylum is so important. Europe is the baker in Kos who gives away his bread to hungry and weary souls. Europe is the students in Munich and in Passau who bring clothes for the new arrivals at the train station. Europe is the policeman in Austria who welcomes exhausted refugees upon crossing the border.	It is Europe today that represents a beacon of hope, a haven of stability in the eyes of women and men in the Middle East and in Africa.	But now is not the time to take fright. It is time for bold, determined and concerted action by the European Union, by its institutions and by all its Member States. It is high time to act to manage the refugee crisis. There is no alternative to this. We need more Europe in our asylum policy. We need more Union in our refugee policy. A true European refugee and asylum policy requires solidarity to be permanently anchored in our policy approach and our rules. A truly united, European migration policy also means that we need to look into opening legal channels for migration. We can no longer afford to be ignorant or disunited with regard to war or instability right in our neighbourhood. We need a stronger Europe when it comes to foreign policy. We need more Europe in our Union. We need more Union in our Union. But when, generations from now, people read about this moment in Europe's history books, let it read that we stood together in demonstrating compassion and opened our homes to those in need of our protection.

Angela Merkel	The extraordinary (affirmation) - Triumph	It will take a determined contribution from Europe to solve this crisis – by taking action against war and displacement, terrorism and political persecution, and against poverty and despair. We also have a duty to treat the people who come to us in need with respect, to see them as human beings and not as an anonymous mass – regardless of whether they will be allowed to stay or not. We have to deal responsibly with Europe's gravitational pull. In other words, we have to take greater care of those who are in need today in our neighbourhood. Giving these people the chance to live their lives in dignity, in their home countries, without being scared to death by bombs and terrorists – managing that is a European task, and ultimately a global task.	The healing of the divide in Germany was ultimately followed by the healing of divisions in Europe. Now, ... Europe is facing a tremendous challenge. We are facing a test of historic proportions. Now more than ever, there is a need for an economically strong Europe, which uses the opportunities of the single market. If we view this challenge as a joint European and worldwide challenge, we will also be able to identify and seize the economic and social opportunities that this historic test brings.	Today we can look back with gratitude and some pride on the historic achievements that we Europeans were responsible for over these years of continental bonding. And now it seems a matter of course to us that Europe is free and united. In brief, they have brought us more Europe, because we Europeans have learned in the course of our history to make the most of our diversity. In the refugee crisis we must not give in to the temptation to fall back on national government action. On the contrary, what we need now is more Europe. More than ever we need the courage and cohesion that Europe has always shown when it was really important. For only together will Europe succeed in mitigating the root causes of flight and displacement worldwide. Only together will we succeed in effectively combating criminal human trafficking rings. Only together will we succeed in better protecting the external borders of the European Union with jointly operated hotspots and manage not to jeopardise our internally border-less Europe. I therefore advocate the adoption of a new approach based on fairness and solidarity in sharing the burdens. For Europe is a community of shared values, a community founded on shared rules and shared responsibility. Pan-European challenges are not to be solved by a few member states on their own, but by all of us together. We will have to continue working hard to convince people of the value of our Europe.
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Jean-Claude Juncker					
The extraordinary (disruption) - Trauma	-	-	-	Europe has made the mistake in the past of distinguishing between Jews, Christians, Muslims. There is no religion, no belief, no philosophy when it comes to refugees. Pushing back boats from piers, setting fire to refugee camps, or turning a blind eye to poor and helpless people: that is not Europe. Europe has failed the Syrian people. "...it is time for honesty. It is time to speak frankly about the big issues facing the European Union."	"There is not enough Europe in this Union. And there is not enough Union in this Union." Where Europe has clearly underdelivered, is on common solidarity with regard to the refugees who have arrived on our territory. To me, it is clear that the Member States where most refugees first arrive – at the moment, these are Italy, Greece and Hungary – cannot be left alone to cope with this challenge. This requires a strong effort in European solidarity. Before the summer, we did not receive the backing from Member States I had hoped for. But I see that the mood is turning. And I believe it is high time for this.
Angela Merkel					
The extraordinary (disruption) - Trauma	Retreating from the world and shutting ourselves off is an illusion in the age of the Internet. It would not solve any problems, but would create additional ones, for we would be abandoning our values and thereby losing our identity . If we forget that, we betray ourselves – it's that simple. But if we remember it, we will manage to pass this historic test and will, moreover, emerge stronger from this crisis than we went into it. Then we will manage to persuasively stand up for our values and interests at global level , too. By the way, that is what people outside of Europe, too, expect of us.				

Jean-Claude Juncker					
The ordinary (affirmation) - Routine		I am encouraged that some Member States are showing their willingness to significantly step up our European resettlement efforts	Over time, migration must change from a problem to be tackled to a well-managed resource.		We have collectively committed to resettling over 22,000 people from outside of Europe over the next year, showing solidarity with our neighbours. We must work together more closely to manage our external borders.
Angela Merkel					
The ordinary (affirmation) - Routine	We need a political process involving all regional and international actors to resolve the crisis in Syria – with a greater role for Europe.				It is fortunate that we in Europe acted together
Jean-Claude Juncker					
The ordinary (disruption) – Crisis	There has been a lot finger pointing in the past weeks. Member States have accused each other of not doing enough or of doing the wrong thing. And more often than not fingers have been pointed from national capitals towards Brussels. The attempt of blaming others is often just a sign that politicians are overwhelmed by unexpected events.			We tripled our presence at sea. Over 122,000 lives have been saved since then.	
Angela Merkel					
The ordinary (disruption) – Crisis					

Elena NEGREA-BUSUIOC*

‘Of the People or for the People’? An Analysis of Populist Discourse in the 2014 European Parliament Elections in Romania

Abstract

Populism is on the rise in Europe; this is a fact attested by the success of populist parties in recent elections (regional, national, European). Populists’ electoral performance can be explained from a variety of perspectives, depending on the focus of the analysis; e.g. ideological, socio-economic, political factors. This paper aims to contribute insightful observations to the attempts to show how these parties have managed to score so well in elections by analyzing the communication and discursive practices used by populist politicians. I will focus on examining elements of populist rhetoric used by populist politicians, as well as by mainstream politicians in televised debates and election posters from the 2014 European Parliament election campaign in Romania.

Keywords: populism; communication style; 2014 EP elections; Romania.

Introduction

The recent success of the right (and extreme right) parties in the regional, national and European elections should not be too surprising, given the rise of populism in Europe, especially in Western Europe, during the last two decades. The growth of populist parties and ideologies comes from numerous and various sources, ranging from general disappointment with mainstream politics to increasing fear of immigration (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008). As far as the European Union is concerned, populism in many member states has also been fueled by the criticism surrounding the processes of European enlargement and integration. Undoubtedly, the 2008 financial and economic crisis and its grave negative impact on the EU have contributed to the spread and consolidation, in many European countries, of popular sympathy towards populist ideologies. Seizing the opportunity, populist politicians have capitalized on European citizens’ discontent. This is a very brief outline of the context in which populist parties in Western Europe have gradually thrived and gained ground, up to the point of scoring top positions in many electoral races, culminating with the impressive success in the 2014 elections to the European Parliament. What about the populist parties in Central and Eastern Europe? Have they been as successful as their fellow Western populists? What communication style, discursive strategies and metaphors defined the Eastern populists’ rhetoric during the 2014 EP election

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campaign? To answer these questions, this paper aims to analyze the populist discourse of three Romanian populist parties that have participated to the 2014 EP race. Furthermore, this study seeks to shed light on the dynamics of populism in Romania and on the features that the populist discourse in Romania does not share with its Western counterpart.

What is Populism and Why is It Successful?

Populism is a widely spread phenomenon that characterizes political movements from different geographical areas from the world over: the US, Latin America, Europe. Apparently, it is a “pathological normalcy” (Mudde, 2010) that accompanies mainstream democracies. Populism has been the subject of heated academic debates for more than four decades (Mudde, 2004; Rooduijn, 2013). The scholarly literature surrounding populism focuses largely on defining the concept, although many of the definitions advanced so far have been contested (Ionescu & Gellner, 1969; Mudde, 2004; Taggard, 2000; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). However, there is large consensus among scholars over some characteristics that all populist parties or politicians share. Whichever the perspective chosen to “define the undefinable” (Mudde, 2004), populism is an anti-elitist and anti-establishment ideology. It is essentially people-centered, moralistic rather than programmatic (Mudde, 2004), proclaiming the evilness of the corrupt elites that oppress the good and pure people. While a unanimously accepted definition of populism might not be easily formulated, some scholars have suggested that finding a lowest common denominator shared by a many populist parties and politicians might be a viable solution to accurately describe what seemed to be disparate tendencies, spatially and temporally scattered (Rooduijn, 2013).

In the literature in the field, populism is conceptualized as a (thin) ideology (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Mudde, 2004), as a communication style (Canovan, 1999; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007), and as a political strategy (Kriesi, 2004). These three possibilities to approach populism are not mutually exclusive; features of populism in different countries and across different times may (and usually do) include elements that are consistent with ideology, rhetoric and communication or political organization. However, this paper seeks to identify and analyze features of populist communication in televised debates broadcast during the 2014 EP election campaign. As a special style of communication, populism displays proximity to the people, the ordinary citizens, while, at the same time, taking a stance from the ‘corrupt’ elite (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). Populists identify themselves to the people on behalf of whom they pretend to speak. There are no intermediaries between a populist and the people he or she represents and talks about. According to Jagers and Walgrave (2007), populism is rhetorically appealing to people; it uses communication tools and techniques to mobilize support and gain voters’ sympathy.

Does adopting a certain (populist) style and rhetoric ensure electoral success of populist parties? We cannot properly answer this question without a substantial empirical investigation. However, given the recent success in European, national or regional elections of populist parties across Europe, we may speculate that the communication style adopted by these parties, by their leaders, has contributed to their success in attracting voters on their side. Addressing voters directly, using simplistic, even tabloid-style language, employing highly emotional slogans, relying on the oratorical skills of a charismatic leader, populist parties seemed to have managed to obtain surprisingly good results in electoral confrontations, especially in

the 2014 elections to the European Parliament in member states from in Western Europe. Thus, Ukip in Great Britain, le Front National in France, Podemos in Spain or Five Star Movement in Italy scored very well in these elections. We cannot say that the success of these parties is due entirely (or exclusively) to the use of a specific communication style during the campaign. However, the populist rhetoric that their leaders have constantly used has attracted a lot of sympathy from people who may have perceived them as "taboo breakers and fighters against political correctness" (Mudde, 2004, p. 554).

This paper aims to examine the populist communication of parties that entered the 2014 race to EP in Romania. The analysis focuses primarily on the discursive strategies used by populist parties, without, however, excluding the populist rhetoric employed by mainstream parties. Transcripts of televised debates broadcast during the election campaign and posters used by the parties (both populist and mainstream parties) will be analyzed. Since populist parties in Romania are far less known than their relatives in Western Europe, a brief presentation of these parties and their leaders will precede the section displaying the method used and the results of the study.

Populism in post-1989 Romania

The political road that post-communist Romania has embarked on does not differ significantly from the one taken by other Central and Eastern European countries that came out from behind the Iron Curtain. The fall of communism and the never-ending transition in many of these countries has not necessarily brought them closer (at least not as quickly and as genuinely as one would have hoped) to the 'old' Western European liberal democracies. Undoubtedly, the EU accession and further integration have contributed heavily to the democratization of the ex-communist countries, and of Romania, in particular. Nevertheless, gaining membership and securing a place at Europe's top table came at a high price; despite Romanians' relatively constant high level of trust in the EU, as shown by Eurobarometers, many of them acknowledge that EU membership has not generated substantial improvement of their welfare and purchasing power (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2001, 2007; Sum, 2010). People's discontent and disillusion with the perceived effects of EU accession have been exploited by populist parties and leaders who have managed to gain important popular support, which has contributed to the political capital that these parties have managed to raise after 1989. As a matter of fact, the success of post-communism populism is not a particular feature of Romania; other ex-communist countries in the region have witnessed the rise of populism as an "alternative politics" (Shafir, 2008), a reaction to the region's lack of "ideological alternative to democracy" (Krastev, 2007, p. 58). Romanians' disenchantment with politicians and party performance (irrespective of the ideological stances or programmatic statements) and their dissatisfaction with their socio-economic situation have paved the way for populist parties to virulently express their voice and gain significant ground on the national political scene, and even achieve important electoral success.

Populist parties in post-communist Romania have not been a constant and stable force in Romanian politics. With some notable exceptions, they rarely accede to power, and many of them have undergone many transformations that have ultimately led to their dissolutions. In this brief overview of populists in Romania, I shall focus exclusively on the parties that have either actively participated in the national and European political life, either by gaining seats

in the Romanian and/ or European Parliament or by participating in the EP elections, albeit unsuccessfully. It is worth mentioning that such parties are not the only purveyors of populist ideas and themes in the Romanian society. Officially unrecognized parties such as Everything for the Country Party (TPȚ) and political movements like The New Right (ND) are perhaps the most prominent representatives of populism, especially among young, educated segments of the population, whose substantial presence on the Internet cannot easily go unremarked. Despite their absence from recent electoral politics (ND has never actually participated in any post-communist elections because of the courts' rejection of its application to become a party), TPȚ and ND continue to spread extremist, nationalist, fascist, racist and xenophobic discourse in Romanian society, inspired by the Iron Guard, Romania's inter-war far right Legionary Movement (see Cinpoș, 2013).

The most renowned Romanian populist party, often mentioned in the literature (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2001; Mudde, 2007; Sum, 2010; Cinpoș, 2013), is the Greater Romania Party (PRM), which is also the most consistently present and the most electorally successful. As early as 1992, PRM entered the Romanian Parliament and even participated to the creation of the government as a coalition partner (Cinpoș, 2013, p.170). However, the peak of its participation to Romanian politics was reached in the 2000 parliamentary and presidential elections, when PRM secured 121 seats in the Parliament (across both chambers), becoming the largest opposition party, and the leader Corneliu Vadim Tudor was a runner-up in the race for the highest position in the state. In 2008, PRM didn't make it to the parliament, but it participated to the EP elections held in the following year and secured 3 seats in the EP, one for Vadim Tudor himself. PRM displays almost all features of populist parties described in the literature (Canovan, 1999; Taggart, 2004; Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn, 2013): it lacks a clear ideology and consistent internal structure and organization; it presents itself as a party of the people and for the people, whose will and expectations are ostensibly voiced by the leader Vadim Tudor; it obsessively proclaims a systemic crisis of the Romanian society and blames the corrupt elites that lead the country for destroying the economy; it fears the attacks from external 'others' - often identified as Hungarians, Roma people, (Jewish) Mafia, America, Russia - to Romania's territorial integrity, Christian Orthodox faith and values. PRM is an anti-system party, supported by former members of the communist nomenklatura, a fact that may partially explain its easiness in accommodating far-right features, such as anti-Semitism and ethnic nationalism, with far-left elements, such as exalting the communist nationalization of economy and industry (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2001; Cinpoș, 2013). Clearly, the charisma of its leader, the flamboyant Vadim Tudor, is an undisputable populist asset to the party. Ceaușescu's former 'court bard' and one of his most trusted political ideologues, Vadim Tudor has adapted rather quickly to the new post-communist political reality and has managed to build quite an extraordinary political career. A sociologist by profession, Vadim Tudor has excellent oratorical skills and is a fierce adversary in a political debate; he has a vast cultural background and never ceases to brag about his intellectual qualities and awareness of various facts whenever he gets the chance. The televised debates for the 2014 EP elections provided him with the opportunity to show off his extensive knowledge of history, literature and sociology. A quick glance at the results of the most recent parliamentary and EP elections reveals that PRM and its charismatic leadership are in accentuated decline and that the force that the party, mainly through its leader, had once exerted may have faded. The presence on the political scene of the New Generation Party – Christian Democratic (PNG-CD) may have contributed to the

erosion of PRM's strength. Fed up with Vadim Tudor's erratic behavior and personality cult, many members defected from PRM and subsequently adhered to PNG-CD.

The New Generation – Christian Democratic Party (New Generation Party prior to 2006) was founded by Viorel Lis, former mayor of Bucharest, who, rumor has it, "sold" it to George (Gigi) Becali in 2004. It is this transaction that propelled both the party and its buyer-become-leader to the premier league of Romanian politics. To gain power, Becali played the populist card and, to some extent, he played it pretty successfully, not necessarily for the party, but for himself. He became a politician in addition to his other public personae, self-made millionaire and businessman, owner and sponsor of Romania's all time greatest football club. Similarity with the former Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi is observable: both are filthy rich businessmen, both own prestigious football teams. However, unlike Berlusconi, Becali is a promoter of ethnic and Christian nationalism, his discourse abounds in anti-Semitic, racist and xenophobic statements, and he has little or no former education at all (he used to be a shepherd). Furthermore, one important factor to PNG-CD and Becali's success was the mainstream Romanian media. Becali enjoyed huge amounts of airtime from TV channels in search of high ratings and publicity. The populist leader's simplistic, direct, unsophisticated discourse uttered in a poorly commanded Romanian, lacking basic grammar notions, has attracted many less educated, socially, economically and politically disoriented and frustrated Romanians.

Becali and PNG-CD are an example of what Shafir (2008) calls "neo-populism from below" (p. 443), which means that they seek to accede to power by whatever means. In his political career, Becali has managed to secure two mandates as member of the Romanian and the European Parliament on the lists of other parties (the National Liberal Party (PNL) and Greater Romania Party) then his own, given that PNG-CD has never met the required electoral 5% threshold in Romania. However, the party's influence in Romanian politics has declined constantly in recent years; many of its members have defected and have joined other parties, especially People's Party Dan Diaconescu, which will be presented next. In May 2014, Becali was in the worst position he could have ever imagined himself: he was in jail, serving a 3-year sentence for bribery. PNG-CD did not enter the race for the 2014 EP elections, but I have decided to include it in this section because this party stands out when discussing post-communist populism in Romania.

People's Party Dan Diaconescu (PP-DD) was founded in 2010 by Dan Diaconescu, a contested self-employed television presenter at a TV station called OTV. At the time, both PRM and PNG-CD were facing difficult times, both in terms of electoral success and internal stability. Dan Diaconescu seized the opportunity to politically capitalize on the misfortune of the two established populist parties in Romania and formed PP-DD. The party participated to the parliamentary elections in 2012 and, to almost everybody's surprise, including its founder, scored very well, managing to gain 68 seats in both houses. Ideologically, PP-DD could be labeled as a left-wing populist party, despite the fact that it lacks a coherent and consistent platform. As the same time, the party also shares some features of right-wing extremism (e.g. strong anti-homosexual views), but cannot be truly included in this latter category (Cinpoie?, 2013). PP-DD and its leader mimic the media populism displayed by Venezuela's former President Hugo Chavez. One memorable populist episode in the history of the party is Diaconescu's attempt, in 2012, a couple of months before the start of the parliamentary elections campaign, to buy the state-owned chemical plant Oltchim, 'in the name of the people and for the people'. Eventually, it was revealed that he never actually intended to buy the plant, nor had he the money to do so, but this sham brought him and his party a good deal of

votes. Behind the wheel of his opulent Rolls Royce, Dan Diaconescu promises the eradication of poverty in Romania, the destruction of the corrupt political class and the instauration of people's dictatorship. Nowadays, PP-DD seems to be in no better shape than PRM or PNG-CD. Dan Diaconescu is currently in jail, serving a 5-year sentence for blackmail. As many populist parties that are dependent on their leaders usually do, PP-DD has lost momentum. The void of power created by Diaconescu's imprisonment has led to numerous internal struggles ending in many party members' migration to other parties. PP-DD participated to the 2012 EP elections, albeit unsuccessfully.

The last party discussed in this section is also the newest apparition on the Romanian political scene. The New Republic Party (PNR) obtained the official decision of the courts acknowledging its existence at the beginning of 2013. The party was founded and is currently led by Mihail Neamțu, a young well-educated Romanian philosopher and theologian. PNR positions itself towards the centre-right of the political spectrum, and its manifesto (published under the section called "Manifesto" on the party's website www.nouarepublica.ro) contains many populist elements, from fighting for total recovery of the power by the people and for the people, to proclaiming an unprecedented economic and, more worryingly, moral crisis of the Romanian society. PNR is an anti-system party, denouncing the corrupt and rotten ex-communist elite whose power they hold to have spread like an illness over the otherwise pure and uncontaminated destiny of the Romanians, while appealing to the values of Christian Orthodoxy for recovery. PNR entered the 2014 race to the EP, although without success. However, its leader's discourse in the electoral campaign shared many features with classic, textbook populist discourse, as shown in the next section of the paper.

Finally, I add a brief note on the role of the Romanian Orthodox Church (BOR) in supporting more or less overtly nationalist, ethnically and religion-based movements in Romania. (Cinpoș, 2013). BOR has tacitly meddled in Romanian politics and especially in electoral campaigns by endorsing one or more candidates. The Church's intolerant and, at times, violent attitude towards religious and sexual minorities has inspired many populists, among which Becali is a good example of how populism uses religion to justify itself as doing God's work in the war against Satan and its deceitful servants, i.e. Jews, the LGBT community, etc. BOR is not the only church in the region to get involved in politics and inspire and heighten populism; the politicization of the religious discourse in Greece under the aegis of the Greek Church is another example (Stavrakakis, 2005).

Features of Populist Discourse in the 2014 EP Elections in Romania

In May 2014, political parties, alliances and 8 independents participated to the second EP election held in Romania, in order to determine who would occupy the 32 seats allocated to Romania in the European Parliament, for a full 5-year mandate (not counting the elections of 2007, immediately after the country's accession to the EU, which led to a 2-year mandate for the then elected Romanian MEPs). The 2014 EP elections in Romania did not spark too much interest among voters. This is not surprising, given the perceived second-order nature, where "less is at stake" (Reif & Schmitt, 1980, p. 9), of these elections across Europe. Interestingly, not only voters perceive EP elections as less important than parliamentary or presidential elections (first-order elections, according to Reif & Schmitt, 1980), but politicians themselves seem to think that these elections are less important than the national elections, especially if

both electoral cycles happen in the same year. This was the case in Romania, in 2014, when voters were called to elect both Romania's MEPs and its president for the next 5 years. The EP elections held in May were considered by some political parties and alliances, especially by the alliance in power, as the following analysis will show, as a general rehearsal for the presidential elections that took place in November 2014. This would explain the high penetration of populist elements into the Social Democratic Party's discourse (especially in the campaign posters). But this was not the only case of populism in the 2014 EP elections, since 3 populist parties that have been previously described entered the race.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the populist discourse in the 2014 EP elections in Romania. Populist rhetoric and communication style will be examined, with a particular focus on metaphorical framings used by populist leaders to translate abstract concepts and ideas (pertaining to European and national politics and economy) into simpler, more accessible notions that would resonate with their audiences. My aim is two-fold: on the one hand, I intend to analyze the discourse of established populist parties and, on the other hand, I aim to identify and investigate the elements and themes belonging to populism and populist discourse used by mainstream parties in the elections.

Populism has been a constant of the last year's EP elections across several member states, with populist parties scoring high in countries such as France or the UK, where rampant right-wing extremism threatens the EU. In Romania, the prospects of electoral success for populist parties remained unfulfilled in the 2014 EP elections; none of the three populist parties has succeeded to win a seat in the European Parliament. This does not necessarily mean that the situation is reassuring; populist arguments have substantially penetrated mainstream politics, being present in the discourses of politicians from the parties in power, as well as from those in the opposition.

Corpus and Methodology

The corpus of the study comprises 10 televised debates organized by the Romanian public television (TVR) and 20 campaign posters used by 14 candidates (parties, alliances or independents). The televised debates were broadcast between April 25th and May 2nd, 2014; they all have the same format: 1 hour-long shows, 1 moderator (the same for all 10 debates), 4-5 candidates invited in each show. The distribution of minutes to each candidate was made in accordance with the electoral and broadcast laws in force. The purpose of the debates was to familiarize the Romanian voters with the political offers of the candidates, their objectives as MEPs, the policies they would like to support in the EP, their opinion on key EU-related topics. The moderator tried to guide the discussions into these lines, despite some candidates often slipping into populist arguments and excessive focus on issues related to national politics.

The inclusion of posters into this analysis is motivated by the fact that many of the political parties and independent candidates chose to invest into outdoor print campaign materials, hoping that this would ensure more visibility for them among the electorate who actually goes to vote and, thus, they would increase their chances to catch a ticket to Brussels. Furthermore, this paper seeks to show to what extent the message delivered by the participants to the televised debates matched the content of their campaign posters.

The debates were transcribed and then content analyzed using a codebook that comprised four dimensions of populist discourse: people-centrism (any reference to the people), criticism of the corrupt political class/ elite (including moral corruption), evoking and acclaim-

ing the greatness of the country, and praise of Christian Orthodox values. The first two categories of the codebook have been adapted from established research work on populist discourse (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn, 2014), to which the latter two dimensions have been added; these two dimensions were drawn from the literature on Romanian populism (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2001; Ietcu-Fairclough, 2007; Shafir, 2008). In addition to grouping the content of the debates according to the categories in the codebook, particular attention was paid to the metaphorical framings used by populist leaders (namely, candidates and representatives of the Greater Romania Party, the People's Party Dan Diaconescu and the New Republic Party) to talk about European and domestic politics. The analysis would provide valuable insights into the use of metaphors in populist discourse and their functions in a particular context (i.e. EP elections debates in Romania).

Self-obsessed Populism – Greater Romania Party

The party was represented by its leader, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, also a candidate to the EP (in three debates) and by Vlad Hoge, who did not run for a seat in the EP. Given the history of the party and the notoriety of its leader, the coded dimensions of populist discourse are found in the televised performance of the PRM leader and his colleague. Vadim Tudor announced that the corrupt political class that rules Romania has destroyed the country:

“We didn't destroy the economy, those who were in power did it.” (May 21)

“Ponta (the incumbent PM) has taken down the economy.” (May 21)

He also expressed his party's intention to organize a meeting to denounce Ponta's corruption and undermining of the national economy. Furthermore, the leader of PRM seized the opportunity to communicate his alternative to the direction in which the country was led:

“I propose, when I come to power...and the history is cyclic, in times of crisis, parties like Greater Romania, despite being kept facing the wall, will come to power...I promise that I'll do nationalization...why is PETROM (*a major oil and gas company*) in the hands of foreigners?” (May 21)

Throughout his interventions in the debates, Vadim Tudor never ceased to praise Romania's glorious past. He took great pleasure in acclaiming the inventions made by renowned Romanians (e.g. the pen, the jet engine, etc.), the work of scholars such as Mircea Eliade, or the fact that the first European Christian church was built in Romania (St. Andrew's cave).

Christianity and appeal to Christian Orthodox values are crucial to PRM and to Vadim Tudor's discourse. He acknowledged that both he and his parents were devout Christians and that Christianity was the only true religion of the world. He also mentioned several times that Christianity is very important for powerful EU countries, such as France or Germany (he quotes a former high official in the German parliament whom he had met during a visit in Germany and who had allegedly told him in confidence that Germany sought to unify Europe based on Christian values). Furthermore, when referring to Turkey's accession to the EU, Vadim Tudor again quoted a foreign official, French this time, who had allegedly confided to him in a meeting that France did not want Turkey in the EU because they “did not want to bring the worm into the apple”. But maybe the most theatrical expression that he used to proclaim the superiority of Christianity and the privileged status of the Romanian people was when he proudly and piously declared that “Romanians are the sons of God” (May 28).

Interestingly, the references to the people are not abundant in Vadim Tudor's discourse. On the contrary, he focused extensively and obsessively on himself, using “I” and active ac-

tion verbs very frequently. In fact, his performance revolved substantially around himself. He bragged about his cultural and educational background, about his accumulated experience as politician, about his meetings with high-ranking officials from all over the world and even about his readings. In all three debates to which he participated, Vadim Tudor brought a pile of books that he placed in front of him. Before answering, almost always, he started with a long introduction in which he boasted about his many and extraordinary achievements. He even showed a picture of him and Pope Paul II and another of him with Nelson Mandela. This is more evidence to show that his erratic behavior and his personality cult have altered his populist rhetoric, in the sense that instead of taking a hard line on his opponents in an electoral debate, he uses the time to talk about his erudition and righteousness. It seems that the fierce Vadim Tudor has gone softer when it comes to attacking everybody on every ground. In the debates analyzed, the leader of PRM used his usual weapon of choice – attacking Hungarians and their irredentism – on May 21, right before election day, when he had already seen the polls announcing a very weak position for PRM. He then attacked the candidate of the Democratic Union of Hungarians from Romania and invited them to “go to South Tirol and stay there if they want collective rights and autonomy for Hungarians” (May 21).

The people-centrism is more present in Hogeă's discourse, a well-known Romanian extremist, neo-Nazi and denier of the Holocaust, who, although not being a candidate to the EP, has reinforced PRM's appeal to the people whose interests it solely represents. Hogeă said that “we shouldn't position ourselves in opposition to Europe” and that “we have to show dignity in the EU” (May 7). At the same time, though, Hogeă contributed to his boss's personality cult by reminding a candidate from the Social Democratic Party (the incumbent PM's party) that the socialists' slogan in the EP elections, “Proud to be Romanian”, was actually a plagiarism of Vadim Tudor's book called “Pride of being Romanian”. Hogeă's remark alludes to the scandal surrounding Ponta (the PM), who had been accused of plagiarizing his PhD thesis.

Feeble Populism – People's Party Dan Diaconescu

People's Party Dan Diaconescu was present only once in the televised debates. A party representative, not a candidate, joined the debate on April 25th, 2014 and communicated PPDD's political offer to voters. There is insufficient material to properly analyze PPDD's populist discourse in the 2014 EP elections. It is possible that the party's leader was not sufficiently interested in these elections, or else he may have thought that there were more efficient ways in which to campaign than through participation to televised debates. The moderator asked why a candidate had not joined the debate, and the answer was that all candidates were then travelling across the country campaigning for the EP elections.

The representative of PPDD kept pointing out that her words were transmitting the political message of the party. Her discourse focused on the party's people-centrism almost exclusively. She affirmed that PPDD “made a different politics, a politics for the people and with the people”. The party sought to win seats in the EP in order to “represent the people, to represent the Romanians” (May 25). Her discourse excessively used “we” (we want, we seek) and “our” (our interests, our country, our future) in order to highlight the fact that the party represented the people. There were no occurrences of the other three dimensions in the discourse analyzed. Had it been more substantial, I would have expected at least the presence

of criticism of the rampant corruption of the political class and acclaim of Romania's greatness, which are staples of the PPDD's populism.

As far as PPDD campaign posters are concerned, they all had the same format: the picture of the candidate, on a purple background (this is the color of the party and a hint to Dan Diaconescu's purple signature tie), with the text "Together we win".

Rebellious Populism – New Republic Party

The 2014 EP elections were the first time when the New Republic Party (NRP) participated to an electoral confrontation. In the televised debates it was represented once by its leader, Mihail Neamțu, whose message contained all four dimensions of populist discourse, albeit differing in intensity. The leader announced from the beginning that NRP is an anti-system party. Its goal is to fight corrupt political elites on all fronts.

"Our goal is to fight rampant corruption in Romania, to denounce corruption at all levels. Not only smoking kills, stealing kills, too."

"Romania has been too much led by villains, by individuals with no morality, by criminals even." (May, 28)

NRP's leader mentioned that the party stemmed from a grassroots movement, and he referred to the "free citizens who built this party from scratch" who "gathered together led by a common ideal". Neamțu praised the numerous achievements of the party despite its short political history.

The politician managed to tackle many topics in the little time he had. The corruption of the political class was his weapon of choice. His discourse abounded in examples of corruption in education ("bribery at national exams"), the health system ("the mafia in the health system"), the fiscal system, the implementation of EU-funded projects, etc. He also attacked Ponta's plagiarism and mentioned that "stealing is a sin" everywhere in Europe, not only in Romania. He considered that all these were illnesses inherited from the communist era.

One of the last points that PNR's leader made in his discourse tackled Romanians' Christian values. PNR seeks to defend and preserve these values against EU initiatives such as Estrela and Lunacek, whose aim is "to reverse the traditional, Christian values". He declared himself against the reevaluation of the 2000-year old Christian principles and values in Europe. When the moderator asked him if he thought that these were topics that Romanians were really interested in, PNR's leader responded that "in Romania, there are millions who worship the Christian tradition and expected that politicians embrace the values in this country without betraying our secular creed".

As far as the acclaim for the country's greatness is concerned, Neamțu did not say much, maybe because lack of time. However, he referred to Romanian students who flee to the West, which is usually associated with 'brain drain', denoting a view of Romanian professionals as highly gifted.

The discourse of the NRP leader is consistent with the content of the party's posters. The message builds on the illness metaphor (discussed below) that Neamțu used when framing the fight against the corrupt political elites. The slogan on the poster reads: "Antidote to country's asthenia" and is followed by the image of a pill from which the medicinal substance is coming out. On the pill is written "pro-life". This is a reminder of NRP's opposition to EU initiatives such as Estrela, which advocates abortion, among others. While populists such as

Becali posed as Romania's redeemers on a God-given mission, NRP and its leader assume the role of guardians of the country's physical and spiritual health.

Populist Elements the Discourse of Mainstream Parties

Populism is a familiar presence in Europe not only as a self-standing ideology, but also as component of mainstream politics (Mudde, 2004). Populist arguments have been used by mainstream politicians of the opposition to challenge those in power, while the latter refuted opposition on the grounds of using populism to cover the formers' lack of viable alternate solutions. However, appeals to populist discourse seem to increase during elections, when many mainstream politicians believe that such a strategic move might bring them important votes. In addition to analyzing the discourse of the three identified populist parties participating in the 2014 EP elections, I have also searched for populist features in the discourse of mainstream parties. I have ruled out the discourse of the 8 independent candidates for methodological and space-related reasons.

Not entirely surprising, the major Romanian mainstream parties in the race for EP have integrated populist elements in their discourse. With the exception of the National Liberal Party, whose candidates have not used too many populist arguments, the other three (Social Democratic Party, Liberal Democratic Party and Popular Movement Party) have often slipped into a populist rhetoric. The National Liberal Party has elaborated a programmatic document for the EP elections and almost all participants to the debates have referred to this document. As far as their posters are concerned, the message was built on the conceptual metaphor "POLITICS IS A GAME" and the extended version "LIBERALS ARE WINNERS".

With regard to populism, the examination of the political discourse of the other three, and especially of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), is more thought-provoking. The candidates from the Liberal Democratic Party (PDL) and those from the Popular Movement Party (PMP) have been constantly at each other's throats whenever they met during the debates. The problem was that PMP was formed by a group of defectors from PDL, under the aegis of President (at that time) Băsescu. The weapon of choice that both opposing parties have extensively used has been corruption. They have accused one another of being corrupt and of lacking real solutions to the problems that Romania has been facing; at the same time they have also accused PSD (the party in power) of being the most corrupt party in Romania and for destroying the country. Using populist rhetoric also allowed the candidates of these parties to keep the debate on national-related topics, without little or no reference to EU-related politics.

"PMP is a copy, I invite people to vote for the original, PDL" (Marin Jean Marinescu, PDL, April 30)

"PDL's platform is: we support stained people". (Cristian Preda, PMP, April 30)

"We have a handicap: Ponta has done more harm to Romania than Ion Iliescu, "his political grandfather". (Cristian Preda, PMP, April 30)

"We have the right to a life without corrupt tycoons". (Cristian Preda, PMP, May 19)

PMP and PDL were practically sharing the same constituency, thus the need to attack each other in order to distance themselves from each other.

The messages of their posters did not necessarily directly relate to their discourses in the debates, but the content of the posters displayed no visible populist elements. PDL's slogan present on every poster read "Europe in every household", while PMP's message was "We

lift Romania up”. These two slogans and especially PMP’s deserve a separate analysis, one that is beyond the purpose of this paper.

By far the most interesting case is the discourse of PSD’s posters. The party has snaffled elements of populist discourse and has used them in their own. The candidates of the party have not necessarily used populist arguments during the debates. They had a hard time blocking attacks on government from the representatives of parties in opposition. Basically, with one notable exception (Ioan Mircea Pașcu), all other candidates from PSD fought with candidates from PDL and PMP on issues related to domestic politics.

The content of PSD’s posters reveals more interesting features of populist rhetoric than the candidates’ discourse. I have analyzed five posters, whose slogan is “Proud to be Romanians!”. None of the party’s candidates to the EP appears on the posters; instead, Victor Ponta, the PM, who was not a candidate in the race, is portrayed in two of the posters. He invites people to vote for the candidates of the party, in one case, and states that the party sends to Brussels people who are proud to be Romanians and who will defend the country. Playing the national pride card triggers some resemblances to populism and its predilection for exaggerating *Romanianness*. A different poster displays a collage of pictures of the most renowned Romanian cultural and natural attractions. Why would these be relevant to a voter when choosing who would represent the country in the EP? A plausible interpretation falls into the line of the preference of populists for referring in their discourse to examples describing the greatness of the country. Other two posters contain messages further supporting this idea: “Romania has the biggest growth in Europe!” and “Romania, the granary of Europe”. Out of context, these statements are bluntly false, they are meant to boost the pride of Romanians by distorting the truth. It is also worth mentioning that the 2014 EP elections campaign was conceived by PSD as a rehearsal for the high-stake presidential elections, which took place in November last year. Ponta was PSD’s candidate to the presidential elections. He lost to Klaus Iohannis, after scoring 10 points higher in the first round. Clearly, there are many complex factors that may explain Ponta’s striking defeat in the second round, however, it seems that the campaign messages of posters used during the EP elections (appeal to obvious populist elements) might have backfired during the presidential campaign.

Metaphors in the Romanian Populist Discourse during the 2014 EP Elections

Research on metaphors in political discourse has identified several types of conceptual metaphors that structure our experience with politics and that are frequently used (and preferred) by political actors. Some of these are WAR, SPORTS, FAMILY, AND ORGANISM/BODY. In his analysis of the metaphorical models underlying American politics, Lakoff (1996) highlights the role of the FAMILY metaphor in structuring the ideological divide in the US society between, on the one hand, conservatives who elaborate their view of the nation state on the basis of the STRICT FATHER model and liberals, who, on the other hand, rely on the competing NURTURANT PARENT model. Examining the metaphors used to conceptualize Europe and the European Union, Musolf (2004) shows how elements of the HUMAN BODY/ ORGANISM domains are mapped onto the institutions and the functioning of the Union. The corporeal conceptualization of political entities is widely spread and popular in both political and media discourse on the European Union.

The analysis of the metaphors used by populist parties in the 2014 EP elections has revealed three established ways in which the EU and politics are conceptualized: FAMILY,

ILLNESS and JOURNEY. The family scenario was suggested by the moderator of the debates when he asked about candidates and their parties belonging to a European political family. Given his previous sensitivity on the matter (his application to join the European Popular Party had been rejected, despite his efforts, which also included the changing of the party's name in Greater Romania Popular Party!), the leader of PRM declared that he "didn't want to be in any family". To the moderator's objection that not being part of a European political family means not having much influence in the EP, Vadim Tudor replied: "I have a lot of influence, I have been one of the finalists of the 2000 Romanian presidential elections. They know me in the EP" (April 28). Vadim Tudor switches from the FAMILY metaphorical framing of Europe and European politics to the SPORTS metaphor. He tries to divert the attention from the influent political groups that denied him access. Instead, he highlights his own merits, earned by participating in a race, hence the use of the sports metaphor. His excellent oratorical skills help him easily retaliate and push back with an alternate metaphorical framing of Europe and politics that serve his purpose. Despite his disagreements with the powerful European political families, Vadim Tudor is a promoter of the EU, a true believer in the European project, a Euro-optimist, as he proudly calls himself.

When asked about the objectives of her party in the event of winning seats in the EP, the representative of People's Party Dan Diaconescu described the JOURNEY that both the candidates and the voters that they represent would embark on. She mentioned that "we are Romanians and we intend to go there with dignity, to carry the message of the people" (April 25). She added: "we want to carry the people's interest into the EU". In this case, POLITICS IS A JOURNEY and POLITICIANS ARE TRAVELLERS are the conceptual metaphors used to connect people to candidates to the EU.

The New Republic Party leader's discourse builds on the ILLNESS metaphor. Romania is suffering from an "illness inherited from Communism" (April 28). He is willing to fight this illness that comprises corruption, post-communist presidents' wrongdoings, anti-Christian values among others. The illness has contaminated Europe, too. The metaphor EUROPEAN UNION AS A BODY favors conceptual mappings from the domain of HUMAN BODY onto the abstract domain of EUROPEAN UNION. Attributes of bodies, such as proneness to diseases, are transferred to the EU. NRP is ready to stop the spread of the disease using a "pro-life" pill.

Conclusions

Populism has gained momentum across Europe, culminating in the stunning high scores that populist parties, especially right-wing parties, obtained in the 2014 EP elections. This holds mainly for Western Europe. In Central and Eastern Europe, populist parties and movements seem to have taken a slightly different course. In this paper, I have analyzed the political discourse of three populist parties that participated to the 2014 EP elections in Romania, during televised debates. My aim was to examine if the populist discourse of these parties is people-centric, anti-establishment, acclaims the greatness of Romania and praises the Christian Orthodox heritage of the country. The Greater Romania Party, the People's Party Dan Diaconescu and the New Republic Party have integrated one or more of these dimensions in their political discourses in the elections. The people-centric feature that defines all populist endeavors is visible in all populist discourses, with a notable exception – PRM. In this case, the people-

centric valences of the discourse are overlapped and overridden by the leader of the party's obsession with his own achievements. Vadim Tudor is known to have shown an erratic political behavior that, in combination with other factors, has undermined the party. Despite their leader's charisma (Vadim Tudor), youth-driven exuberance (Neamtu) or repeated appeals to the people (PPDD), plus the presence of the populist elements in their discourse, none of these three parties managed to secure any seat in the EP. Their participation to the race has been entirely unsuccessful. PPDD and NRP are young parties whose internal strength hasn't been eroded in too many electoral confrontations; however, PRM seems to have exhausted its resources and may not be able to engage in future major electoral races.

A more interesting feature of the political discourse in the 2014 EP elections in Romania is the use of populist elements by mainstream parties. The Social Democratic Party has displayed many populist features in the content of its campaign posters. What seemed to be a good option in an attempt to maximize electoral success and to give a momentum to Victor Ponta's (the leader of the party and PM of Romania) candidature to presidential elections has not yielded the expected results. PSD has obtained a good number of seats in the EP, which was the overt goal of the campaign. However, in the long run, it seems that PSD has lost more than it has gained: Victor Ponta is not the president of Romania and, at least for the moment, party's dreams of a brighter political future have hit a wall.

Unlike the populist parties in Western Europe, their Romanian counterparts have not emerged victorious from the EP electoral race. And this comes despite the fact that Romanian populist parties are overt and genuine supporters of the European Union and of (many of) the European policies, unlike their Western relatives.

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Religion-Based User Generated Content in Online Newspapers Covering the *Colectiv* Nightclub Fire

Abstract

The high degree of interactivity of the Internet, combined with the almost ubiquitous presence of forums on online media publications, has offered everybody the possibility to express their opinions and beliefs on websites. This paper uses content analysis to examine the religion-based comments that were posted on 8 Romanian mainstream news websites in reply to articles regarding a fire that broke out during a rock concert in Bucharest, killing over 50 people and injuring more than 100. The analysis also included the answers to these comments. Among the findings, we have discovered that the highest percentage of religion-based comments made some type of reference to Satanism and that very few of them expressed compassion towards the victims. On the other hand, counter-speech strategies managed to halt hate speech in almost half of the cases where they were employed. However, personal attacks against religion-based commentators were the most commonly used form of counter-speech, contributing to an unfriendly climate on the forums.

Keywords: hate speech; user-generated content; religion; counter speech; content analysis.

Introduction: Hate Speech as a Form of Expression on the Internet

The fact that the Internet is a place where people can easily express their beliefs anonymously in an environment with a high degree of interactivity has transformed it into one of the most important tools for spreading out positive messages, but also hateful ones (Erjavec & Kovacic, 2012). Journalists have been one of the most important beneficiaries of the interactivity of the Internet. Their publications could reach out to their readers more easily by providing them with the possibility to post comments right next to the articles they read. This has led to readers taking a more active "watchdog" role, by being able to provide information to the journalists, but also to signal ethical slips in journalists' activity (Bowman & Willis, 2003). The economic model that most of the press relies on, i.e. revenues coming from advertisers that are interested in the size of the audience of the publication (Pavlik, 2001), has made comments even more important, as they show the engagement of the readers. However, more interactivity opens up more frequent possibilities for hate speech to be used online on mainstream websites (Erjavec & Kovacic, 2012).

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When it comes to hate speech, it is worth mentioning that there is no standard definition of the term (Slagle, 2009). The Council of Europe defines it as follows: “the term “hate speech” shall be understood as covering all forms of expression that spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin” (Weber, 2009). A more relaxed definition is given by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: “hate speech is hereby understood to be inflammatory language, often insulting and derisive, that targets an individual or group, and that may or may not include a call to violence” (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2009). Regardless of the type of definition used, a discourse can be considered a form of hate speech when its targets are selected by certain characteristics, when it stigmatizes the victims by associating them to traits that are usually seen as profoundly unwanted and when it casts the social group outside the normal boundaries of social relationships (Parekh, 2012).

Hate speech is a subtype of harmful speech (Leets, 2002), which is broadly defined as speech that is either intended by the producers or it is perceived by the receivers to cause damage (Leets & Giles, 1999). Even though there is legislation against hate speech, it is worth mentioning that not any form of hate speech can and should be retaliated against by means of law enforcement (Reed, 2009). Indeed, when analyzing hate speech, and, by extension, when determining its magnitude, there are at least four elements that need to be taken into consideration: the content, the producers, the receivers and the context (Angi & Badescu 2014).

Religious groups, such as the radical and dogmatic Catholic Movement have been noticed to use the internet as a tool for delivering their messages (Cammaerts, 2009). Even though very few studies have been conducted on hate speech propagated by religious groups in Romania, it would appear that atheists can be included among the targets of hate speech (Angi & Badescu, 2014). A recent practice shows that religious groups, regardless of their denomination, have started to develop and to disseminate hateful messages targeting representatives of the secular trend (Angi & Badescu, 2014). If atheists are a target of religion-based hate speech, the question arises on how producers of hateful speech communicate about people associated with the rock subculture, a culture that sometimes challenges conventional religious beliefs and that is, therefore, perceived to be against them (Abraham, 2014). This paper aims to examine the religion-based comments posted on news website forums in response to articles covering an accident that involved participants at a rock concert in Bucharest.

The Context of the Study

On October 30th, 2015 a fire broke out at a club in Bucharest during the concert of metal-core band Goodbye to Gravity. The incident was caused by fireworks used by the concert organizers during the show, but preliminary reports made clear that the venue itself did not comply with fire safety regulations, using flammable materials for soundproofing and lacking the required number of exits or fire protection equipments. 27 people were pronounced dead at the scene, while more than 100 other were taken to hospitals, many of whom required hospitalization in intensive care units. The nightclub fire became the main topic in the Romanian media. By November 1st, the site of the fire drew thousands of people that came to

mourn the victims, including several ambassadors and local political figures. Also, 8000 people participated in a memorial march in the center of the city.

The proximity of the event to the Halloween holiday (a non-traditional, albeit ‘borrowed’ holiday in Romania) led some people to speculate on the Facebook page of the event about mystical connections between the accident and the holiday, viewed by some Romanian ultra-traditionalist priests as an unholy and dangerous cultural import. Discussions about Halloween had made their way into the public sphere the week previous to the event, as some schools decided to ban the celebration. After the event, several religious public figures, including the Head of the Romanian Orthodox Church, made controversial remarks claiming that the victims were responsible in a certain way for the accident because of the kind of activity they were involved in, i.e. celebrating Halloween and going to rock concerts instead of going to church. Other public figures associated with Orthodoxism went even further and claimed that the participants or the music they were listening to (rock music) were Satanists.

As the focus of the media coverage changed from reports of the medical condition of the victims and the particularities of the event to mentions of allegations of widespread corruption that made it possible for the club to function despite complying to fire safety regulations, people started to protest against the government and the local administration of Bucharest (protests were directed at the mayor and the administration of capital’s District 4, where the club is located). On the evening of November 3, 2015, 4 days after the event, more than 15,000 people marched through Bucharest asking for the resignation of Romania’s Prime Minister, the Minister of Interior Affairs and the Mayor of District 4. The participants also passed by the headquarters of the Romanian Orthodox Church, in sign of protest against the attitude of Patriarch Daniel towards the victims. The following day, the Prime Minister resigned, but protesters continued to gather in even larger numbers in Bucharest, as well as in other cities, prompting the President of Romania to summon representatives of the parliamentary parties and civil society representatives to consultations over the formation of a new Cabinet. As such, the topic became politicized and the focus of the media shifted almost entirely towards the political crisis that followed the event.

Content Analysis of *Colectiv* – related Religious Comments Published Online. A Note on Methodology

In order to find a pattern for the religion-based commentators on the forums of online newspapers, we have chosen to use content analysis (White & Marsh, 2006), with the unit of analysis represented by the article. However, a corpus comprising all the websites that have covered the accident would have been impossible to gather and even counter-productive: there is no database that would list all news websites published in the Romanian language, but their number is estimated to be larger than 550. Taking into consideration that the fire at the *Colectiv* club has virtually been the only topic in the news for 4 days, one can estimate that the number of articles generated would be very high, tens of thousands, as would be the number of comments, too. This means that a way of narrowing down the research was imperative. As such, we have chosen to examine only national tabloids as well as publications that include general news. We have chosen to eliminate from the study publications that are specialized on certain topics such as sport, finance, home and decoration, etc. Religious publications have also been avoided, since they are marginal publications and it would be expect-

ed that their public is biased. In order to further narrow down the number of analyzed articles to around 500, we have chosen to analyze the first two general news online publications associated with Romanian televisions (www.romaniatv.net, www.stirileprotv.ro), the first three tabloids (www.libertatea.ro, spynews.ro and www.cancan.ro) and the first three general news online publications not associated with televisions (www.gandul.info, adevarul.ro and www.mediafax.ro), all ranked according to the audience they registered by the Audience and Internet Traffic Study done by the Romanian Trans-media Audit Bureau. We have also chosen to restrict the publication date of the articles analyzed to the first four days after the event, based on the fact that after this period of time the attention of the general public turned towards political issues, marked by fall of the Government.

The Google search engine was used to select the articles that were analyzed: the search was restricted to one site at a time, the time frame to the period between October 31st and November 3rd and the search word was “Colectiv”, the name of the club where the fire took place. For each search on the nine websites, only the first 150 hits were taken into consideration. Out of these, articles that did not concern the incident, its outcome or the victims, as well as articles that did not have any comments associated to them, were filtered out.

The coding form used to analyze the comments and included references to the number of religion-based comments, the type of articles that were more likely to attract this kind of comments, the percentage of visitors that left such comments, what were the main themes of the comments, with focus on the ones involving hate speech targeting people perceived to be bad Christians, whether people responded to them and how and if the responses determined hate speech to stop.

In order to be considered religion-based, a comment had to contain certain identifiers: keywords associated with the Christian religion such as “God”, “Jesus”, “Satan”, “devil”, “hell”, “Christianity”, “faith” or references to questions of Christian spirituality. Comments containing key words similar to the aforementioned, but as part of common expressions such as “Go to Hell” or “God forbid” were not considered religion-based unless there were other identifiers present in the text. A special case was that of comments containing the keyword Halloween or other indirect references to the holiday. All comments that hinted towards the fact that the incident that took place during the Halloween was not just a simple coincidence were considered religion-based, since the celebration does not imply rituals that pose physical harm to partakers.

Next, the categories used to classify the articles, the comments and the answers to the comments had to be identified. As such, frame analysis (Entman, 1993) was applied to a sample consisting of 30 articles and their related comments. As a result, 10 main themes were identified for the articles: information about the accident, portrait of the victims, portrait of the saviors – neighbors and employees of public authorities, portrait of the saviors – partakers to the event, articles concerning the owners of the club, articles concerning victims – musicians, articles about the involvement of the authorities, messages and declarations, messages and declarations – religious content, religious figures and public figures associated with Orthodoxy and a catch-all category – other. The religion-based comments fell into three large themes: anti-church, including comments against various religious figures, comments that were compassionate towards the victims and comments condemning certain behaviors, attitudes or subcultures that are considered harmful by the Orthodox Church. This last theme, consisting in comments that can be considered hate speech based on the three main characteristics of this type of discourse (Parekh, 2012), was further divided into anti-Halloween, as-

sociation of Halloween with Satanism, anti-rock, association of rock with Satanism and association of the participants to the event with Satanism. Another catch-all theme, “other” was taken into consideration, which would count the number of comments that would not fall into any of the aforementioned categories, such as comments that would be considered preaching or messages of support towards certain churches or anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic religious comments. The answers to hateful religion-based comments fell into 4 main categories: sarcasm, personal attacks towards the commentator, including insults, hate speech towards Christians and other non hate speech responses. For each of these categories, another marker was inserted that would say whether the type of counter speech employed has or has not stopped the hateful comments on the article. Two other markers were assessed at the end of the analysis of the responses to hateful comments: the first would assess whether it is possible or not to determine what kind of response would stop hate speech, the other would assess whether hate speech was stopped or not.

The coding form was also built so that a pattern of the behavior of the religious commentator could be shown. For each of the articles that were analyzed, the publication date was introduced in the coding form. Thus, by correlating the frequency of religion-based comments to the publication date, we could see if the commentators were more interested in the articles written just after the event, or they followed the event up to the end of the timeframe set for the research. Also, we were interested to see if the religion-based comments, as well as the answers to them, were grouped in clusters, or spread throughout the comments section.

Findings

Overall, 500 articles, which generated 7897 comments were analyzed. However, only 289 articles, that is a little over half of them, generated religion-based comments, which amounted to 1517, or 19,21% of the total number of comments posted. Looking at what type of articles that generated the largest amount of religion-based comments, the top position was occupied, unsurprisingly, by the messages and declarations that had a religious content or were given by religious figures and figures associated with Orthodoxism. These articles gathered 535 religious comments, about 32,7% of the total amount of comments that were registered for this category. High volumes of religion-based user-generated content was registered for articles that presented portraits of the victims (162 comments, or 27%), portraits of the saviors that were also partakers to the event (20,5%, but only 32 comments), portraits of other kind of saviors (16%, 11 comments) and information about the event (290 comments representing almost 14,9%). Articles that concerned the musicians victims gathered only 16 religion-based comments, but these comments represented almost 20,8% of the total number of comments posted to these articles. To the opposite pole, only about 3,8% of the comments posted to articles about the involvement of the authorities were religion-based, and articles about the owners of the club gathered 21 comments (7% of the total number), while messages and declarations not connected to religion in any way gathered 82 comments (almost 9%). Articles that fell in the “other” category had a percentage of religion-based comments of almost 21%, their number amounting to 348.

Articles published on October 31, the first day after the event, attracted 281 religion-based comments which represented 17% of the total amount of comments posted on day one. The percentage of religion-based comments published on November 1 and November 2 repre-

sented 19,4% and 21,3 %, respectively, of the total number of comments. However the sheer volume was considerably larger than on the first day: 452 religious comments posted to the articles published on November 1 and 465 to those that appeared on November 2. On the last day of the timeframe selected for the research, the number of religion-based comments dropped to 319, which represented 18.4% of the entire comments published that day.

Focusing only on the religion-based comments, 162 of them, or about 10,7% represented compassionate comments; 400 comments (about 26,4%) were against the Orthodox Church, priests or practicing Orthodox Christians; 27 comments, or about 1,8% were against Halloween, while another 29 (almost 2%) associated Halloween with Satanism; anti-rock beliefs were expressed in just 18 comments (1,2%), but the number of comments associating rock fans music or culture with Satanism amounted to 206, or about 13,5% of the religion-based comments, and 362 comments (23,86%) associated the participants at the concert with Satanism. The catch-all “other” category gathered 316, or 20,83% of all the religion-based comments. It is interesting to notice that Satanism was a theme present in about 39% of the religion-based comments and that comments that can be considered to represent hate speech against people viewed as not adhering to the Christian way of life amounted to about 42% of the total number. Turning to the articles where religion-based comments were posted, about 10 % of them had these comments grouped in clusters and almost 41 of the articles had religion-based comments spread out among others. 49% of the articles included in this category gathered only one religion-based comment.

As far as the comments that responded to hateful remarks are concerned, they appeared in 117 articles (or 40,48% of the number of articles where religion-based hate speech was present), and amounted to 538 comments. However, it is worth mentioning that in 56 out of the total of 538, meaning almost half of situations where counter-speech was employed, comments posted in response to hate speech actually managed to stop the propagation of hate speech. The most widely used strategies to counter religion-based hate speech were using personal attacks (245 cases or 45,5%), which were determined to be the winning strategy to stop hateful comments in 20 articles, and non-hate speech remarks (176 cases, or 32,7%), being successful in 14 articles. Sarcasm was employed 26 times (about 4,8% of all answers to hateful comments) and managed to stop religious hate speech in 3 articles, while hate speech towards people associated with religious hateful comments was employed 91 times (about 16,9%), but managed to stop hate speech in only 4 articles. Regarding the remaining 15 articles where religious hate speech was stopped, combinations of the strategies described above were used, so it was not possible to determine which one was more effective than others.

We have also observed that the percentage of the religion-based comments that were posted through Facebook was slightly lower than of those posted directly through the websites that were analyzed: 15,32% compared to 19,70%. A huge difference between these two kinds of comments was visible in the percentage of religion-based comments posted to articles that offered information about the event: 4,13% in case of comments posted through Facebook and 15,65% in the case of comments posted directly to the newspaper website. Messages and declarations without any religious content gathered 1,15% religious comments posted through Facebook, while comments for this articles posted directly on the websites themselves had 9,62 religious comments. Big differences were also seen in what concerns the percentages of religious comments posted to articles that depicted portraits of the victims – only 8,57% in case of Facebook posted comments, but 28,3% in the case of the comments posted on websites. It is also worth mentioning that the highest percentages of religion-based comments

were posted during the second and the third day of the timeframe of the research (15,67% and 22,22%, respectively), while articles posted during the first and last day gathered around 7,1% religion-based comments.

Among the religion-based comments posted through Facebook, 34,8% of them were directed against the Church, priests or practicing Christians (as opposed to 25,54%, as was the case of comments posted through the websites themselves). Also, the comments associating rock with Satanism made up only 2,22% of the comments posted using a Facebook account, as opposed to 14,7% in the case of the ones posted directly through the website. The comments associating the participants with Satanism were less common when users posted them through Facebook accounts: 16,3%, as opposed to 24,60%, when posted directly through forms on the websites. The percentages of comments falling in the "Other" category were, however, higher when posted through Facebook accounts, namely 34,8%, compared to 19,46%, as was the case with the comments posted directly.

Interestingly, among the articles that had religion-based comments posted through Facebook accounts only 15,8% also included replies to these type of comments. The most common strategy to answer hateful comments continued to be the use of personal attacks and of non-hate speech remarks, 52,1% and 36,6%, respectively, while the use of sarcasm and of hate speech directed towards practicing Orthodoxists were the strategies that were employed in the fewest of the cases, 2,8% and 8,4%, respectively.

Some differences were also observed when comparing the results obtained for the three types of publications that were analyzed: websites associated with televisions, online tabloids and general news websites. We have noticed that religion-based comments on tabloids tended to be grouped in clusters more often than in the case of the other types of publications: 22,6% compared to 4,4 % for general news websites and 7,35% for websites associated with televisions. Tabloids also had the highest percentage of religion-based articles – 27,66% (the percentage for all three types of publications, altogether was 19,2%). The articles that talked about victims that were musicians gathered the highest percentage of religion-based comments on tabloids (29,27%, compared to 1,45% for general news websites and 5,8 % for television websites). The portraits of the victims also gathered the highest percentage of religious comments on tabloids (34,25%).

The percentage of compassionate comments was highest on websites associated with televisions (about 18 %). Anti-church comments had the highest percentage among articles posted on general news websites, while the comments that associated rock with Satanism were more common on tabloid websites – 28,31%. The number of religion-based comments that fell in the "Other" category was lowest among those published on tabloid articles (10,4%). Interestingly, personal attacks used to react to religion-based hate speech was the most common response strategy among comments on articles published on general news portals, and made up about 51% of the replies.

It is also interesting to note some particularities about the findings related to some of the websites that we have selected for our research. First of all, the only newspaper website that has a working policy of not approving certain comments (among which are the ones that take the form of hate speech) was *Adevărul*. We have noticed that the 46 articles that we have analyzed from this website generated 88 unapproved comments, or about the same value as the religion-based comments, which amounted to 86. Taken together, the comments published on *Adevărul* that associated Halloween, the participants or the rock subculture with Satanism made up almost 20% of all comments, which represents a high percentage, but still half of

the median value for this sort of comments for all publications (about 40%). Also, on *Adevărul*, the comments that associated the participants with Satanism were found in a proportion of 4,65%, extremely low if compared to the median value of 23,86% of total comments of this kind found in all articles analyzed. It is therefore reasonable to say that some of the comments that were removed were religion-based and extremist in nature, but their exact number can only be speculated upon.

Another interesting phenomenon was observed on the website of the newspaper *Gândul*. The website had an automated filter for censoring obscene or defamatory words within the comments, but users were able to bypass it extremely easily by purposely misspelling such words, or entering punctuation marks among them. Also, obscene drawings made out of non-alphanumeric characters were posted by certain users. However, they were mostly directed towards political figures. Another particular thing that was noticed when analyzing articles from *Gândul* was that certain users engaged in preaching in the comments section. The most common way to do so was represented by posting several large comments, strictly containing quotes from the Bible, one after the other during a short period of time. These sort of comments were included in the category labeled "Other".

Particular behavior was also observed on the website of the tabloid *Cancan*. Here, the same several comments, usually associating rock with Satanism or saying that the participants were Satanists, were posted under different user names to a great number of articles. The fact that the comments were usually found one next to the other might suggest that one single person posted them under several aliases.

Discussion

Our research has focused on two directions. One of them was to try to determine the discursive behavior of the people that posted religion-based comments to article covering an event that involved people belonging to a certain subculture that is not considered by them to share the same values as Christian Orthodoxists. The other direction was to show how people posting online comments might fight religion-based hate speech and whether or not it is possible to stop this kind of speech.

As far as the first aim of the research is concerned, we did not expect to see such a great number of religion-based comments to articles on this topic: in the end, almost one in five comments brought into discussion matters of religion or spirituality, showing the importance of this topic for the people that are commenting on the forums of news websites. When comments posted were analyzed, we have observed that, although a considerable number of them were directed against the Orthodox Church, its priests or practicing believers, the greatest percentage of the religion-based comments was represented by several forms of hate speech directed towards people not seen as good Christians. The majority of these comments contained some type of reference to Satanism. This shows that people posting religion-based comments tend to have extremist views towards members of the society whose values they see as clashing with their own. This is in great contrast with what happened in the "offline" world, where, during the four days that represented the timeframe for the analysis, people tended to show solidarity towards the victims, with the number of blood donors reaching huge numbers and thousands of people coming to pay their respects to the victims at the site of the accident.

As expected, the articles that presented messages and declarations that had a religious component or that came from religious figures or from figures associated with Orthodoxism generated the highest percentages of religion-based comments. However the comments posted to articles that did not bring religious matter into discussion showed the judgmental behavior of people commenting online using religion-based arguments, or, at least, the fact that many people engaging in posting online comments tend to appeal to religion to explain tragic events. The majority of religion-based comments were found to articles that either presented the events or depicted the portraits of victims and saviors. When being presented with speculations about who might have been guilty of the accident or when were presented with conclusions about the investigation, readers tended not to post that many religious comments.

Another interesting thing that was noticed was that less than a quarter of all the articles that were analyzed hosted almost all of the religion-based comments. This shows that people posting such comments tend to do so if they see that others have engaged in the same kind of behavior as themselves. In other words, reaching a certain critical mass of religion-based comments to an article determines more users to post the same kind of comments to that particular article. These comments tended to be spread out throughout the comments section, a possible indicator of the fact that people posting them feel the need to "contribute" their religious ideas to the conversation, even if the focus in the comments section has changed in the meantime.

Another interesting fact is that the percentage of the religion-based comments has stayed pretty much the same throughout the 4 days that were analyzed, even though we have noticed that the volume of comments was greater during days 2 and 3 of the selected period. This could be an indicator that the attention span of religious commentators to a certain topic in the media is the same as that of the regular commentator.

When it comes to the second aim of the research, represented by how and to what extent people fight successfully religion-based hate speech, the most interesting conclusion was that counter-speech (i.e. using speech to combat hate speech) was surprisingly effective, having a success rate of almost 48% in the cases where it was employed.

However, people that have engaged in answering religion-based hate speech have most frequently posted personal attacks against the religious commentators, contributing to an unfriendly climate in the comments sections. This strategy was also the one that brought hate speech to a stop in 20 out of the 56 cases registered by this study. The second most widely used strategy was to post peaceful and informative answers, which had a positive impact in 14 out of the 56 cases. The worst results were obtained by the strategy that used hate speech in order to fight hate speech. Sarcasm seemed to be the strategy with the best success rate, comparing its results to how many times it was used. It is also interesting to note that people engaging in answering hate speech-filled comments also tended to group their posts to a small number of articles.

Furthermore, the lack of anonymity seems to favor less extremist behaviors: the readers that posted comments using a Facebook profile (where people usually use their own name and, thus, information about them is easier to access) have tended to express less extremist thoughts than people who posted under the protection of anonymity (the comments posted directly through the website allow users to select an alias in order to post comments). However, the number of anti-church comments was higher in the case of Facebook and the users that engaged in answering religion-based hate speech comments tended to use personal at-

tacks more frequently. Extremism is also well countered by having in place mechanisms to censor inappropriate messages, as was the case of the newspaper *Adevărul*.

Conclusions

This paper sought to examine the behavior of people posting religion-based comments in terms of what topics they touched upon, how extremist were the views they shared, whether they had a "pack" behavior or not (did they tend to comment to the same articles or not) and how much religion-based content could be generated by them in relation to an event that had at its center people they considered not to share the same values as themselves.

However, the way these people have built their arguments is not investigated here. It would be interesting to see whether they prefer to post longer or shorter comments, what kind of figures of speech they use in particular, whether or not they try to use logical arguments or just emotional ones, whether they tend to use the same archaic language that is found during Orthodox sermons or not and whether or not their behavior could be considered "trolling" (posting comments not out of personal convictions, but as means to annoy other readers). These are all future avenues for research that could be exploited in order to gain more insightful knowledge into the discursive specificities of online comments.

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Book review

Mălina CIOCEA*

Book review of *Mass-media, modernitate tendențială și europeanizare în era Internetului* [*Mass-media, tendential modernity and Europeanization in the Internet era*] by Constantin Schifirneț, Bucharest: Tritonic, 2014, 356 pages

A strong voice in the Romanian sociology of communication, Constantin Schifirneț has published extensively in the fields of cultural anthropology and Romanian philosophical and sociological thinking, re-editing fundamental works by Spiru Haret (vol. I-XI, 2009-2010), C. Rădulescu-Motru, A.D. Xenopol and other significant authors. His most recent papers analyze phenomena and processes in Romanian society: modernization and Europeanization, with a special focus on the role played by mass-media in these developments.

This book gathers several articles and studies previously published in various academic journals, which illustrate the evolution of the central concept in professor Schifirneț's systematic investigation of contemporary Romania: tendential modernity. The author defines tendential modernity as "a specific type of development, mainly produced as a modern political and institutional construction in a non-modern social and economic context" (*Introduction*, p. 11). The concept is minutely articulated in chapter 14 of the present book, *From tendential modernity to Europeanization*. The analysis of mass-media impact on the Europeanization of Romanian national society requires an in-depth study on transition societies, where modernization is a political strategy, rather than an organic result of capitalist economy. Romanian modernity is defined by the author as "a tendency, rather than an evidence" (p. 286), a mosaic of organic cultural models and unstructured Western influences. Initially imported as a political project, modernity has failed to replace obsolete social structures and institutions. With capitalist culture, entrepreneurship and civil society missing, modernity in Romania does not permeate the deep strata of traditional culture: "there is modernity, but the modern man is missing" (p. 291). On this imperfect, incomplete process of modernization is now superimposed a new type of modernity, Europeanization, which requires a reorganization of nationhood. The author's constant preoccupation with processes of social change in Romania allows him to claim that "all discourses in Romanian public space invariably associate Europeanization with a new modernization, which shows the existence of a modernization deficit, which people expect to recover through European development" (p. 298). In the absence of organic assimilation of European values and modern behavior, Europeanization may well result in

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half-way modernization, dissociated from Romanians' real needs. In this context, mass media can model European behavior.

The author's interest in cultural practices is well illustrated by the article *Traditional culture – mass media culture*, initially included in the book *Generation and culture*, published in 1985. In fact, the author was one of the first researchers of mass media in Romania and its impact on various publics.

In the book reviewed here, the concept of tendential modernity is put to work in a variety of contemporary contexts. The articles approach cases such as: image of institutions in a tendential modernity society (chapter 7), corporate social responsibility in Romanian society (chapter 9), types of interactions on the forums of online newspapers (chapter 4), processes of interaction and socialization in mass media and new media (chapter 12). The most consistent part of the book is constituted by the cumulative development of the central concept. The earlier chapters fix the role played by mass media in the modernization process. In *The paradox of the public space*, the author points that mass media's capacity to model public space depends on the level of economic and social development and the complex value system. From the national public sphere, the perspective opens towards European public sphere (chapter 2), the main thesis developed by the author being that in post-communist societies, mass media favor party elites' viewpoints, rather than the opinion of various social groups. The following chapter discusses transformations in identitarian processes, in the context of Europeanization, delving into the early modernization stages. While the author's interest in 19th century history places him into a well-established tradition in Romanian thought, it is his acute analysis of contemporary processes which is the real gain of the book. Questions such as: "Can mass media have a real influence in the process of Europeanization in the context of the population's distrust in other fundamental institutions?" (chapter 6, *The Europeanization of national community in the context of tendential modernity*, p. 123) could invite vivid debates about various distortions of modern imperatives in Romanian society. The presentation of complex research developed in the grant "The media construction of Europeanization as a public problem in the context of Romanian society's European integration" provides much-needed data on the Europeanization of local media (see, for instance, chapter 10, *Europeanization, identity and mass-media in tendential modernity society* on the content of news on public and private TV channels and the role of national public debates in the formation of European identity).

As knowledge about European identity and European public sphere progresses, such local analyses on "the domestication of Europeanization" will build an informed perspective about the national publics' expectations and reactions. On the other hand, they invite an unambiguous treatment of "the European man", who "is not an artefact, the consequence of constructed identity" (p. 188).

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