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Nicoleta CORBU*
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Framing the Refugee Crisis in Online Media: A Romanian Perspective

Abstract

The European Union (EU) is under severe pressure, due to the multiple crises it has to manage. Among them, the refugee crisis is remarkable, since it is shaking both the individual member states and the EU as a whole. The media coverage of the refugee crisis is important because the media still are the main source of information concerning distant issues (the refugee crisis included), and as such it facilitates people's access to social reality. Using the perspective of agenda-setting and the conceptual background of framing theory, we aim to (1) identify the most prominent frames online media employ with reference to the refugee crisis, and (2) reveal the tone of voice online media use when portraying issues related to this crisis. To achieve these two goals, we content analyzed 1493 online news articles, published between April 15, 2015 and February 29, 2016.

Main findings show that online media outlets mainly refer to the refugee crisis in terms of responsibility and conflict, in this order of prominence. At the same time, online media portals prefer using a reasonably balanced viewpoint when portraying the refugees, and a slightly negative one in terms of attitudes towards the European Union.

Keywords: online media coverage, generic frames, tone of voice, EU refugee crisis

Introduction

Issues related to refugees and the refugee crisis have been highly debated in many European Union countries over recent years (Berry, Garcia-Blanco, & Moore, 2016; Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). One explanation refers to the implications of the increasing waves of refugees who found shelter in the EU, leading to the refugee crisis, often portrayed as the second most important crisis at the EU level, after the financial crisis from 2008. The most severe implications include the continuous degradation of positive public attitudes towards refugees (i.e., the positive attitudes of compassion, solidarity, and empathy have quickly turned into aversion, disruption, and apathy); the widespread feelings of insecurity associat-

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ed with the refugee crisis; and, as a consequence, the rise of populist, xenophobic and Eurosceptic parties across the EU. The media have an important role to play in this dynamic.

Previous research studies show that the media are people's main means of information, especially with reference to topics to which people do not have direct access (Strömbäck et al., 2011). The media function as a "window" to the world, in the sense that they offer the order of priority of real-life events, the objects, the associated attributes, and their interpretation as well. Therefore, by offering people the most important topics of discussion and the main frames of interpreting those topics, the media also function as a "guide". First, they attract people's attention, second, they provide a certain direction towards that topic, and, then, they cultivate people's opinions and attitudes about that specific topic. It is against the background of these well documented roles of the media that our research unfolds.

The aim of the present article is twofold: (1) to explore the online media framing, and (2) to determine the tone of voice used with reference to the European refugee crisis. We start from the existing literature which shows that the media coverage of EU-related topics, and the tone of voice used by the media to cover issues referring to the EU largely influence public perceptions and attitudes towards the refugees and the refugee crisis. We calibrated this study on the basis of the third-level agenda-setting theory and framing theory. Its focus is to reveal the way online media frame the refugee crisis (i.e., which are the main attributes online media associate to the crisis), and the way online media cover the crisis in terms of attitudes towards the refugees and attitudes towards the EU. This theoretical setting allowed us to identify some important characteristics of the online media coverage of the refugee crisis which could further explain changes in people's attitudes towards the crisis.

1. Media coverage of the European refugee crisis

Both theoretical and empirical studies so far suggest that the media play an important role in modern and complex societies, mainly due to the fact that the citizens are dependent on the information provided by the media (Machill, Beiler, & Fischer, 2006, p. 173). The media can either "lead or follow public opinion" (Lawlor & Tolley, 2017, p. 968), meaning that there is a permanent renegotiation of roles among the entities (i.e., the media, the policymakers, and the public) involved in the process of public opinion formation. However, the role of the media not only as a source of information, but also as a source of interpretation of events cannot be neglected (also see Milioni, Spyridou, & Vadratsikas, 2015).

The media coverage of EU-related topics has been recurrently studied from various points of view, such as the visibility of EU-related news stories (de Vreese, 2001; de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006), or the type of news coverage (de Vreese, 2007; Norris, 2000; Schuck & de Vreese, 2012). Such studies suggest two relevant connections: (i) the greater the visibility of EU-related topics in the media, the higher people's knowledge about the EU; (ii) the more negative the tone of the news about the EU, the more negative the public evaluations of the EU (see also Menéndez Alarcón, 2010).

Studies on European migration topics emphasize the fact that the media coverage (i.e., media framing and media's tone of voice) "can influence public opinion, promote various interpretations of the immigration system [...], or cue specific considerations, including legitimacy, 'need', and security" (Lawlor & Tolley, 2017, p. 968). In other words, the way in which migrants and refugees issues are described, categorized and represented has a great importance,

especially when it is done by news media “whose ‘cultural authority’ is premised upon speaking truth to power and representing the world of events to us” (Berry et al., 2016, p. 13). The media coverage and interpretation of topics related to refugees actively contribute to people’s understanding of events – what the events are about, and how people should further relate to them (for an overview of social representations of refugees and the refugee crisis in the media, see Bleich, Bloemraad, & de Graauw, 2015; Horsti, 2008; Licata & Klein, 2002; Mengistu & Avraham, 2015). As Strömbäck et al. (2011, p. 161) show, “what the media cover and how they cover it thus become highly important”. According to results from studies on agenda-setting, framing and priming, the media can have a strong influence over what topics people consider important (i.e., the first-level agenda-setting or the order of priorities of events), and how people evaluate and perceive issues, actors and events (i.e., the second and third-level agenda-setting) (Guo, Vu, & McCombs, 2012). Indeed, the media provide the information which citizens use to understand the world and find their place within it (Berry et al., 2016).

Furthermore, it is important to mention that not only the presence and visibility of the topic make a difference, but also the tone of news coverage: “evaluative media content is an important parameter for assessing the nature of public debates, because evaluative media content provides important cues for citizens’ perception of the EU” (de Vreese, Banducci, Semetko, & Boomgaarden, 2006, p. 483). According to Berry et al. (2016), research developed in many EU countries confirms that refugees are more likely to be referred to in a negative manner, as a problem, rather than as a benefit to host countries. The negative evaluations of the refugees in the media often lead to negative evaluations from the public (Menéndez Alarcón, 2010).

Nevertheless, there are occasions when the media can have a positive impact on public attitudes and policy. Positive references to refugees in the media are often associated with less concern about immigration among people (Berry et al., 2016; Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). In other words, the media coverage of sensitive topics (such as the refugee crisis) might explain the shifts in public opinions and attitudes, and might give some clues about the emergence and development of decisions and behaviors at a societal level (e.g., “unexpected” voting results or the rise of populist, xenophobic and Eurosceptic parties).

2. Third-level agenda-setting and framing

Some of the most recent studies referring to media and communication effects identify a new theoretical approach, namely the third-level agenda-setting or the network agenda model (Guo, 2012; Guo & McCombs, 2016). According to this rather new model of influence, the media are responsible for offering people the topics of discussion (i.e., the objects), their attributes and their interpretation, as well as the way topics are associated with each other: “the news not only tells us what to think and how to think, but also determines how we associate different messages to conceptualize social reality” (Guo, 2016, p. 3). The hypothesis behind this new model of influence is that “the salience of media networks of objects and attributes influences the salience of the networks of these elements among the public” (Guo, 2016, p. 5). In other words, the third-level agenda-setting model suggests that media’s influence might not be limited only to offering people topics of discussion, the order of priorities (first-level agenda-setting), and a direction of interpreting events (second-level agenda-setting). This new model suggests that media’s influence goes further, shaping or reshaping people’s cognitive network.

The main aspect that characterizes the third-level agenda model is that the representations in “people’s heads” are based on images following a network-like structure; unlike the other two ramifications of the agenda-setting theory, the network agenda model states that the media influence not only the objects and their associated attributes, but also the relationship between the objects themselves. In other words, the network agenda model has deep implications, suggesting that the media play an important role in configuring the way people think and how they think about certain events (Guo, 2014). The implications of the theory have been empirically tested and there is sufficient ground to argue in favor of a third-level of agenda-setting effects. Studies emphasize the idea that the more prominent the simultaneous association between certain objects and attributes in the media, the more likely the public perceive them as strongly linked together (Meraz, 2016; Vargo, Guo, McCombs, & Shaw, 2014).

In what regards the framing theory, researchers tend to agree with each other that the media offer, through framing an event or an issue, a certain direction of understanding, in the sense that they might change the way people might understand that specific event or issue (de Vreese, Boomgaarden, & Semetko, 2011; Lee, McLeod, & Shah, 2008; Matthes, 2008). Starting from the classic definition of frames and framing proposed by Entman (1993), the media have the ability to select some aspects from the reality and make them salient in a communication context. Therefore, by emphasizing some aspects and ignoring others, the media guide people’s perceptions on a specific topic. Following the same line, other classic views suggest that media frames are “a set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 3).

In real-life media contexts, there is a high probability that media frames differ in terms of typology. Therefore, the exposure to different media frames could cause different effects. Theoretical studies show a rather clear distinction between generic and issue-specific news frames and their effects on audiences (Carter, 2013; de Vreese, 2005, 2012; de Vreese et al., 2011; Iyengar, 1990). On the one hand, the generic news frames might go beyond thematic constraints, being used for an entire set of topics. On the other hand, the issue-specific news frames are suited for individual or particular situations and events (de Vreese, 2005).

The generic approach to media frames enables generalizations and conclusions that “transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts” (de Vreese, 2005, p. 54). Specifically, generic news frames facilitate the comparisons among similar topics and, thus, contribute to the creation of associative networks among connected theories. In this context, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified five types of generic news frames: (1) responsibility frame; (2) conflict frame; (3) morality frame; (4) economic consequences frame; (5) human interest frame (for details regarding the types of questions used in order to identify each of these frames, see the Appendix).

Theoretical studies prove the existence of two main ways of identifying news frames, irrespective of their typology. The deductive approach refers to “the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). In other words, by using such an approach, researchers try to find out if certain pre-defined ideas are recognizable in a news story. This type of news frame identification is considerably safer than the inductive one. The latter “refrains from analyzing news stories with a priori defined news frames in mind” (de Vreese, 2005, p. 53).

Empirical studies so far underline the idea that these five generic frames are widely used by the media with reference to a wide variety of topics (Asker Guenduez, Schedler, & Ciocan,

2016; de Vreese et al., 2006; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). However, due to the rather few studies on the media coverage of European migration and because of the novelty of the issue, both the way media frame the refugee crisis, and the tone of voice used in portraying the refugees and the EU are still subject to examination. Therefore, this research paper aims to investigate the online media coverage of the refugee crisis (i.e., the most prominent frames used by the media and the tone of voice used for covering issues related to the crisis), in an attempt to understand the emergence and development of public attitudes towards the refugee crisis.

Specifically, this research paper addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. How was the refugee crisis framed in Romanian online media?

RQ2. Were the most prominent topics about the refugee crisis framed similarly or differently in the Romanian online news?

RQ3. What was the tone of voice used in Romanian online news regarding the European refugee crisis?

RQ4. Was the tone of voice of the most prominent topics about the refugee crisis similar or different from the rest of the news, in terms of attitudes towards the refugees and attitudes towards the EU?

3. Methodology

Method

This study proceeded from a content analysis of the online news concerning the refugee crisis in the period April 15, 2015 – February, 29, 2016. The online media outlets were chosen based on the number of unique visitors during this time period (reported by SATI, the Romanian media audience measurement agency): two news portals, hotnews.ro and ziare.com, and two online newspapers, adevarul.ro and gandul.info. TV news sites were not considered for this study. Only news concerning the refugee crisis were content analyzed. Archives of the news outlets and 21 keywords covering the semantic field of the refugee crisis (such as refugee, migrant, quotas, asylum, etc.) were used to identify all relevant pieces of news for the topic. A total number of 1493 news stories were coded: hotnews.ro (n=376), ziare.com (n=367), adevarul.ro (n=436), and gandul.info (n=314). Coding was performed manually by four native speakers, graduates of a College of Social Studies in Romania. The intercoder reliability tested on a subsample of 30 articles yielded satisfactory results for both frames (.76) and tone of voice (.88).

Framing measures

To assess the extent to which a frame appeared in a news story we used an adapted scale from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Thus, five generic frames were measured, using 18 questions to which the coder had to answer with “yes” (1) or “no” (0). The answers were afterwards grouped into scales for the five generic frames typically used in news analysis: responsibility, conflict, morality, economic consequences, human interest (for full scales, see Appendix). We used Cronbach’s alphas (according to Kuder-Richardson 20 method for dichotomous data) to measure the internal consistency of the five scales. Thus, alpha values were: responsibility .822 (5 items), conflict .753 (4 items), morality .811 (3 items), economic con-

sequences .834 (3 items), human interest .821 (3 items). We computed composite variables for each scale, by averaging the unweight scores for all items of each scale. Thus, the maximum value for a frame (1) would mean that the specific frame is present in the news story in all its aspects, while the minimum (0), the frame is totally absent from the news story.

Tone of voice measures

The tone of voice of the news stories was measured on an ordinal scale of -1 to 1 (negative, neutral, positive), assessing both the tone of voice regarding the refugees and the European Union in this context.

4. Findings

Generally speaking, the refugee crisis was covered in the Romanian online media from a responsibility point of view, that is the subjects covered were discussed in terms of who is (or should be) accountable for solving the crisis, finding solutions, or focusing on findings solutions, both at the national level and at the European level. All four media outlets covered the topic in a similar manner; only small differences in frame prominence were registered (Table 1).

Table 1. Intensity of frames by media outlet for news stories about the refugee crisis.

Media outlet		Responsibility frame	Conflict frame	Morality frame	Economic consequences frame	Human interest frame
www.hotnews.ro	Mean	.45	.20	.11	.12	.17
	N	376	376	376	376	376
	Std. Deviation	.37	.29	.26	.28	.31
www.ziare.com	Mean	.41	.21	.17	.16	.21
	N	367	367	367	367	367
	Std. Deviation	.38	.29	.31	.32	.36
www.adevarul.ro	Mean	.40	.23	.13	.14	.14
	N	436	436	436	436	436
	Std. Deviation	.36	.31	.29	.29	.29
www.gandul.info	Mean	.40	.24	.08	.16	.13
	N	314	314	314	314	314
	Std. Deviation	.37	.33	.23	.32	.28
Total	Mean	.41	.22	.12	.14	.16
	N	1493	1493	1493	1493	1493
	Std. Deviation	.37	.30	.28	.30	.31

The second most visible frame was conflict, emphasizing difference of opinions either within the European Union, or at the country level, disagreements among the European member states or among representatives of parties or countries. Human interest ranked third, es-

pecially due to the “episodic” framing of various moments of the crisis, stories that brought into the spotlight incidents at sea or individual stories of refugees or journalists covering the crisis. Even though there were many economic implications of the refugee crisis, the economic consequences frame was not very prominent in online news. This could be due to the lack of appeal of economic matters to the public in general, which makes journalists in general reluctant to discuss too many economic issues in news.

Generally, the same kind of framing of the refugee crisis was used in the subset of news stories which specifically referred to the European Union. In terms of responsibility, this could mean that journalists emphasized the need to take responsibility, action, and blame not only when the European decisions and actions were discussed, but also for individual countries, stories, or particular topics related to the crisis (Table 2).

Table 2. Intensity of frames by media outlet for news stories about the refugee crisis referring to the EU.

Media outlet		Responsibility frame	Conflict frame	Morality frame	Economic consequences frame	Human interest frame
www.hotnews.ro	Mean	.45	.20	.10	.15	.11
	N	119	119	119	119	119
	Std. Deviation	.36	.32	.25	.32	.26
www.ziare.com	Mean	.39	.17	.18	.18	.18
	N	116	116	116	116	116
	Std. Deviation	.38	.29	.34	.34	.35
www.adevarul.ro	Mean	.41	.23	.11	.14	.11
	N	174	174	174	174	174
	Std. Deviation	.38	.31	.26	.28	.27
www.gandul.info	Mean	.44	.27	.09	.11	.11
	N	92	92	92	92	92
	Std. Deviation	.37	.36	.26	.27	0.27
Total	Mean	.42	.22	.12	.15	.13
	N	501	501	501	501	501
	Std. Deviation	.37	.32	.28	.30	.29

The only differences between all news and EU related news were a small increase in the economic consequences frame in the EU related stories, and a slight decrease in the intensity of the human interest frame. However, these differences were almost negligible.

The news stories made prominent several topics (from an agenda building perspective), among which the most visible were the decisions taken in the member states (55.9% of the news stories), political asylum (34.8% of the news stories), and solidarity at the EU level (30.7% of the news stories). These three topics were covered generally in the same manner as all other news stories, that is, largely framed from a responsibility point of view, followed by a conflict framing and a human interest one. However, there were some significant differences in terms of the intensity of these frames for the topics of political asylum and solidarity.

For the general topic of the political asylum, news that covered this particular topic were significantly ($t(988)=1.953$, $p<.05$) more conflict oriented ($M=.24$, $SD=.32$) than news stories that did not ($M=.21$, $SD=.29$). As far as solidarity is concerned, the responsibility frame was more intense in the news stories covering the topic ($M=.46$, $SD=.36$) than in the rest of the news ($M=.39$, $SD=.37$), the difference being statistically significant ($t(1491)=3.441$, $p<.01$). At the same time, there were differences in the economic consequences framing intensity ($M=.17$, $SD=.32$ vs. $M=.13$, $SD=.29$ respectively), the difference being statistically significant ($t(801)=2.027$, $p<.05$) in the sense that the news stories discussing the problem of solidarity at the level of the European Union were more focused on the economic dimension than the rest of the stories. However, responsibility largely remains the dominant frame of all topics related to the refugee crisis, followed by the conflict frame, regardless of the subjects covered by the news or of the media outlet.

As far as the tone of voice is concerned, the overall tone of the news covering the refugee crisis was generally balanced, with a mean close to zero ($M=-.02$, $SD=.74$), whereas the tone of the subsample of news in which the European Union was specifically mentioned was slightly negative ($M=-.14$, $SD=.74$). (Table 3)

Table 3. Tone of voice of news regarding the refugee crisis (attitudes towards the refugees vs. attitudes towards the EU).

Media outlet		Attitude towards refugees	Attitude towards the EU
www.hotnews.ro	Mean	-.03	-.07
	N	376	119
	Std. Deviation	.74	.73
www.ziare.com	Mean	.04	-.09
	N	367	116
	Std. Deviation	.74	.74
www.adevarul.ro	Mean	-.04	-.24
	N	436	174
	Std. Deviation	.73	.74
www.gandul.info	Mean	-.04	-.10
	N	314	92
	Std. Deviation	.77	.74
Total	Mean	-.02	-.14
	N	1493	501
	Std. Deviation	.74	.74

As in the case of frames, the tone of voice does not differ much from one media outlet to the other. The one clear difference reflects the fact that the website of the newspaper Adevărul was more negative towards the EU than the rest of the media outlets.

As far as the three most prominent topics are concerned, the decisions taken in the EU member states were covered generally in the same manner as the rest of the news, whereas there was an important difference in the way journalists covered the topic of solidarity within the EU, if compared to the rest of the news stories, from the point of view of attitudes towards

the refugees ($t(872)=13.911, p<.01$). The news stories that dealt with the topic of solidarity showed a positive attitude towards the refugees in general ($M=.36, SD=.70$), while in the rest of the news the tone of voice regarding the refugees was negative ($M=-.19, SD=.70$). This is probably due to the feelings of empathy, solidarity, human understanding of the human drama of the refugees, as opposed to judging the consequences, social movements or country difficulties raised by the crisis. The attitude towards the EU is equally different in the stories covering subjects related to solidarity: the EU is framed in a slightly positive way in these news stories ($M=.04$), and negatively in the rest of the news ($M=-.29, SD=.68$), the difference being statistically significant ($t(499)=5.161, p<.01$). The general attitudes towards the refugees and the EU were similar in the news covering political asylum, compared with the rest of the news.

5. Discussion

Increased contestation over numerous EU-related issues reshaped the manner in which this supranational political entity is perceived by the general public. In recent years, the EU was exposed in the media and by the media as being flawed and vulnerable to crises. The waves of refugees in need of asylum that hit EU territory as of 2015 prompted vivid national and European debates over the opportunity of EU member states to act together to solve the crisis. The aim of our research was to investigate how the refugee crisis is framed in the online media in Romania, and to determine the tone of voice prevalent in the online news articles. In line with findings in the literature, we argue that the particular way in which EU-related issues are framed influences the public perception of those issues. Furthermore, the media coverage of any topic of European relevance can have a spillover effect, by cultivating the public's opinions on the EU as a whole.

Findings indicate that the online media outlets we analyzed framed the refugee crisis mainly in terms of accountability. Out of the five general frames (responsibility; conflict; morality; economic consequences; human interest), the responsibility frame was prevalent across all sources. Through specific framing processes, the journalists enforced the argument that the most significant issues related to this complex topic were casting blame, and identifying the suitable actors for solving the crisis. Furthermore, the responsibility frame ranked first in the subset of news that made reference to the European Union. The need to address EU's accountability as a global actor, to share responsibility, and to take action were present both in news discussing European decisions, and in news which focused on individual countries, stories, or particular topics.

Unsurprisingly, conflict came second in terms of visibility in the news. This frame emphasized difference of opinions within the EU. This finding reflects the reality of the refugee crisis; for many months, addressing the crisis was stalled by disagreements among the European member states or among representatives of parties or countries over who is to blame, what measures need to be taken, and who should (or should not) share responsibility. There was a significant amount of online media coverage on the opportunity and justification of enforcing mandatory quotas of refugees for all member states. It was to be expected that such lasting dissensions would make the conflict frame more visible than others.

Despite the fact that the refugee crisis is not only a question of foreign policy and security, but also a heart-breaking human tragedy, it is rather surprising that journalists did not make

the human interest frame more visible. Ranking third, this frame reflects emotional moments in the timeline of the crisis, such as at-sea accidents, or individual stories of refugees fleeing from the destruction of their countries. Despite the newsworthy potential of human interest stories, our data suggests that journalists favored a broader interpretation of the crisis, focusing on macro phenomena instead of depicting singular life stories or tragedies. This does not imply the trivialization of human loss; instead, it suggests the overall circumstances that made this tragedy possible.

Journalists were least preoccupied with the economic consequences and the moral aspects. In what the economic consequences frame is concerned, its relative low visibility could be explained by the public's lack of interest in the arid economy-related topics. Nevertheless, there was small increase in the economic consequences frame in the EU related stories, probably due to the controversy surrounding the mandatory quotas. Arguments in favor of, or against the quotas revolved around the costs of caring and integrating the refugees in the European societies, thus making the economic consequences of the crisis more concrete for the audience. The morality frame ranked last for both news stories about the refugee crisis in general, and the news stories that relate explicitly to the EU. This result suggests that the online media coverage does not associate accountability for the crisis with moral judgments; the appeal to the European values (especially solidarity) is not salient, despite the fact that official statements in Brussels often pleaded for acting based on this shared system of values and beliefs. The news stories we analyzed failed to depict the topic in these terms.

It is worth mentioning that no significant differences between online media outlets could be found. All four websites covered the topic in a similar manner, and only small differences in frame prominence were registered. This homogeneity of the online media coverage across news sources could potentially increase the effects of framing for the audience, by enforcing the perception of a shared view of the crisis in the Romanian public sphere.

We were interested in the prominence of the topics identified in the news stories. The fact that the most visible topic were the decisions taken in the member states illustrates the urgency of the refugee crisis, which prompted member states to take action, instead of gradually building consensus towards shared solutions. The topics of political asylum and solidarity at the EU level were also prominent in the news stories. Based on this top-three ranking of topics, it can be argued that the refugee crisis was mainly understood as an urgent issue in need of swift decisions, and as a question of giving or denying political asylum to the refugees. Furthermore, the crisis introduced the citizens to a dilemma: should all member states act united, based on the principle of solidarity? Favoring solidarity or individual interest during the refugee crisis could create a precedent for crisis response at EU-level for many years to come.

The aforementioned topics were covered generally in the same manner as all other news stories, favoring the responsibility frame, followed by conflict and human interest. Nevertheless, the intensity of these frames varied in the case of two topics: political asylum and solidarity. More specifically, news that covered the former tended to be more conflict oriented, suggesting that this issue prompted more diverging point of views than other topics. The responsibility frame and the economic consequences frame were of greater intensity in news addressing the question of solidarity than the rest of the news, which could in turn lead to the perception that member states who refuse cooperation in solving the crisis are actually avoiding their responsibility to do so.

The online media coverage of the refugee crisis is generally characterized by a balanced tone of voice, with the notable exception of the sub-sample referring to the EU, where the

tone tends to be slightly negative, suggesting that EU's image has not been left unharmed during the crisis. In this respect, *Adevărul* is the news outlet with the most negative tone of voice towards the EU. Besides this exception, no other significant differences between news sources could be found, suggesting a unified voice of the Romanian online media on this particular topic.

When comparing attitudes towards the refugees and attitudes towards the EU, differences are visible according to the topic in question. In general, the news stories focusing on solidarity tended to show positive attitudes towards the refugees, in contrast with the rest of the news, which manifested negativity towards them. Furthermore, the attitudes towards the EU are more positive when solidarity is addressed. We can conclude that, albeit the refugee crisis was not framed in terms of human interest, the online media coverage does have, at times, a humane approach, focusing on solidarity, shared values, empathy and understanding for the personal drama of the refugees. This is the only approach that allowed positive attitudes towards the EU and towards the refugees. The online media coverage that evaluated "hard" aspects, such as consequences, social movements or national difficulties raised by the crisis was prone to rather negative attitudes.

6. Conclusions

The refugee crisis is one of the most recent examples of public contestation over EU-related issues. The amplitude and urgency of the refugee waves made the crisis an issue of concern for all member states, irrespective of their role in handling the crisis. In what the Romanian online media are concerned, findings suggest that the refugee crisis was mainly framed in terms of accountability. Journalists were deeply concerned with identifying the actors responsible for the refugee crisis, and also with casting blame, identifying solutions, and emphasizing conflict. Other meaningful aspects of the crisis, such as morality, economic consequences, and human interest were secondary. The emphasis on responsibility and conflict is associated with negative attitudes towards the EU and the refugees. Since the particular framing of an issue influences public opinion towards that issue, we expect the EU to suffer losses in terms of image in Romania, as well as in other member states.

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Appendix

Frames coding questions

Attribution of responsibility

Does the story suggest that the government structures (national or supranational) have the power to solve the problems?

Does the story suggest that some level of the government sector / political decision makers (national or the EU) is responsible?

Does the story suggest finding rapid/immediate solutions to a problem?

Does the story suggest that the problem requires rapid / urgent actions?

Does the story suggest that individuals (or groups or society) are responsible for a problem?

Conflict frame

Does the story suggest conflicts / disagreement between parties/ groups / individuals / decision makers / countries?

Does the story refer to winners and losers?

Does the story reflect that one party / individual / decision maker / country reproach another?

Does the story refer to two sides of the problem?

Morality frame

Does the story contain any moral message?

Does the story refer to God or religious values?

Does the story refer to behavioral / social norms that should be adopted or that are acceptable / unacceptable?

Economic consequences frame

Does the story refer to financial losses or gains on the short or long term (for anyone)?

Does the story mention costs or expenses involved?

Does the story mention economic consequences of adopting / not adopting some measures?

Human interest frame

Does the story provide a “human face”, an individual example for the problem (refugees, citizens of EU member states, etc.)?

Does the story refer to ordinary people’s reaction to events?

Does the story offer a human face of the subject, by appealing to adjectives that suggest suffering, hardship, humility, empathy, etc.?

Loredana IVAN*

Sex Role Identity, Communication Skills, and Group Popularity

Abstract

Using two groups of undergraduate students ($N = 71$) the present paper argues about the importance of sex role identity (Bem, 1981) as a potential predictor of group popularity. The results show that participants with psychological androgine identity tend to use better their communication skills and become popular among their peers. Contrain to previous studies (e.g. Hall, 1984; Saarni, 1999) focused on gender gap in communication skills, the current study emphasis on the importance of the sex role identity (Bem, 1974, 1975) in undstanding the relation between communication skills and likeability.

Keywords: communication skills, sociometric popularity, sex role identity, psychological androgyny

Introduction

The importance of interpersonal communication skills in producing positive outcomes for individuals and groups is largely accepted and scholars agree that differences in communicational competence are associated with differences in the way social actors achieve personal and professional success.

When studying communication skills, considerable research emphasized that men and women differ in their cognitive responses to interpersonal situations (Hall, 1984; Hall & Halberstadt, 1981) and at least at common sense women are perceived as better than men in their abilities to communicate with others(see Gray, 1992). Contrary to the stereotypical representation on gender differences in communication skills, the empirical evidence suggests that differences between men and women are rather small for each of the communication aspect measured or research instrument used to assess the communication competence. "Meta-analyses of sex differences in communication behavior generally indicated that there are small differences between women and men in communication behaviors, and these differences are moderated by other variables". (Dindia, 2009, p. 4). The effect size of biological sex on different communication skills is small ($d \sim .02$). In most studies sex did not explain more that 1% of the variances in communication competence and 85% of men and women overlapped in their scores on the communication aspect measured in that particular study (Canary & Hause, 1993; Hyde, 2005).

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One interpersonal communication area in which sex differences proved to be larger is nonverbal communication. The work of Judith Hall (1984), *Nonverbal Sex Differences: Communication, Accuracy and Expressive Style*, is one of the most quoted research study in the regard of sex differences and nonverbal communication skills. Using a meta-analysis of more than 900 empirical studies, Hall found a medium effect size ($d \sim .05$) for half of the dependent variables, meaning that one third of women and men do not overlap in their scores, when nonverbal communication skills were measured. Even though some authors (e.g. Dindia & Canary, 2009) have criticized these results mainly because Hall did not report also the studies in which not gender effect was found, it seems that sex differences in nonverbal communication are larger compare with other interpersonal communication areas. The research findings provided by Hall (1984, p.142) show also that while the size effect ranges from $d \sim .02$ to $d \sim .05$ across studies, in the case of dependent variables which refer to decoding skills, the probability to find sex differences increases. In other words, there are not significant sex effects in communication skills, except for nonverbal competence and, within this research area, women score better especially in the nonverbal decoding accuracy tasks. Such statement seems in line with the research findings provided by Robert Rosenthal and collaborators (1979) using the PONS test (The Profile of Nonverbal Sensitivity), one of the first instrument to measure nonverbal decoding skills, widely used in empirical studies on adult groups: A consisted effect on gender for PONS test was found in 80% of the tested samples ($N = 2615$).

Taking all these into account, the current study investigates potential gender differences in nonverbal decoding accuracy using PONS, when psychological sex is also considered. The study argues on the importance to use the sex role identity to analyze differences in communication competence and the impact of communication skills on individuals' social success. Thus, people might differ in their abilities to decode nonverbal cues, not because they are women or men, but because they think about themselves in stereotypically feminine terms (i.e. emphatic) or in stereotypically masculine terms (i.e. tough). In addition, their communication skills could be a mediator between their psychological sex identity and social success.

In the subsequent paragraphs, first we discuss about the main findings on gender and nonverbal accuracy, then we argue about the usefulness of sex role identity theory in interpreting and generalizing these findings and in the end we will provide evidence for the interplay between nonverbal sensitivity and sex role identity on group popularity, particularity on likeability.

Gender and nonverbal communication accuracy

Studies that have analyzed gender differences in nonverbal sensitivity consistently show that women have higher abilities to encode and decode nonverbal cues (C. Saarni, 1999). In most studies, nonverbal competence is tested by asking participants to mimic or to decode facial expressions associated to the basic emotions: happy, sadness, fear, anger and surprise. One possible explanation for the higher performance of women in nonverbal communication of basic emotions is the difference in early socialization: At least in European and North American cultures, women are encouraged, beginning with the early years of their life, to express emotions and to read others' emotional feelings (Buck, Miller, & Caul, 1974; Zuckerman & Przewuzman, 1979). However, at least in case of decoding accuracy, a large body of studies (Ekman & Friesen, 1969; Izard, 1971) found that people from different cultures,

including primitive ones, men and women, could easily decode facial expressions of the basic emotions, regardless their level of emotional socialization. If we accept the idea of universal, basic emotions (as happy, sadness, fear, anger) we implicitly accept the idea that women and men do not differ in their abilities to decode basic emotions, but their might differ in their abilities to decode others' nonverbal cues associated with daily interactions.

Gender stereotypes could be a source of differences in communication skills between women and men. We expect women to be more involved in interpersonal communication, more emotional and interested in others' feelings, whereas men are expected to be more emotional controlled, rational and less interested in others' emotional experiences. When people hold these schemata about gender roles, they probably pay less attention to behavioral aspects which are counter-schematic. It is well known that mental schemata influence the way we select and process information from the environment (Cohen, 1981; DeLamater & Myers, 2011) and gender stereotypes are nothing more than mental schemas that we have about women' and men' role in the society. It might be that women and men have similar communication abilities but they react differently according to their expected gender role. In the case of decoding accuracy, gender stereotype might help women to get higher scores because they are expected to pay more attention to others' feeling and nonverbal sensitivity is included in their self-schema. One experiment conducted by Casey (1993), using participants from 6 to 12 years of age, proved that although boys and girls experienced the same emotions when a person gave them positive or negative feedback, girls were more emotional expressive than boys and they were also more able to give details about the emotions they had shown to others. Other research studies (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988; Klein & Pitman, 1993) have found that men have higher performance at controlling negative emotions (i.e. sadness, anxiety, fear) than women. Such findings suggest that gender differences in communication skills, particularly in nonverbal accuracy, are more related to sex role identity than to biological sex particularities.

Sex role identity and communication skills

Bem (1974, 1975) advocated for the sex-role identity theory in which femininity and masculinity are seen as interdependent dimensions of self-identification with stereotypically gender characteristics. From this point of view individuals, both men and women, could identify themselves more with culturally defined masculine characteristics (e.g. 'dominant') and be a masculine sex-oriented type or with culturally defined feminine characteristics (e.g. 'sensitive') and be a feminine sex-oriented type.

Additionally, Bem (1981) described the third type, neither masculine nor feminine sex-oriented but androgynous – individuals who described themselves both through feminine and masculine characteristics, representing a more flexible sex-identity type. For the current research we hypothesize that: *The differences in nonverbal decoding accuracy will be higher when we consider people's sex role identity than when we take into account their biological sex (H1)*. Because people will pay more or less attention to nonverbal cues if their self schema includes stereotypically feminine characteristics, as emotional sensitive or emphatic, we expect differences in their nonverbal decoding scores especially between masculine oriented type and feminine oriented type or androgynous type. In other words, people who include in their self role identity attributes typically defines as feminine, will also score higher on nonverbal decoding accuracy, regardless their biological sex.

Current research on the relationship between stereotype and performance emphasis that holding a particular self schema does not always help people to performed better. Stereotype threat (see Steele & Aronson, 1995) describes what happens when stereotypes are activated and people become aware of them: People might act in order to confirm or disconfirm the stereotype with direct implications on their performance. Although such process has been originally studied on negative stereotypes, showing a negative impact on individual's performance, current findings have distinguished the implications of stereotype threat also in case of positive stereotype (Seibt & Förster, 2004): When negative streotype are activated, individuals performance in creative tasks decreases, whereas in analystic tasks increases and when positive stereotypes are activated, the reverse is possible. When people are aware of the negative stereotype associated with their group (ex. "women are not so good in maths") they will act in order to disconfim it and this will results in higher concern for mistakes which might eventually lead to bad performance, especially when the task is new or requires creative approach. Contrary, when the positive stereotype is activated (ex. „women are emphatic”), people could act in order to confirm it and this will eventually increase the probability of making errors in basic, rutinier tasks. Following this argumentative line, we predict that: women with strong feminine role identity, will not necessary score higher on nonverbal decoding tasks, especially because they are overconfident in their abilities to do so. *Due to stereotype threat process decribed above, women with a strong feminine sex identity would not benefit from their highly expected nonverbal competence and their scores will be lower on nonverbal decoding skills compare with the fellow participants with androgynous role identity (H2).*

Nonverbal accuracy and likeability

Generally speaking, nonverbal decoding accuracy has been related to individual's popularity in groups, in studies conducted on children (Nowicki & Marshall, 1992; Nowicki & Mitchell, 1998) and adolescents (Nowicki & Strand, 1999). People with high nonverbal accuracy seem to be more liked by their peers (Nowicki & Marshall, 1992) and have higher rate of social participation (Custrini & Feldman, 1989; Verbeek & de Wal, 2001). Studies conducted on adults show also that the nonverbal decoding accuracy is related to relational well-being (Carton, Kessler, & Pape, 1999) and social status (Scherer & Scherer, 2011). Such findings are not surprising because people expect others to be sensitive to their feelings. Moreover, systematic research findings (see Archer, Akert, & Constanzo, 1993) show that extraverts and empathic people have higher scores at both nonverbal accuracy and likeability. Thus, the relation between nonverbal competence and popularity could be mediated through some core personality features. In addition, self identity schemata could shape the relation between decoding skills and likeability. It is well known that schemas induce expectations about how things will develop (Fiske & Taylor, 1991) and when people hold feminine or androgynous role identity, they would probably expect to be more interpersonal sensitive and, as a result, more liked by others. People are feeling uncomfortable when situations are progressing in a different way compare to their schemas (Forgas, 2001) and they would probably try to modify the reality so to confirm de expectations (Rosenthal &. Jacobson, 1966). We predict that the sex role identity mediate the relation between nonverbal accuracy skills and likeability: *People with high feminine role identity and high nonverbal competence will be more liked by*

their peers than people with low feminine role identity and high nonverbal competence (H3). We estimate that similarly pattern is valid in the case of masculine role identity: Participants having high masculine role identity and nonverbal competence are less liked than those with low nonverbal competence, but consistent to their self identity schema.

Method

Participants

Two groups of undergraduates from a Romanian public university ($N = 71$; 57 women and 14 men), age 19 to 21 ($M = 20.3$, $SD = .64$) took part in this study as a part of their weekly seminar meetings. One group was enrolled to a Nonverbal communication class, 35 students (7 men and 28 women) and another group was enrolled for a Social psychology class, 36 students (7 men and 29 women). Each group completed the tasks separately.

Measures

Sex role identification. The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI, Bem, 1981) has been used to assess participants' self-description in 'masculine' or 'feminine' terms. A Romanian back-translated version of BSRI has been firstly pre-tested on a group of 40 students and then used for the current research. The instrument consists in 60 scales of bi-polar attributes stereotypically associated with masculinity and femininity. After calculated 'femininity' and 'masculinity' scores for each individual, the instrument allows also the distinction between four possible categories of sex-role identity: F (individuals with high femininity scores), M (individuals with high masculine scores), MF (psychological androgyny, both feminine and high masculine scores above the mean) and N (non-differentiated – individuals with both masculine and feminine scores below the mean).

Nonverbal sensitivity. A face and body form of Profile of Nonverbal Sensitivity (PONS, Rosenthal et al., 1979) has been used to assess participants' ability to decode emotional situations. This form contains visual items from the full PONS, 20 body-only items and 20 face-only items and consists in 40 slides, 2 seconds each, enacted by a young woman (aged 24, white, resident in US) who is filmed when expressing spontaneous emotions associated to different situations: some with low emotional intensity (e.g. 'ordering food in a restaurant') and others with high emotional intensity ('expressing jealous anger'). The face and body PONS measures nonverbal sensitivity on visual channel only, having a .63 overall reliability. The internal consistency of the PONS ranges from .86 to .92 and its median test-retest reliability is .69 (Ambady, Hallahan, & Rosenthal, 1995). The visual channel scores significantly correlate ($r = .50$, $p < .001$) with the full PONS (Rosenthal et al., 1979, p. 53). Participants have to choose the correct answer from a dual answering sheet.

Sociometric peer's rating. Social preference has been tested by a rating procedure: Participants were asked to rate each colleague on a 7-point scale from 'dislike very much' (assigned -3) to 'like very much' (assigned +3), with the midpoint of the scale (0) reflecting neutral judgments (e.g. Witvliet et al., 2010). Then likeability scores were calculated for each participant using the normalized average likeability rating. Sociometrically liked people have

been associated with prosocial behavior and, generally speaking, their likeability is explained by the way they offer gratifications to others (see Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993).

Procedure

First students had to answer each of the 40 items from the Face and Body PONS. Then, they were asked to describe themselves using the 60 polar attributes of BSRI. In the end, each participant received a set of rosters with the names and codes of all the other peers from the seminar group and he/she would be asked to rate each of them on likeability, using the social preference rating procedure described above. Additional information about participants' age and biologically sex were collected.

Results

Sex role identity and nonverbal decoding accuracy

We compare the PONS scores obtained by students from our sample with the normative group (Rosenthal et al., 1976). The mean scores of our student sample are similar with Rosenthal standardized group of 68 married people: face ($M = 15.51$, $SD = 1.66$); body ($M = 14.46$, $SD = 1.53$), total ($M = 29.97$, $SD = 2.35$). Only in the case of face-only items our subjects scored lower (see Table 1). Women were better than men in decoding emotional situations associated with the PONS test ($t = 2.45$, $p = .05$), particularly on body items ($t = 1.99$, $p < .05$). These results are consistent with previous studies using PONS on Romanian student samples (see Ivan & Duduciuc, 2011).

Table 1. Means and standard deviation for nonverbal decoding accuracy scores (PONS).

<i>Level of nonverbal</i>	<i>Face items</i>		<i>Body items</i>		Total PONS	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>sensitivity</i>						
Females ($N = 57$)	14.21	1.84	14.80	1.56	29.0	2.71
Males ($N = 14$)	13.90	1.56	13.12	1.31	26.40	2.42
Total ($N = 71$)	14.05	1.82	14.13	1.61	27.94	2.60

In order to test the first hypothesis, we conduct an Analysis of Variance on the mean accuracy scores of nonverbal accuracy between the three sex role identity types: masculine, feminine and androgynous (Table 2). The ANOVA revealed significant differences between the three sex identity types and nonverbal competence on all three dimensions: face, body and total PONS. Post-hoc tests showed that participants who tend to describe themselves both in feminine and masculine terms, called here 'psychological androgynous' were significantly more accurate in decoding nonverbal cues than those who could be described as 'masculine sex-oriented type'.

Table 2. Sex role identification and differences in nonverbal communication skills using PONS.

(ANOVA)					
	Sex role (BSRI)	N	M	SD	F
Total PONS	Feminine type	40	28.56	2.51	5.29 (p = .025)
	Masculine type	8	27.40	2.90	
	Androgyny type	23	29.30	2.62	
Face items	Feminine type	40	14.32	1.42	2.32 (p = .024)
	Masculine type	8	13.27	2.10	
	Androgyny type	23	14.56	1.62	
Body Items	Feminine type	40	14.78	1.51	3.26 (p = .002)
	Masculine type	8	13.63	1.96	
	Androgyny type	23	14.94	1.64	

Moreover, women who defined themselves in stereotypical feminine terms and got higher feminine scores on BSRI were also less able to decode the emotional situations of the PONS test ($r = -.27, p < .001$). These findings are intriguing especially because there is no similar work on emotion recognition and sex role identification. We found partial support for the second hypothesis: Women with a strong feminine sex identity will have lower decoding skills compare with the fellow participants having androgynous sex role identity. This particular relation was found on total PONS scores but not on the two PONS components (body-only and face-only).

Sex role identity, nonverbal decoding accuracy and likeability

In order to test the third hypothesis we compare the likeability scores for men and women participants with different sex role identities. Both women and men with androgynous role identity were more liked by their peers than women with feminine role identity and men with masculine role identity. Note that there was no woman in our sample that could be labeled as “masculine type” or man that could be labeled as “feminine type”, probably due to the reduced number of participants.

Table 3. Differences in likeability as a relation between sex and sex role identity.

Biological sex	Sex role (BEM)	N	Likeability	SD	ANOVA (F test)
Women	Feminine type	40	56.21	6.82	6.49 (p=.001)
	Androgyny type	17	60.73	6.32	
Men	Masculine type	8	61.75	8.94	9.03 (p=.000)
	Androgyny type	6	64.67	5.27	

The results show that participants with androgyny role identity have both high nonverbal decoding accuracy (on both face and body items) and high likeability scores. As we have pre-

dicted, participants from the androgyny type, regardless their biological sex, have higher nonverbal decoding accuracy and they also enjoy peers' appreciation.

In order to test the interplay between the two variables: sex role identity and nonverbal competence in predicting sociometric preference (likeability), we conducted A Two Way ANOVA, using likeability as a dependent variable, whereas the androgyny and the total PONS were factors (Table 4).

Table 4. Two way ANOVA. Test between – subjects effects.

Dependent variable: likeability ^a		
Variable	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Sex role (androgyny)	5.592	.020
PONS	1.419	.184
Sex role * PONS	5.594	.004

^a R squared = .55 (Adjusted R squared = .27)

The analysis of variance show that: 1) there are not differences in likeability between participants with high nonverbal accuracy scores and those with low nonverbal sensitivity scores; 2) participants with androgynous role identity are significant more liked than those with feminine or masculine sex role identity. Moreover, the data support the third hypothesis: We found an interaction effect between the sex role identity, particularly the androgynous role identity and nonverbal competence in predicting likeability in peer groups. Having high nonverbal decoding skills and androgynous sex role identity increases chances for a participant to be liked by their peers with 27%.

Discussion

Consistent with previous studies using PONS test (Rosenthal et al., 1979) we found that women scored higher than men and this relation is particularly strong in the case of body items. Such differences in the nonverbal decoding accuracy at body cues had previously been found in studies on adult population in Romania (Ivan & Duduciuc, 2011) and abroad (Thibault, Bourgeois, & Hess, 2006). It could be that body-only items are more difficult to decode or require previous experience, and women are better at such nonverbal decoding tasks because they pay attention more to body cues in general or they are used to do so in daily interactions, because they occupy more submissive roles.

We have also found that the sex role identity could be used as an important predictor for the nonverbal decoding accuracy and studies that analyze gender differences in communication skills could benefit from using a comparison between biological and psychological sex. Androgynous type was associated with higher nonverbal decoding accuracy. We suggested as a possible explanation gender stereotypes and the way self schemas are working to transform the perceived situation: People who describe themselves both in stereotypically feminine and masculine terms (psychological androgynous), would pay more attention to nonverbal cues in general and would be also more motivated to decode others' feelings. Following the same argumentation line, we predict that when people hold strong feminine self identity, this will work against them and decrease their nonverbal competence though stereotype threat

phenomenon. And indeed we found a negative relation between feminine scores (on BSRI) and scores of the total PONS. It might be that women who are thinking about themselves in strong feminine terms would rely more on their intuition in interpreting the emotional situation. In a previous research (Ivan 2009) we used Rational Experiential Inventory (REI, Epstein, Donovan, & Denes-Raj, 1999) in relation to PONS test performance and we emphasized that participants who rely on intuition would have lower scores than those who rely on cognition. Thus, participants who are overconfident in their abilities to decode nonverbal cues, as women with strong feminine sex role identity, would eventually have lower scores on the PONS test, compare with those with androgynous role identity.

Finally we emphasized the interplay between the sex role identity and nonverbal competence to predict likeability/ sociometric popularity. Contrary to previous studies that directly linked nonverbal decoding skills with social status or likeability, we argue that such relation might be mediated through individual's sex role identity. Indeed, participants labeled as androgyny type and having high nonverbal scores were more liked by their peers than those having high nonverbal skills and different sex role types (feminine or masculine). The direct relation between nonverbal decoding accuracy and likeability was not significant, whereas the interaction effect between sex role identity and nonverbal competence significantly increased participants' chances to be liked by their peers.

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Alina DUDUCIUC*

Age-friendly Advertising: A Qualitative Research on the Romanian Silver Consumers

Abstract

As consumption has become a major aspect that characterizes the life of people currently aged 55 and older, fervent public and academic debates have been raised around the accurate portrayal of seniors in advertising. While most of the previous quantitative and qualitative research highlighted the inappropriate ways of representing elders and the unsuitable framing of advertising claims, little research has been done so far to understand which are seniors' expectations regarding their portrayal in current advertising campaigns. Based on in-depth interviews with Romanian adults of the 55+ generation, this paper investigates how seniors understand ageing with respect to the manner in which they have been depicted in nowadays advertising and what are the detailed features of the offensive or inoffensive advertising campaigns targeting them. The findings revealed that participants that lost their status during ageing favor the use of chronological rather than cognitive images of their age. Additionally, the running of the natural surroundings in advertising were found as empowering for both the young and the older adults of our research.

Keywords: advertising, ageing, silver consumers, qualitative research

Introduction

The nowadays under-representation of elderly people in mainstream advertising has been the subject of ongoing criticism. On argument, often voiced by critics, is that the 20th century advertising seemed to be obsessed with the cult of youth, as proved by how often the juvenile features of the models used in ads were emphasized. Since 1950, the presence of the ageing models in media productions and printed advertising has been rather an exceptional occurrence than common for both marketers and target consumers. Consequently, the current modalities of advertising products (i.e. cosmetics, clothes, new technologies, tourism services) follow the same pattern of age differentiation: they advertise brands and, implicitly, identity models targeting mostly the young population.

With the demographic shift to an ageing society worldwide, advertising and media industries began to renew their interest in silver consumers and to prospect the potential of their purchasing power and longevity. Still, the presence of the “greyed models” in certain adver-

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tising campaign (i.e. *Dove*; *Dolce & Gabbana*; *Marks & Spencer*) has been a isolated phenomenon within a “myopic youth centred marketing” (Wassel, 2011, p. 357), segmented only by age, product or service category. In this context, over the past three decades, the accurate portrayal of people aged 50 to centenaries has become a recurrent theme of the academic and public debate.

In this case, the manner in which media advertising portrays ageing and the perspective of growing old has been largely investigated in media and ageing studies using both quantitative (Kay & Furnham 2013; Kohlbacher & Chéron 2012; Furnham & Paltzer 2010; Zhang, Harwood, Williams, Ylänne-McEwen, Wadleigh & Thimm, 2006; Miller, Leyell & Mazachek, 2004) and qualitative methodologies (Chen 2015; Marshall & Rahman, 2015; Loose & Ekström, 2014; Flatt, Settersten, Ponsaran & Fishman 2013; Brooks 2010; Calasanti 2007; Calasanti & King 2007). In all these approaches – whether qualitative or quantitative – the scholars have highlighted the inappropriate ways of portraying elders (i.e. as unattractive persons; not up to date; confused; physically frail and financially dependent persons) and the unsuitable framing of advertising slogans (i.e. the anti-ageing ad claims that neglect natural ageing). When targeting silver audience, “the bold and the beautiful” (Panic, Cauberghé & Verhoye, 2011, p. 133) images are often endorsed two-fold: as “heroes of ageing” who are “positive” about ageing, with “youthful” habits and demeanour, on the one hand, and as physically frail and traumatized people who are not able to take care of themselves, on the other.

Theoretical background

Previous research has shown that both younger and older adults share the same idea regarding offensive and inoffensive portrayal of seniors in advertising and that both age groups (younger people and seniors) are aware of the use of stereotypes in commercials (Robinson, 2008, p. 248). The mature consumers (50+) approve or disapprove the use of advertising models that are similar to their chronological age. The elderly people appreciate the advertisements in which the persons of their age are represented as autonomous, friendly, competent, educated and motivated to find out new things (Ahman 2002, p. 354). Other senior consumers prefer models similar to their cognitive age, which is 10-15 years younger than the real self.

Recent studies also showed that seniors preferred models that resemble with their subjective age rather than their chronological age (Yoon & Powell, 2012, p. 1324; Robinson, Gustafson & Popovich, 2008, p. 236). The similarity with the age of the models has several effects as the attention toward ads, the credibility of the source and the likelihood of purchasing the product increase. Other explanations for these results might be related to the trend in today’s society, characterized by a fear of ageing and a strong need to stay and look young. Not only do seniors like models who match their subjective age, they also find them more trustworthily (Panic et al., 2011, p. 142).

While the quantitative approach on ageing in advertising tracks the media representations and stereotypes, the qualitative framework (Chen, 2015; Marshall & Rahman, 2015; Flatt et al., 2013; Brooks, 2010; Calasanti, 2007; Calasanti & King, 2007; Coupland, 2010) is more focused on how seniors perceive and interpret the meaning of advertising messages as well as how cultural ideas about modifying or controlling ageing spread through advertising claims or how advertising shapes the social attitudes toward successful ageing. The anti-ageing ads

are using stereotyped images and claims of old age as tools to promote products that promise the empowerment (Calasanti, 2007). Calasanti (2007, pp. 335-337) notes that a whole society is based on the logic that the younger counts more in a certain point of time than the older people and thus it legitimates ageism. The exclusion of the elder people from job market, family or status groups, not only as a consequence of ageism, but also as a result of the way in which the society is structured (e.g. social groups, life stages), creates opportunities for unequal distribution of resources and power. Thereby, the rhetoric of anti-ageing advertising reinforces the cultural constructs of ageing, bodies and gender.

Advertising was criticized because its textual and visual messages are rallied with the dominant discourse of the society, favoring the discriminatory treatment of seniors in society (Carrigan & Szmign, 1999). Consequently, most of the data research on elderly people, when the latter were in favor of the image of “rejuvenated” old age, were attributed to the “hard” effects of advertising on the attitude and life style of the audience. However, based on the statistical data, several advertisers and marketers sustain that, in general, seniors preferred to be depicted ten years younger than their real chronological age (Yoon & Powell, 2012, p. 1324; Robinson, et al., 2008, p. 236). Such assumptions, as Gilleard and Higgs (2011, p. 369) pointed, are made based on erroneous methodologies, which segmented silver population as a residual and homogenous group, and on the characteristics pertaining to age or product category. Moreover, previous similar studies were rarely involved seniors as respondents (Gilleard & Higgs, 2011).

Although the findings of the previous research on traditional media advertising are largely available for the state of knowledge, little research has been done so far to understand the attitudes of seniors regarding advertising and how the means of executions (in this case, the cognitive versus chronological illustrations of old age; the selected models; situation to portray, etc.) can empower or disempower the older adults. However, questions about the relationship between personal experiences of older adults and the emergence of new ways of representing ageing in advertising remain unanswered due to the prevalence of youngsters in the research sampling. In marketing and consumer research, the silver consumers have been treated as a homogeneous segment of the population (Moschis, 2012), based on their chronological age. Although the gerontologists and the ageing studies have emphasized that there is no “typical” senior consumer, and that they are rather heterogeneous, the concept of ageing as cultural construct is often ignored in many advertising strategies (Loose & Ekström, 2014).

While some important steps have been made in regulating the standards of portraying seniors in advertising, certain ad execution styles often reflect the implicit cognitions regarding seniors, i.e. “high in warmth and low on competence” (Cuddy, Norton & Fiske, 2005, p. 278). Possibly stemming from these stereotypes, people of the 65+ group are often assigned a domestic role (as “eternal grandparents”) or as health service requester in advertising scripts, but rarely as businessmen or as an applicant for a job on the labour market.

When representing old age, the Romanian advertisers sometimes follow the same pattern as observed in the Western culture: ageing is often neglected, and advertising messages have been framed accordingly. Therefore, this paper intends to examine advertising models and techniques considered to be appropriate for senior consumers. The substantial growth of the ageing population worldwide, the use of older adults as comic relief in Romanian commercials as well as the diversity of the silver consumers’ life styles and needs are some of the premises of this study. As far as we know, the research on how the Romanian advertising has portrayed seniors is limited (Stoica, Miller & Ardella, 2011); the research presented here seeks

to address several aspects of this topic: How do seniors understand and represent old age? How do seniors describe their age group? How does the advertising industry constrain seniors to relate to age-advertising models? Do silver consumers favor the cognitive or the chronological representations of their age in advertising? In our case, we are interested what 55+ people think of their age and their point of view with regard to the legitimate and accurate modalities of portraying old age in advertising. Furthermore, this research aims to gather data on the opinion of elders regarding their portrayal in current advertising campaigns and their aspirations with respect of this depictions.

Method

The socio-demographic category investigated by this research is represented by people in the 55-84 age group, retired Romanian living in the urban area (respectively, Bucharest-Ilfov). Twenty three people (19 women and 4 men), aged between 55 and 84, were interviewed during February-March 2017 in order to answer the previously stated research questions. Since the interviews were semi-structured, further questions were addressed in order to expand the research scope. Subsequently, the answers were encoded in keeping with a theme analysis grid: old age representation – old age metaphors; cognitive age – the preference of younger or older models or of models of the same chronological age; visual executions in advertisements –the elders’ amnesic processes; social comparison with senior models in advertisements; “optimum” old age in advertising.

At the time the interviews were conducted, the interviewees were in good health and were not affected by any terminal disease. Relevant to our discussion was the fact that during their active life most of the interviewees held jobs traditionally associated with the *middle class* category on the labour market, for which a secondary school education was requested, e.g. seamstress, manicurist, administrator, superintendent, carpenter, electronic specialist. People were recruited by the snowball sampling method. Interviews lasted an hour on average and were recorded with the participants’ consent.

Findings

Cognitive age: metaphors and context

The first two questions of the interview guide were designed to help the participants familiarize themselves with the structure of the interview-type communication. We tried to provide a non-directive feedback, to facilitate the participants’ compliance with and disclosure of the topics advanced for discussion. Thus, the first question was developed based on the *expressive* technique: the participants were asked how they would draw or photograph their current age. The purpose of this question was to engage the respondents generate analogies and metaphors related to the social meanings of old age. Then, their answers allowed us to explore the similarities between representation (objects, things, people, etc.) and the target topic (old age). According to the interviewees, old age is “a state of mind”. They used metaphors and analogies that reflect their current status (*My current age? ... near the flowers in the pot – the children, friends and family*), and most of them compared the theme of the

metaphor (i.e. old age) with positive vehicles that refer to topics like nature (*flowers and trees in bloom*). One of the participants, a 61-year old woman, said that she saw her old age as a “helpless little child”, thus expressing the social perception of old age “like a second childhood” (Hockey & James, 1995, p. 140).

Age-related perceptions are in general positive, with interviewees stating they’ve accepted ageing gratefully. But, when looking at the responses in terms of losses and challenges that occurred throughout their life course, the metaphors of old age used by the participants are not so homogeneous. Those interviewees who have lost their partner tend to have a more negative image of old age, such as *a tree, not quite bloomed. Like a tree because sometimes I feel lonely* (man, 63 years, widower); *Like a small child, helpless* (woman, 61 years); *Like autumn...* (woman, 64 years, widow); *Near an old tree* (woman, 84 years, widow).

Thus, the findings of our research are similar to the gerotranscendence theory (Tornstam, 1996), according to which the more individuals approach the third age the more their self is more cosmic. The labels the participants attached to old age reflect to a certain extent the fact that individuals redefine time, the sense of life, space, life and death as they approach a later stage of their life.

Ageing self and social comparison

The next question of the interview – a transition question – dealt with the ingroup members. Starting from the premises of the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), the participants in this study were asked to say how they saw the others similar to them, the ingroup members of the same age, how they felt about and how they were treated in society. The participants’ answers indicated that, in general, they compared themselves with inferior members and that they had a negative image of the members of the same age group, often stereotypical, approving the society’s dominant attitudes towards the old people. No interviewee referred to chronological age or to noticeable, physiognomic features, which are central to, the perception of or the interaction with people, regardless of age.

People my age are very often rejected by society. Family usually accepts you, and sometimes not even them. Actually, because of our age we are more than often rejected (man, 78 years).

The healthy ones are very energetic and full of life, willing to do something, to socialize. The suffering ones have the strength to find a balance with the help of the TV, crossword puzzles, treatment with natural remedies. Neither of them is apathetic (woman, 71 years).

I stay away from them. What I have noticed is negative: they are marginalized and that is why I stay away from them (woman, 60 years).

Everyone sees himself/ herself as they feel. It does not matter how society treats you, what you feel matters. In the bus people said they refused to sit near old people because they whined. And this is what I myself do: I do not pair off with whining people (woman, 59 years).

The interviewees spoke about others like them, referring to dimensions like health condition, financial situation and social status. In their statements they pointed to the consequences of the health condition and of the social status on interpersonal, intergenerational and work relationships.

In my time, when I was working at the Institute for Design... That team included several generations, about ten people from each generation. When one generation retired, the young generation had what to learn from the experience of those going into retirement. Nowadays this is no longer valid. The young people consider themselves omniscient, while the old people live in fear of being laid off. They no longer share their knowledge with the young ones, they leave taking it with them. There is no more respect for the old generation. The old people are sad, tired, and poor. They are depressed because of poverty (woman, 70 years).

When they characterize those of the same age with them, the interviewed seniors ignore the negative aspects of themselves, namely physiognomic features of old age and appearance. Perhaps, the reference to the outward appearance of old people (which are immediately available, i.e. wrinkling, balding, greying) occurs without conscious awareness and it is internalized when they evaluate age. From our point of view, the absence of reference to physical signs in their discourse of ageing could be explained by the internalization of the stereotype that old age diminishes attractiveness and that it is unpleasant, which is enforced by the mainstream society, no matter the age (Cuddy, Norton & Fiske, 2005). Seniors understand their biological changes, but they do not speak about them. Furthermore, this lack of reference to physical changes of ageing in the public discourse is a symptom of the present-day society, where the anti-ageing social practices have been institutionalized. At a formal social rhetoric level, in public policies and scientific research, words like *old people*, *old age* and *elderly* were replaced by much more neutral concepts – e.g. *ageless* – precisely to avoid the explicitly negative connotation of the word *old* (Settersen Jr. & Angel, 2011, p. 7) and the labelling of the seniors based on the prejudices about age (Ivan, 2015, pp. 65-66).

It depends on age! The almost 80-year olds have health problems, they are abandoned, they are alone because their children went abroad (woman, 66 years).

They are sloppy, marked by needs. Others can afford to go on trips and to beauty salons, but there are a lot of them in distress (woman, 57 years).

Third age people are, most of the time, alone and useless. They are older than they actually are, mean spirited, frustrated, and that is why I believe that they are not well received by the society. There are exceptions, of course, (woman, 70 years).

They are poor and depressed because of the society that does not receive them too well (man, 60 years).

Society does not treat them right, they are seen as a burden. Old people do not have money for medicines, they have small pensions, bitterness and sadness can be seen on their faces. Neither does society accept them, nor do they have a positive state of mind (man, 63 years).

While the first question pursued a more abstract discussion about the participants' old age, the second one was contextualized to the old age of the others in the same age group. Obviously, the answers received led to two contrasting, paradoxical concepts related to the meanings that the participants assigned to old age: on the one hand, their own old age has a cosmic dimension, linked to everything that changes into nature (plants, flowers, trees), while others' old age is about social marginalization, economic difficulties and health frailness; on the other hand, both themselves and the others are *ageless* in terms of facial and bodily changes. *I feel young but this isn't me* emphasised a 67-year old interviewee, thus expressing the dualistic concept of ageing. Seniors' subjective feeling (*this is not me*) cannot be ignored when

they attend to the mainstream idea of looking young. It is very difficult to manage the “young mask of old age” (Hepworth, 2004, pp. 20-25) because in the heart of social thinking lies the illusion of youth later in life. The participants in our study used negative terms only when talking about others’ old age and not about their own, so as to adjust their self and avoid the emotional discomfort regarding their own ageing and future old age.

Seniors talking about how they should be depicted in advertising

The interviewees either approved or disapproved the casting of young models in advertisements for seniors or the unrealistic messages of certain ads regarding the characteristics of various products.

People my age are not seen in advertisements, and when I see a product for me, glasses, for example, I do not see myself in the people advertising them, they do not represent me. People my age should show their real age in ads (woman, 84 years).

I do not see myself at all in the people advertising products. For instance, in the spot X I like the ambience. The people my age wearing make-up for ads in order to look younger are nonetheless ridiculous, pompous. They should be more genuine (man, 67 years).

I like the ads on other TV channels, not ours, from abroad, which show us how beautifully people age. People my age look relaxed in ads, are well spirited, like in Neckermann. In Romania, old people promote only pharmaceuticals for digestive disorders. They are gross! I do not see myself in these ads with elderly people (woman, 64 years).

I do not see myself at all in the people appearing in ads. They look very cheerful, energetic, smiling. They should be closer to their real age for which the product must be used, in keeping with the age (man, 78 years).

Some of the participants in this study were not necessarily critical. They treated advertising and its executions techniques “as such” and they perceived them as a social fact, without exercising opportunities or constraints on their age.

In an ad for a medicine, urinary products, for my age there is a beautiful, joyful woman. She is shown from profile with a cream coloured jacket... younger... I like her. In all ads women look younger (woman, 66 year)

The people in ads are photogenic... Thinking of the ad on mineral water X, pharmacy Y... those old people look good and are well-known people, actors, folk music singers, so that people should recognise them. They represent us only formally. I think people my age should appear in an ad only if they are presentable, good-looking, and not decrepit. When I see someone looking good, this encourages me, makes me confident (man, 66 years).

The people who promote denture fixing gels, for instance, which I use, look good, younger! They want to convince us, and they succeeded, we use this product and we look better (woman, 66 years).

Two of the participants in this study stated that it was an absolutely new field for them, that they did not think whether the seniors in the ads were presented adequately or inade-

quately [*I have never given a thought to whether I saw myself in the people in the advertisements (man, 57 years). I do not see people my age in ads too often. I do not know what to say (woman, 84 years)*].

The question about the ways old people should be depicted in advertising was a projective type of question. During the interview, the participants were asked to imagine that they were consulted by advertising representatives in order to make recommendations on how advertising executions for silver consumers should be made. The answers revealed multiple representations of the ageing self, rather than a single stereotype labelling, as advertising sometimes uses. Although only one out of the 23 interviewees said that the people in ads were representative, most of the participants recommended the use of aspirational type models, of cognitive young age rather than real, chronological age.

They should show the age the product is designed for. I do not mind. I like to see them younger. Were they older, confined to bed or wheelchair and advertise nappies for adults, they would depress me (woman, 60 years).

They should be dressed nicely, smartly; they should know how to communicate. They should be younger. An old person is depressing. An old person will not make you buy the product (man, 63 years).

Firstly, they should look good, even if they are old (woman, 66 years).

I like people my age who look younger, and they should be in ads because they enchant me. Were their real age shown I would be depressed, I would be in a bad mood (woman, 71 years).

They should be cheerful, serene; they should not show their age. They should not show their age because if we always look bad it is nice to see faces looking good in the third age (woman, 66 years)

Some of the participants were critical towards to the use of younger models in the commercials that target seniors. In their portrayals and in their recommendations regarding cognitive age, the central feature they referred to was age and less the social roles usually associated with seniors.

They should be real, show their age. Old age does not bother me. It is not humiliating to have an infirmity. Old people should be accepted as they are: at their real age, their real social status in society (woman, 59 years).

I would recommend them just as they are... because we do not have to imitate anybody. It is too pompous for them to look so young (woman, 67 years, electronic specialist).

For other interviewees, the major goal of advertising is to actually inform people about product characteristics. They were indignant at the fact that advertisements were deceitful sometimes, and less critical about the physical aspect of the old models promoting the product.

They should be more understandable. Many of them are disguised. For instance we are deceived. We order the product and receive something else (woman, 64 years).

They should be honest as regards the content of the product and its effects (woman, 71 years)

Honest as regards the product, true to life (woman, 67 years).

Ads should be real. They should show exactly what the cream, product, shower gel consist of.

For Maria, a former employee in telecommunication, senior age is associated rather with a social role and she recommends that the elderly people in ads should be portrayed *showing more confidence in them. Children should gravitate around them and not vice versa. It should be understood that we are who we are today also thanks to our parents* (woman, 70 years).

Discussion and conclusion

Within the group of elderly adults interviewed, we have found are two contrasting images of old age depiction in advertising. These are similar to the modalities of depicting old people in nowadays advertising: on the one hand, as “heroes of ageing” (Featherstone, 2005, p. 231), forever young and able to keep alive a “young” and functional ageing, having the same appearance, the same habits and wishes as the hordes of young people; on the other hand, as physically frail “to the extent of being incompatible with and disguising their inner selves, the so-called mask of ageing” (Featherstone, 2005, p. 231). The younger seniors (56-70 years) included in our research proved to be “age sensitive”, as compared to the older seniors (over 70 years). Our study showed that several respondents thought that advertising images of “young seniority” are more desirable. Seniors often avoid thinking of their age in order to maintain an *ageless* identity, and this could serve as a *coping* strategy to diminish stress and threat of physical changes occurring with ageing.

From our point of view, the debate does not consist in deciding how to represent old age in advertising, i.e. depicting the chronological or the cognitive age of the population; the real issue is contained in why these two options – “the young and the old”/“the bold and the beautiful” – are dominant in advertising executions. Moreover, these two operate by exclusion and inclusion, determining the orientation of the silver consumers towards one side or the other. Thus, our interviewees’ suggestions about the portrayal of old people in advertising fell within the two dominant trends in cultural ageing: there are some who deny old age and uphold a successful ageing in terms of youthfulness, and others who disapprove the mask of ageing and are in favor of more realistic portrayals of older people in advertising. Advertising has standardized ageing within these two dimensions – to look young or to not be young, and people often compare themselves consciously or unconsciously only with these two options.

Nevertheless, most of the interviewees feel as cognitive young. Seniors were asked whether they prefer to be depicted showing their real chronological age or younger than their age. We encoded the answers given by those who experienced a stressing event in their life, such as the loss of their life partner. As previous research has shown, the elderly people who lost their social status (married, employed, etc.) are more prone to express negative feelings about their age, they have a lower self-esteem and they tend to rarely take part in social and cultural events as compared to those who have not gone through a “catalytic” event (Stephens, 1991, pp. 38-39). In this regard, our findings support the following idea: the widowed interviewees wish to be portrayed in ads showing their real age, while they express their aversion to the advertising that emphasizes only the juvenile features of the seniors.

They should be real, they should show their age. Old age does not bother me. It is not humiliating to have an infirmity. Old people should be accepted as they are: at their real age, their real social status in society (woman, 59 years, retired nurse).

As they are, because we do not have to imitate anybody. It is too pompous for them to look so young (woman, 67 years, retired electronic specialist).

If the ad depicted them as being disabled, confined to bed or in a wheelchair and advertising nappies for adults, this would be normal... I would like to be shown another reality (man, 60 years, widower, retired military).

People in ads should look closer to the age for which the product is meant, consistent with the age (man, 78 years, widower).

Recommendations for advertising executions

Last but not least, the findings of this research allow us to advance a number of recommendations regarding advertising for seniors and to answer questions such as: How should old people be portrayed in advertisements (showing their chronological or their cognitive age)? What are those “slices of life” that attract and organize senior consumers’ attention? First of all, an ad that contains neutral elements, which are not related to age, such as images of natural surroundings (nature, trees, flowers) are better accepted than those featuring old people. No interviewee referred to himself/ herself in terms of their biological age and age-related physiognomic signs. Thus, we recommend the running of the natural surroundings in advertising executions that could be empowering for both the young and the older adults of the silver consumer category. At the same time, seniors prefer those advertisement casts that portray them as active people who play an important part in the lives of those close to them (i.e. grandchildren and children) and in society, in general (i.e. mentoring young people on the labour market).

In relation to these two recommendations, there is another important idea that steams from our findings. The participants display resistance to persuasion, especially to those images with emotional content. The interviewed seniors prefer the rational framings, which present real facts about product characteristics or prices, rather than those with *emotional appeal*, such as “anti-wrinkle cream for everlasting skin youth and freshness”.

Finally, the findings of our research support the idea that the younger seniors (up to 75 years) should be depicted at their (*young*) *cognitive age*, this being a self-adjustment strategy on entering a new age stage. As for the ads of *chronological appeal* emphasising biological old age, they are approved by older consumers (over 75 years) and by seniors who have lost the social status that was dominant during their past self (e.g. they lost their job, their life partner, a beloved person).

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Book review

Raluca BUTUROIU*

Review of *Temporal Love. Temporality and Romantic Relationships* by Mira Moshe, New York, Nova Science Publishers, 2016, 90 pages, ISBN: 978-1-53610-050-1

Moshe's book entitled *Temporal Love. Temporality and Romantic Relationships* deals with a classical but fashionable part of sociological studies, namely the sociology of emotions. As the third in a series dealing with this challenging topic, the book is a valid proof for Moshe's interest in how emotions develop and influence various aspects of people's lives. In an era which "enables us to perceive different time dimensions simultaneously" (p. vii), the author aims at addressing the role of time in shaping both people's ideas about romantic relationships and the relationships themselves. In this context, time is regarded as a major moderator influencing people's subjective perceptions about the efficiency of their emotional investment (i.e., if a romantic relationship proves to be either a "temporal loss" or a "temporal profit"). Thus, in the attempt to unveil and better understand the psychological nature of romantic relationships, the author builds on the idea that human experiences are strongly linked to the notion of psychological time, which is responsible for the divide into past, present and future time frames. These three layers of time perspective or temporal orientation breed different types of romantic relationships; understanding temporality with reference to romantic relationships might contribute to more realistic representations about love and romance.

The volume includes five chapters, structured in the form of five separate, yet interconnected sections. The first chapter, *Temporal Orientation and Romantic Relationships*, offers insights about people's attitudes towards time. Specifically, the role of this chapter is to set the background for the following ones, dealing with how temporal orientations (i.e., present, past or future) shape the magnitude and direction of romantic relationships. The second chapter, *Romantic Relationships and Love in the "Here-and-Now"*, mainly refers to the present temporal orientation, which is often described as hedonism. People experiencing this type of romantic relationship are those seeking to "maximize pleasure for their own benefit" (p. 17). However, due to high technological advance and the evolution of virtual romantic relationships, the "here-and-now" characteristic of romance is seriously questionable since it might determine unrealistic and inconvenient relationships. The third chapter, *Romantic Relationships and Love in the "There-and-Then"*, offers a comprehensive understanding of how references to both past and present have an impact on how people perceive their romantic relationships. Unlike the "here-and-now" perspective, the "there-and-then" one is more real-

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istic because it integrates complementary issues such as “past and present, fantasy and reality and cause and effect” (p. 31). Nevertheless, “temporal secrets” might represent a relevant point marking the intersection between these two perspectives; by telling a secret (i.e., by making the unknown known), people bring to present some important things from their past. Within this third chapter, the author also underlines two significant concepts related to temporal love, namely (a) temporal honesty or deception and (b) temporal dramas. While honesty and deception might represent real signs for either continuing or breaking the relationship, dramas are not always traumatic – they often depend on the age and experience of the partners involved. The next chapter, *Taking a Break: Romantic Relationships, Love and the Notion of “Time-out”*, offers clarifications about one possible technique for overcoming an emotional crisis, namely *taking a break*. Moreover, within the same chapter, the author explains possible steps from taking a break to breaking up a relationship; for both, time and temporal orientation as well play crucial roles. In the last chapter in this book, *Romantic Relationships and Love for Ever and Ever*, the author advances the idea that romantic relationships are to be found at the crossroad of happiness, time and eternity. Happiness and well-being depend on people’s perception of time; due to their wide time horizons, young people have different aspirations compared to older ones, generally having limited time horizons.

The book offers a well-documented academic perspective on the way time influences both the nature and magnitude of romantic relationships. Therefore, the added value of this book resides in its approach. By combining both theoretical and empirical findings from previous studies on the sociology of emotions, Moshe emphasizes relevant characteristics of romantic relationships, in an attempt to offer clues of assessing and interpreting what works and what does not work in a romantic relationship. Moreover, the book is an important contribution to the field of socio-psychology of emotions, since it does not provide recipes of how to effectively use time in building perfect romance, but rather offers documented pictures and reality-based considerations about how time influences people’s understanding of love and romance and their romantic relationships as well. Another strong point of this book resides in its inspired use of concepts, which allows for an easy yet valuable reading for both specialists and non-specialists. Nevertheless, there is one aspect which might need refinement. Although there are references to empirical studies and even to concepts used in psychological therapy (such as “here-and-now” and “there-and-then”), sometimes the discourse and arguments lack in-depth critical assessment of how empirical results confirm or not the literature in the domain. The book almost implies a need for continuation by a second part (or a second book), containing research on the rich literature about the sociology of emotions. However, this does not minimize the value of the book, which could be used as starting points for future empirical studies focusing on how time impacts love and romantic relationships.

In conclusion, *Temporal Love. Temporality and Romantic Relationships* represents a thorough radiography of how time leaves its marks on the interactions between people, namely on their romantic relationships, regarded as prerequisites for happiness and well-being. In the book, the author explains in rather uncomplicated terms the complex nature of and the interplay between temporality and romantic relationships. Thus, the author’s main merit is that of portraying, in a concise but comprehensive manner, the complexity of two types of investment concerning romantic relationships – the temporal and the emotional one. Understanding how romantic relationships work with reference to time frames means taking a step further towards making them work better and, thus, towards actively contributing to personal and social development.

Andreea BOBB*

**Review of *The Social Psychology of Morality*
by J.P. Forgas, L. Jussim & P.A.M. Van Lange (eds.),
Routledge, 2016, 327 pages**

This volume, that brings together the papers presented at the annual Sydney Symposium of Social Psychology, cannot but be enjoyed by the growing community of social psychologists interested in the field of morality. This is only the second book on morality that has the expression “social psychology” in its title after the *Social Psychology of Morality: Exploring the Causes of Good and Evil* (2012), edited by Mikulincer and Shaver. Forgas, Jussim and Van Lange (2016, p. 1) belief is that „*Homo moralis* is no less an appropriate term to describe humans as is *Homo sapiens*” and that social psychology has the privilege to unravel and understand human morality. I agree with the point of view expressed by the editors of this volume, especially considering the fact that social psychology could be seen as “the most humane among humanities” (see Chelcea, 2008, p. 20).

The book has four parts: “The Nature of Moral Values and Decisions”; “Moral Aspects of Interpersonal Behavior”; “Ironic and Paradoxical Effects of Morality”; “Morality and Collective Behavior”. The first two parts of the book present morality in relation to some antecedents. For example, death awareness makes us behave morally (chapter 2). In turn, our behavior determines our moral identity (chapter 3). Moral judgment is also determined by our deontological and utilitarian tendencies (chapter 6). The second part of the book presents how moral judgments are influenced by feelings we have for close others (chapter 7), and how moral judgments are modified in a competitive context (chapter 8); Also how moral judgments change when social pressure is exerted (chapter 9), and how they differ as a result of a positive or negative mood (chapter 10). The third section of the book (chapter 11, 12, 13) discusses the influence of moral agenda on scientific research and how scientists themselves violate moral norms. The last part connects moral values with political values (chapter 14), with prosocial behavior (chapter 15), and with the use of natural resources (chapter 16). The last two chapters show how inequality of differences in opportunities may increase immoral behavior and how moral heroes prone cohesion among members of the group. All chapters treat morality either as an outcome of a rational process (e.g. moral judgment), or as an intuitive human capacity that influences our judgments, values, behaviors. The current review presents the most relevant chapters from a social psychological perspective.

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In a chapter from the first part of the book, *Moral Opportunities Versus Moral Tests*, Miller and Monin divide all moral situations in two categories: moral tests and moral opportunities. In the case of moral tests, moral behavior is mandatory, so that an immoral behavior would generate a decrease of self-esteem. In the case of moral opportunity, an immoral behavior would not determine lower self-esteem, but a moral behavior would increase the level of self-assigned morality. Miller and Monin state that once a person behaves in a negative manner, she/he will be motivated to restore the positive self by searching for opportunities to act morally in subsequent actions. It is true that sometimes people act like Miller and Monin say, but social psychologists have long time proven that most of the time we are not willing to acknowledge the fact that we have behaved immorally. The authors also believe we have the tendency to avoid moral tests and search for moral opportunities. Unfortunately, Miller and Monin do not provide any experiment designed to test these ideas, nor any clear examples of situations that capture moral tests and opportunities. An example of conceptual clarification that the authors provide is “the more of an opportunity a situation provides, the less of a test it represents, and vice versa” (p. 42). The authors also recognize that whereas some people perceive a situation as a test, for others it could represent an opportunity; and even for the same person a situation may sometimes be viewed as a test and at other times as an opportunity. Given these clarifications, one can ask about the usefulness of such typology.

The moral behavior may be considered as a shield that protects us against death anxiety, argues Pyszczynski in a chapter included in the first part of the book. He asserts that we behave morally to transcend our mortal condition. In other words, we do good to others so that we receive “rewards” after we die.

Cooper’s chapter, *Confessing to an Immoral Act: Consequences to Moral Beliefs and Inferences about Moral Dispositions*, is a documented response to the problem of innocent people admitting crimes they have never committed, as result of psychological pressure during interrogations. In this context, the author presents an experiment in which participants were asked to type a list of words into computer without pressing the ALT key and then invited to sign a statement (Kassin & Kiechel, 1996). It showed that 65% of participants who typed the words very quickly were easily convinced to sign a statement saying that they pressed the ALT key, when they had not. The percentage rose to 100% when a confederate told the experimenter that he saw another participant in the experiment having pressed the ALT key. In the no-witness condition and when the person had enough time to type, none of participants admitted having pressed the ALT key and 65% refused to sign the statement. It is interesting to note that participants, who admitted having pressed the ALT key during the experiment, later came to believe they actually did it.

In a similar vein, Cooper extended these findings to a moral situation, namely cheating. In his own experiment, students had to respond to a test and were accused of taking extra time to answer the questions. They were induced to confess to having cheated. Although none of the participants cheated, those who confessed came to believe it. Also, they came to view themselves as less moral (pp. 148-149). Cooper stated that once we think of ourselves as less moral, we end up behaving in a manner that will confirm the new self-image (p. 150).

Also, in the second part of the book, Forgas presents numerous experiments on the influence of moods on moral decisions. The author proved that a positive affect increases selfishness in situations like dictator game and ultimatum game, whereas a negative mood increases fairness (p.165). So, it is not so bad to sometimes feel bad.

In an interesting chapter from the third part of the book, *Concept Creep: Psychology's Expanding Notions of Harm and their Moral Basis*, Haslam argues that “definitional inflation” is not beneficial. He shows how some psychological concepts like: abuse, trauma, mental disorder, bullying and prejudice have come to include wide range of behaviors that were not initially covered by these concepts. Nowadays, we talk about emotional abuse, psychological abuse and emotional neglect in addition to physical and sexual abuse. Trauma can now refer to different events and their psychological effects, although it is clear that one traumatic event may not have the same strong impact for one person as to another. “One person using an ethnic slur towards another, can now count as abuse, bullying, trauma, and prejudice by some definitions. This redundancy breeds conceptual confusion and parallel literatures.” (p. 211). The two remaining chapters included in the third part of this book connect morality with academic research. Fiedler talks about scientists’ moral values and academic dishonesty. After listing some unorthodox ways that some scientists use their data to support the hypothesis, Fiedler talks about the surprising compliance of social psychologists, especially those who are familiar with classic studies on conformism and obedience, with what he calls “the demon of statistical-significance testing” (p. 223). He observes with regret that journals do not encourage critical debates, but only studies “full of statistics”.

The fourth part of this volume deals with issues like moral leadership, moral heroes, and prosocial behavior in a rather theoretical manner. In my opinion, the most interesting chapter is *The Moral Psychology of Resource Use*. Bastian and Crimston present a new instrument, *The Moral Expansiveness Scale* (Crimston et al., 2016), which “captures individual differences in the extent to which people’s moral worlds are either more or less expansive” (p. 278). The authors argue that each person has a moral universe that can enlarge to include more distant people, plants and objects. It was found that those who scored higher in moral expansiveness were more willing to share resources with distant others.

When I finished reading this book, I remembered Bauman’s (1998, p. 11) wise observation: whatever had been said about morality, the most important things remain unsaid. It is true that human morality is not something very easy to study, but social psychology has made progress in this fascinating field and still has a lot to discover about everyday morality, about moral judgments in their natural dynamics and how these moral judgments are shaped by different social and cultural contexts.

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