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TOWARDS A HEGEMONIC FEMININITY? COVERAGE OF THE FIRST FEMALE ROMANIAN PRIME MINISTER IN THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL MEDIA

Simona RODAT
Professor, PhD, Faculty of Theology and Social Sciences,
Adventus University, Cernica, Ilfov, Romania
E-mail: simona.rodat@uadventus.ro

Abstract

Since her appointment in January 2018, the first female prime minister of Romania has been constantly in the focus of the news. Either it was about ordinary political events and statements, current activity and meetings with counterparts from other countries, or it was about extraordinary actions and assertions that have attracted the attention and sometimes criticism and sarcasm of the media, the first woman in a political executive leading position in the history of Romania has always been in the spotlight of the media. Moreover, topics usually or mostly related to women, such as how does she looks or dresses, how is her hairdo or her makeup, have been on the media agenda regarding the female premier. The present paper analyses the national and local media coverage of the Romanian female prime minister since her nomination in January 2018 and continuing with the first months of her term. The article pays particular attention to the extent to which the first female premier of Romania, as

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represented by the national and regional media, embodies or not the hegemonic femininity.

Keywords: hegemonic femininity, hegemonic masculinity, female prime minister, media coverage

Introduction

The theme of women in Romanian politics was approached and debated in the Romanian media in various contexts and on different occasions, both with reference to their political participation and activity in general (Băluţă, 2010; Surugiu, 2012; Rovența-Frumuşani, 2015), and with reference to specific circumstances, such as those occasioned by the local, parliamentary, presidential, or European elections (Dan and Iorgoveanu, 2013; Kaneva and Ibroscheva, 2014; Cmeciu and Pătruţ, 2014; Rovenţa-Frumuşani and Irimescu, 2018). Although women have become more active in Romanian politics lately, succeeding not only in parliamentary positions, but also in some local power functions (such as Gabriela Firea's victory in 2016 as General Mayor of Bucharest), they still remained generally underrepresented in politics (Surugiu, 2012; Kaneva and Ibroscheva, 2014), and especially in the significant positions of power and decision-making (Băluţă, 2010; Surugiu, 2012). A challenge for this latter aspect has emerged, however, in early 2018, when, for the first time in Romanian history, a woman, Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, became Prime Minister, marking a new political context, defined by the tenure of a woman of the higher executive power position.

The present paper discusses the results of a research which aimed to identify the ways in which the Romanian media have covered the first female premier in the history of the country, starting with her nomination in this position in January 2018 by the Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the winning party of the Romanian legislative elections in December

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2016, and continuing with her political activity and her public appearances in the first months in office. In this regard, starting from a theoretical framework opened by the concept of "hegemonic femininity", there was conducted a content analysis on the news within the online Romanian media during January-April 2018.

Theoretical and conceptual framework

One of the central concepts for the present approach was that of "hegemonic masculinity", a term introduced in gender sociology by R. W. Connell in 1987. The theoretical origins of this concept can be found in A. Gramsci's view regarding hegemony and hegemonic domination. According to Gramsci, maintaining control in capitalism was not so much achieved through political and economic violence and coercion, as through ideology (apud Anderson, 1976). The bourgeoisie has developed a hegemonic culture that propagated its own values and norms, which have become the values of "common sense" of all. Thus, including the members of the working class took up these values and began to identify with them, contributing in this way to maintaining the status quo rather than to social change. For Gramsci, hegemonic domination is ultimately based on consensual coercion (Gramsci, 1999: 549) and only in the case of authority crises the "consent masks slip", revealing the "fist of iron" (ibid.: 48) that, in fact, maintains the domination.

These ideas were caught by R. W. Connell (1987) and used in the analysis of the issues of gender relationships, the model being integrated into her sociological theory of gender. Following Gramsci and his theory of cultural hegemony, Connell comprehends hegemony as the form of rule or domination that is less enforced by means of coercion and violence, than is produced and reproduced by the culturally mediated creation of an (implicit) consent of subordinate groups with their position: by shared values and common interpretive patterns (apud Meuser, 2010: 327-328). Hegemony refers therefore

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to the cultural dominance in society as a whole, but it does not mean absolute control. It is based on the assent or willingness of those who are subordinated to their social situation and also requires a minimum permeability between social classes (ibid.: 329). In other words, hegemony represents a form of regulation of social relations, characterized by a "social openness", and this social openness is specific for the first time to modern societies. Connell (1999) points out, in a later resumption of the hegemonic masculinity debate, that this is a phenomenon of Western modernity. Hegemony means, thus, the ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions and persuasion; it does not suppose violence, although it could be supported by force (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Within her theoretical perspective on gender hegemony, R. W. Connell (1995) understands gender as the ways in which the "reproductive arena", which includes the "bodily structures and processes of human reproduction", organizes practice at all levels of social organization – from identities, to symbolic rituals and to large-scale institutions (Connell, 1995: 71). In the gender relations Connell considers masculinity as the central feature, and she defines it as "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage the place in gender, and the effects of these practices on bodily experience, personality and culture" (idem). Thence, masculinity has, according to Connell, three components: a social position; a set of practices and characteristics understood to be "masculine"; the effects of the collective embodiment and enactment of these practices on individuals, relationships, institutional structures, and global relations of domination (Connell, 2000; 2015). Furthermore, she defines hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell, 1995: 77). Thus, hegemonic masculinity was understood as "the pattern of practice (i.e.,

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things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 832).

Yet, not all men embody hegemonic masculinity. In fact, only a few men might enact it, managing to have a hegemonic social position and correspond to the normative ideal of hegemonic masculinity. But hegemonic masculinity being embodied by at least a few men over time and space, legitimizes the domination of men as a group over women.

The male dominance advantages however, to some extent, all men. Connell uses the term "complicit masculinity" to refer to all forms of masculinity taking advantage of so-called "patriarchal dividends". Thus, men who embody complicit masculinity are those who, without tension or risk, represent "the first-line troops of patriarchate", receiving the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance.

Connell also emphasizes that hegemony in gender relations does not only work by subordinating femininity to hegemonic masculinity but also – equally important – by subordinating and marginalizing other forms of masculinity in relation to hegemonic masculinity. The "subordinate masculinity" is, for example, the homosexual masculinity, which over time was positioned, in a hierarchy of genders, the lowest among men. These masculinities, which are usually stigmatized as effeminate, have been throughout history excluded, subordinated and even criminalized, being treated through intimidation, prejudice, threats and violence.

Subordination is, in Connell's theory, a mechanism through which the superior position of hegemonic masculinity is maintained, but it is not the only mechanism. Considering the intersection of gender and social class, respectively race/ ethnicity, Connell also refers to "marginalized masculinity" to define those men who are part of lower social classes and discriminated racial or ethnic groups. As hegemonic masculinity identifies itself as "white" and having at least the middle-class status, marginalized masculinity can never be able to reach the

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dominance of hegemonic masculinity, and the relationship between them will always be one of supremacy-marginalization. Nonhegemonic masculinities, such the subordinated and marginalized ones, exist therefore in tension with the hegemonic masculinity, and they cannot penetrate or impact it (Demetriou, 2001).

As there are multiple masculinities, there are multiple femininities. However, in Connell's view, since all forms of femininity in society are under the sign of the general subordination of women to men, there is no form of femininity that, among women, corresponds to the position of hegemonic masculinity among men. That is why, in Connell's vision, there is no hegemonic femininity. Instead, she speaks about "emphasized femininity", defined in relation to hegemonic masculinity, namely that femininity that helps to maintain women's subordination and meets men's interests and desires. The name "emphasized" instead of "hegemonic" femininity was preferred in order to acknowledge the asymmetrical position of masculinities and femininities in the patriarchal gender order (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 848). Although she speaks about multiple femininities, Connell does not elaborate this idea, in her theoretical vision remaining central this non-symmetrical rapport between masculinity and femininity in the patriarchal social order, as well as the relationship between the various forms of masculinity.

A new perspective on hegemonic masculinity, but also on hegemonic femininity and multiple femininities, was later outlined by M. Schippers (2007). Unlike Connell, Schippers considers that in gender relations not only masculinity is the central element, but masculinity and femininity both support the relationships that organize social practice, which, through the recurrent patterns constituted in time, (re)produce and legitimize male dominant interpersonal power relations, gendered division of labour, unequal distribution of resources and authority, global imperialism, etc. (Schippers, 2007: 93). Starting from this vision, Schippers emphasizes that both masculinity and femininity are

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hegemonic, precisely "in the ideological work they do to legitimate and organize what men actually do to dominate women individually or as a group" (idem).

However, the societies in which hegemonic masculinity functions as a highly effective symbolic resource for the reproduction of the power relations between genders are undergoing significant changes (Connell, 1998). These changes are designated by terms as globalization, dissolution of boundaries, market radicalization, and casualization of working and living conditions (Meuser, 2010: 329). In these circumstances, the question arises whether at the same time with the development of post-Fordist capitalism a revision of the concept of "hegemony" would be necessary. Moreover, as Meuser in the light of the current changes in male living conditions discusses, the question arises to what extent the concept of hegemonic masculinity is still viable to understand masculinity and gender relations in the present.

On the other hand, Meuser (ibid.: 333) points out that hegemonic masculinity itself becomes more flexible. For example, a development of the pattern of hegemonic masculinity can be observed, which brings with it an increasing integration of the features and activities that previously have been connoted as "feminine" (ibid.: 332). Unlike bourgeois masculinity, strongly anchored in conservative cultures (Meuser, 1998), which involved traditional institutional careers in companies, the new transnational masculinity is suited to the so-called "portfolio careers" (Meuser, 2010), which, although characterized by a fragile safety, are marked by a strong self-confidence. Such careers, however, require a certain "subjectivization" of work, in other words, an involvement in work of the "full-person", which means social skills, and even emotions and the so-called "soft-skills".

Two aspects are to be mentioned in this context: first, this flexibility may mean that homosexual masculinity is no longer incompatible with hegemonic masculinity, and this assertion can also be supported by the fact that, in Western countries, more and more homosexual men make a career in politics. The second

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aspect relates to the increasingly blurring of frontiers in the course of transformation in both gender relations and labour relations and, in this context, to the ascension of women as "players" in the professional competition for career. Therefore, Meuser raises the question of whether we can speak of a hegemonic femininity that is comparable to hegemonic masculinity. Which means, a hegemonic femininity not in the sense of femininity that guarantees men's dominance and subordination of women (Schippers, 2007), but a femininity that occupies or holds an equipotential position with that of hegemonic masculinity.

In the same sense, S. Scholz (2010) also uses the term "hegemonic femininity", referring to a small group of women who have managed to ascend and enter the social elite of politics, a group that is on the way to become the new ideal of femininity. This new (possible) hegemonic femininity, which Scholz opposes to Connell's "emphasized femininity", no longer agrees with the subordination of own gender, and no longer is to be noticed through the alignment with the male interests. In this context, Scholz raises the questions whether this integration of women into the social elite will in the long run change the structural logic of the construction of hegemonic masculinity and whether this participation of women in a hegemony that is no longer exclusively masculine, but also feminine, contributes further to creating or producing a hegemonic femininity.

The above concepts describe socially constructed realities, built up through social interactions, representations, norms and structures. E. Goffman (1977) introduced the term "institutional reflexivity" to describe the mechanisms through which the social "arrangement between the sexes" is maintained and preserved, and through which gender stereotypes are consolidated, as well as the prevailing gender norms in society. According to Goffman (1977: 319), institutional reflexivity is visible in various aspects of social organization, such as social rules regarding the look and appearance, selective allocation of jobs and gendered division of labour, different socialization of children according to their

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sexes, our identification system (including the practices of "placement" a person by perceiving attributes such as face, hair, body shape, voice or even handwriting, as well as by the used names and means of labeling: gender-based proper personal names, titles, pronouns, etc.).

Thus, the "social arrangement between the sexes" (in the sense given by Goffman, 1977), from which differentiations, stratification, hierarchies, gender inequalities derive, and which is often perceived as normality, as given as such "by nature", represents in fact the product of social constructions, perpetuated and reshaped not only by structures, but also by everyday practices, through cultural representations and behaviours, norms and expectations. The "enactment" of the gender is therefore achieved through the general rules of social life (Grünberg, 2002). In the constructivist paradigm, to which the present research is referred, the gender itself is a socially-constructed category of classification (West and Zimmerman, 2009), whereby people define themselves and configure their identity along with other socially-constructed categories of classification, such as "race", nationality, religion, profession, age, etc. Moreover, gender is continuously, systematically and recurrently "achieved": what is called "doing gender" (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 126) involves a whole complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine "natures". Although individuals are those who "do gender", this always takes place in a social context, in the real or virtual presence of others. Therefore, the enterprise of doing gender is fundamentally interactional and institutional in character (ibid.: 137), and gender is not so much a property of individuals, but an emergent feature of social situations: both "an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements", and "a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society" (ibid.: 126), namely the division of genders. Gender and its social construction matter not only the internal aspects of individuals but also social interactions and, ultimately, the institutional sphere.

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As social actors who actively participate in the establishing of social constructs, the media contribute to the modelling and perpetuation of socially-constructed classification categories (Weber, 2016), including that of gender and all that this entails: social representations on gender, gender roles and social expectations in relation to them, gender identities, associated behaviours, gender stereotypes, rules and norms, etc. For example, analysing the perpetuation of some gender stereotypes in the Romanian written media, O. Dragomir and M. Miroiu (2002: 166) noticed that, in these stereotypes, while for men the political antecedents and experience matter, for women the essential continues to be the familial situation and physical appearance. Therefore, gender differentiation on the axis of socially-assigned traditional roles and expectations is perpetuated and strengthened by the mechanism of media construction.

Mass communication contributes significantly to building social reality and perpetuating some representations and categories that, although accepted as "natural", are, in fact, social constructs. Besides, the basic idea with which the constructivist current appeared in the communication sciences, an idea that later was refined and reinterpreted, but without losing its essence, was that mass media do not describe an objective, actual reality in itself, as they construct it, the world set up through the news being a constructed reality (Neveu and Quéré, 1996: 10). In sociology of journalism, the "social construction of reality" by journalists has become an idea that is no longer contested, but only debated and analyzed (Schudson, 1989). By translating itself into words and images, the reality presented in the media is no longer the reality itself, but a selected, interpreted, constructed one (Schlesinger, 1978; Weber, 2002). The act of making news is actually the act of constructing the reality itself, rather than making a description of reality (Tuchman, 1980: 12). The media are no longer seen as representing "the eyes from outside" who inform or relate about events, but are recognized as representing an actor of the events, an active participant in their construction, a "partner in the communication contract" (Charaudeau, 1992).

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Being regarded to the wider theoretical paradigm of socio-cultural constructivism, the research approach presented in this paper can be placed at the intersection of the studies on media framing, specific to the sociology of journalism (Borah, 2018) and the analyzes on the social construction of gender, specific to gender studies. The study has as central concepts the hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity. Methodologically, it can be placed on the line of researches that use content analysis to make inferences in systematic identification and emphasizing the features of messages (Deacon et al., 2010; Altheide and Schneider, 2013; Krippendorff, 2018).

Therefore, in order to answer the research questions formulated below concerning the emergence of a possible hegemonic femininity in Romania, I chose to analyse the media construction and coverage of the topics regarding the investiture and the first months in office of the first female prime minister in Romanian history.

Research questions and methodology

Starting from the conceptual framework delineated above, with regard to hegemonic femininity, respectively emphasized femininity, the specific research questions to which I sought the answer were:

a) Does the first female prime minister of Romania, according to her image constructed by the national and regional media, belong to that small group of women who have succeeded in joining the social elite of politics? In other words, does she fit into the representation of hegemonic femininity (in the sense of M. Meuser and S. Scholz), that is, that femininity that no longer agrees with the subordination of its own gender and does not align anymore to the masculine interests, but, on the contrary, assumes roles of independence and authority?

b) Or, as an alternative question, illustrates the first Romanian premier rather the emphasized femininity (in the sense of R. W. Connell), which, in fact, even being in leadership positions, actually supports the supremacy of

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hegemonic masculinity, acting for the primacy of men's interests and contributing to maintaining the subordination of women in society?

c) What are the topics covered primarily in connection with the nomination, appointment and political activity of Mrs. Dăncilă as premier? What are the topics covered mainly in relation to this person, at a general level? Is the first female prime minister in the history of Romania, only because she is a woman, more often/ intensively media covered as "object", as opposed to a man, under comparable conditions?

The method used was the content analysis, which included both qualitative and thematic elements (Anderson, 2007; Altheide and Schneider, 2013; Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013), and implied the application of the basic principles of content analysis (delimitation of analytical units, working with categories, etc.) in two qualitative methodological processes: the inductive development of categories and their deductive application (Gunter, 2000; Mayring, 2000). The grid of analysis comprised 18 items, each with a number of categories ranging from two to 15. Depending on the unit of analysis, the categories were either exclusive (with only one possible category to choose, as in the case of items related to the type of media, type of the article, the tone of the article, the main appeal of the article) or multiple (such as in the case of items respecting the topic of the article, the issues mentioned, etc.).

The corpus of analysis consisted of press articles selected from national and regional media in Romania in the online version. Regarding the procedure for sampling the articles included in the research, in the online search engine www.google.com I used the keyword "Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă". In the Google menu, I chose "News" and in "Tools" I selected "Recent" in order to be able to delimit the time frame. This was determined by choosing "Custom Range" and limiting the search to the time interval from January 15th to April 15th, 2018. The media articles of the first sixteen pages resulted from the Google search were included in the analysis. The total number of articles included in the analysis was

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162. All considered entries were exclusively online Romanian press articles, in Romanian language.

The selection of the linguistic material, and thus of the corpus of messages that were analyzed, was made exclusively based on their online display on the first sixteen pages as a result of the order used through the Google search engine. Given that the results displayed through Google, though determined by an algorithm that is not entirely accessible to the public (Das et al., 2007), reflect the attributes of exposed messages such as the popularity of the source, the number of readers and users which click on the displayed links, the time allocated to reading the message, etc. (Choi and Varian, 2011), it can be said that articles and news regarding the analyzed topic on the top sixteen Google pages are relevant to the study in terms of criteria of users and public visibility of the messages. Also, given that the search process, as well as the actual selection of messages (all the messages on the top sixteen pages), were clearly and consistently applied, one can say that I have complied with one of the fundamental rules of applying the content analysis (Gunter, 2000: 56), namely choosing the text corpus included in the study according to explicit rules, applied consistently and systematically.

Results and discussions

A series of themes and aspects covered mainly by the media during the mentioned period in connection with the nomination, the investiture, the political activity, but also the personality and the individual characteristics of the first female premier in the history of Romania will be discussed. Noteworthy is that, given the inductive development of analysis categories, these themes and issues have emerged as such from the content analysis, without being predefined categories.

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The path to power of Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă

A first topic frequently addressed by the media, especially during the first part of the regarded time frame, that is, after the nomination and around Mrs. Dăncilă's appointment, was her political rise, more exactly various assumptions as regards what opened and facilitated her way to this position of power. Among the most discussed explanations or suggestions of journalists can be mentioned two in particular.

A first explanation would be that, over time, the female prime minister has made many donations to the Social Democratic Party (SDP). For example, in the article: *The premier Viorica Dăncilă, a life full of happy coincidences* (original title in Romanian: *Premierul Viorica Dăncilă, o viaţă plină de coincidenţe fericite*, national newspaper *Jurnalul Naţional*, https://jurnalul.antena3.ro/, 18.01.2018), it is suggestively mentioned that "Viorica Vasilica Dăncilă is also a generous person. [...]To put that in brackets, Viorica Dăncilă donated in 2009 more than she earned with her husband all year long". The same article underlines furthermore the friendship of the prime minister and her family with Liviu Dragnea, the president of SDP. The same arguments are also highlighted in the articles: *The secrets of fish wife Viorica, the new premier proposed by SDP* (original title in Romanian: *Secretele Ţaţei Viorica, noul premier propus de PSD*, published on the news website *Flux 24*, https://www.flux24.ro/, 16.01.2018): "Viorica Dăncilă is among the first two major financiers of SDP during the European Parliamentary Elections 2014, the year where she contributed the amount of 114,402 lei. [...] Both [V. V. Dăncilă and her husband – n.a., S. R.] worked at the Petrom section of Videle, Teleorman County, until the two had come into the clique of the president of Teleorman County Council, Liviu Dragnea", respectively: *Viorica Dăncilă's husband, the richest OMV PETROM manager in Argeş County* (original title in Romanian: *Soţul Vioricăi Dăncilă, cel mai bogat manager OMV PETROM din judeţul Argeş*, article published on the website of television channel *B1 TV*,

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https://b1.ro/, 16.01.2018): “Viorica Dăncilă, SDP’s proposal for the position of prime minister, and her husband, Cristinel Dăncilă, were the main characters in a big scandal last year, when the press wrote extensively about the massive sponsorships made by the SDP’s member of the European Parliament to her political party. Critics have pointed out that Dăncilă would have had no way to hold as much money as she gave to the party”.

A second explanation of the journalists for the rise to power of Mrs. Dăncilă would be her docility and obedience to Liviu Dragnea, which would be, as many media suggest, the shadow leader of Romania, the *de facto* head of the government. Various personal features mentioned in articles, such as lack of backbone, lack of intelligence (meaning lack of ability to have opinions), etc. would contribute to the conformism and servility of the premier. Examples of articles that deal in this way with the subject of the prime minister’s ascending political career: *Sex and the country with Viorica Dăncilă* (original title in Romanian: *Sex and the country cu Viorica Dăncilă*, national newspaper *Bursa*, http://www.bursa.ro/, 29.01.2018); *Viorica Dăncilă, the head of a mediocre team that will deepen the crisis in the SDP, begins her six-month mandate* (original title in Romanian: *Viorica Dăncilă, şefa unei echipe mediocre care va adânci criza din PSD, îşi începe mandatul de şase luni*, the news website *Ziare.com*, http://www.ziare.com/, 29.01.2018); *Huge protest on Saturday in Bucharest: No more dictatorship of the bailiff Dragnea* (original title in Romanian: *Protest uriaş, sâmbătă, în Bucureşti: Nu mai vrem dictatura vătafului Dragnea*, published on the website of *Replica*, regional newspaper in Constanța, https://www.replicaonline.ro/, 28.03.2018). In the same tone, some journalists point out that the submissiveness of Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă makes her the perfect “puppet” for Liviu Dragnea; from this point of view, she would not actually be in a position of power in Romania, but the power would belong entirely to Liviu Dragnea, who, due to the corruption lawsuits, cannot himself occupy the post of prime minister, being forced to “lead out of the shadows”.

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This topic is addressed, for example, in the article: *Ludovic Orban: I hope you do not think that Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă will be prime minister* (original title in Romanian: *Ludovic Orban: Sper că nu vă imaginați că Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă va fi premier*, published on the website of the TV channel *Antena 3*, https://www.antena3.ro/, 28.01.2018): "He [the president of National Liberal Party, Ludovic Orban – n.a., S. R.] said that along with the investiture of the Government of Dăncilă, Liviu Dragnea will become «the de facto prime minister and will cut and hang in everything that means governmental decision»".

Evaluative media coverage contexts (1): Criticism and irony toward the premier

According to the conducted content analysis, more than half of the investigated press articles had a negative, critical or even sarcastic tone. Most of the subjects accompanied by this tone referred to the characteristics of Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, but not so much to her political, organizational, strategic ones, nor to her leadership skills, but especially to her personal, intellectual and physical traits. There were criticised and ironized, in particular, the premier's inability to express herself correctly in Romanian language, grammatical and vocabulary mistakes, lack of knowledge and understanding of terms, her inability to answer questions, her controversial statements which, for some of the authors of the articles, would be caused by gaps in thinking, intelligence and knowledge. Moreover, subjects of sarcasm were also the outward appearance and the tastes of the prime minister, especially her hairdo and her clothing.

Regarding the first mentioned feature, the inability to express herself correctly in the Romanian language, the media have highlighted, since her nomination as prime minister, Mrs. Dăncilă's numerous gaps, mistakes and blunders, which she made on various occasions. Examples of articles dealing with this subject are numerous, a few of them are as follows:

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a) "The second precedent": *Viorica Dăncilă, blunder: There was a precedent, there may be the second precedent* (original title in Romanian: *Viorica Dăncilă, gafă: A existat un precedent, poate exista și al doilea precedent*, the news website *DCnews*, https://www.dcnews.ro/, 14.02.2018).

b) "Immunoglobin" instead of "immunoglobulin": *VIDEO Viorica Dăncilă, pronouncing six times "immunoglobin" instead of "immunoglobulin": The steps for* immunoglobin*'s acquisition will now be carried out by the national company Unifarm SA* (original title in Romanian: *VIDEO Viorica Dăncilă, pronunțând de șase ori „imunoglobină" în loc de „imunoglobulină": Demersurile pentru achiziționarea* imunoglobinei *vor fi realizate de acum de către compania națională Unifarm SA*, the news website *HotNews.ro*, https://www.hotnews.ro/, 07.03.2018); *After Vasilica Dăncilă has failed to say at least once correctly immunoglobulin out of six attempts, Dragnea is advised to "impose the premier lessons of reading, grammar, and general culture"* (original title in Romanian: *După ce Vasilica Dăncilă nu a reușit din șase încercări să spună măcar o dată corect imunoglobulină, Dragnea este sfătuit să-i „impună premierului în funcție lecții de citire, gramatică și cultură generală"*, published on the aggregate website *AK-24*, http://www.aktual24.ro/, 07.03.2018); *Dăncilă announces how she has resolved the immunoglobulin crisis, but she does not even know how to pronounce it correctly. Not to mention the clawback tax* (original title in Romanian: *Dăncilă anunță cum a rezolvat criza imunoglobulinei, dar nici nu știe s-o pronunțe corect. De taxa claudbec nici nu mai vorbim*, published on the news website *Ziare.com*, http://www.ziare.com/, 07.03.2018); *"From the head of the Government, she cannot hide her emptiness". Viorica Dăncilă, infected with "immunoglobin"* (original title in Romanian: *„Din fruntea Guvernului, nu își poate ascunde goliciunea". Viorica Dăncilă, răpusă de „imunoglobină"*, published on the website of *Realitatea TV*, https://www.realitatea.net/, 08.03.2018).

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c) Pronunciation “twenty-twenty” for 2020: *Unbelievable. How Viorica Dăncilă pronounces year 2020: twenty-twenty* (original title in Romanian: *De necrezut. Cum pronunță Viorica Dăncilă anul 2020: douăzeci–douăzeci*, national newspaper *Adevărul*, https://adevarul.ro/, 12.04.2018); *The prime minister of all blunders: how Viorica Dăncilă read today, in the Government meeting, “Euro 2020” – “Euro twenty-twenty”* (original title in Romanian: *Premierul tuturor gafelor: cum a citit azi Viorica Dăncilă, în ședința de Guvern, „euro 2020” – „euro douăzeci–douăzeci”*, published on the online platform/ opinion website *Republica*, https://republica.ro/, 12.04.2018).

d) Disagreements between the subject and the predicate: *Dăncilă mutilates again the Romanian language: “When these things IS ready...”. The Government fumbles again at the pension pillar II* (original title in Romanian: *Dăncilă mutilează din nou limba română: „Când VA fi gata aceste lucruri…”. Guvernul umblă iar la pilonul II de pensii*, regional newspaper *Info Iași*, https://infoiasionline.ro/, 03.04.2018).

e) Other disagreements and false pronunciations: *Romanian unlettered premier Viorica Dăncilă “indentifies” solutions with the team “we have come”* (original title in Romanian: *Premierul agramat al României Viorica Dăncilă „indentifică” soluții cu echipa „care am venit”*, magazine *Revista 22*, https://www.revista22.ro/, 25.03.2018).

The numerous blunders and mistakes made by the prime minister in Romanian (disagreements, the use of misspelled words and mistaken pronunciations, cacophonies, etc.) caused some articles not only critical, but also: a) mostly sarcastic, as in the examples: *Aberration of the day: Being prime minister, reading from the paper including* Hello, dear colleagues!*, and still making mistakes* (original title in Romanian: *Aberația zilei: Să fii premier, să citești de pe foaie și* Bună ziua, dragi colegi! *și să faci greșeli*, news website *Ziare.com*, http://www.ziare.com/, 31.01.2018); *“It comes from moo”. Bitter fun on Europa FM with the unlettered Dăncilă: “I did not hear ever in my life,*

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somebody saying that" (original title in Romanian: *„Vine de la muget". Distracție amară la Europa FM cu agramata Dăncilă: „Eu nu am auzit în viaţa mea, niciodată, pe cineva spunând asta"*, the aggregate website *AK-24*, http://www.aktual24.ro/, 04.04.2018); b) even offensive, as in the example: *VIDEO Romania's silly went to the assassination of Romanian language! She does not know the usual words, cacophony is at her home!* (original title in Romanian: *VIDEO Proasta României a trecut la asasinarea limbii române! Nu știe cuvinte uzuale, cacofonia este la ea acasă!*, article published on the news website *Comisarul.ro*, https://www.comisarul.ro/, 24.03.2018).

In some cases, the female premier has been ironized and even insulted about aspects unrelated to certain competences (political, linguistic, etc.), but only about certain attributes or concerns considered to be characteristic of "women" (such as the interest in shopping), or simply for being a "woman". Such example is the article published on the aggregate website *AK-24* (http://www.aktual24.ro/, 17.01.2018) with the title: *Dăncilă attracted often attention in Brussels: "I see her always in parliament with bags, suitcases, shopping bags. How can you imagine such a broom head meeting with Merkel or Macron?"* (original title in Romanian: *Dăncilă a atras deseori atenția la Bruxelles: „O văd mereu prin parlament cu plase, pungi, geamantane de cumpărături. Cum să-ți închipui un așa cap de mătură întâlnindu-se cu Merkel sau Macron?*"). The article relates to the alleged interview (posted on Facebook) of a journalist with a Romanian MEP (Member of the European Parliament) whose name is not disclosed, an interview in which Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă is called, among other things, "peaceful, but stupid", "total null, absolute zero", being "keen on shopping; that's all her life, her essence". The expression in the title, the "broom head", which may refer to her hairstyle (ridiculed in turn, as we will see below), but which can also be interpreted in the sense of "having nothing in the head", corroborated with the mention of the shopping bags, may be an

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implicit reference to a stereotype about women, namely their frivolous shopping preoccupation.

Another relevant article in this context was published on the opinion website *Republica.ro*, with the title: *Andrei Pleşu, after hearing Viorica Dăncilă speaking in English: "I became melancholy. She looks like a good housewife. I lose myself anytime invited to a stuffed cabbage [Romanian: sarma] made by her"* (original title in Romanian: *Andrei Pleșu, după ce a auzit-o pe Viorica Dăncilă vorbind englezește: „Am devenit melancolic. Pare o bună gospodină. Mă las oricând invitat la o sarma făcută de dânsa"*, https://republica.ro/, 27.01.2018). The article presents a series of quotations from the broadcast "In front of you" *[Romanian: "În fața ta"]* from Digi24, which had Andrei Pleşu as guest (without mentioning the date of the show). While the article contains several quotes in which Andrei Pleşu criticizes Romanian politicians in general, especially their inability to express themselves correctly, not only in English, but also in Romanian (which makes him think that it would be necessary that they read "the ABC book, and the basic grammar textbooks"), the author of the article chose in the title a quote that refers to women ("good housewife", associated with the idea of making stuffed cabbage – *Romanian: sarmale*). This decontextualization of a wider quote (in which Andrei Pleşu says inter alia that "Viorica Dăncilă seems a nonconflictual lady, a good housewife"), and which is presented later in the article, can implicitly suggest, only by reading the title, the idea of associating women with the household and "stuffed cabbage" (i.e. conforming to the traditional roles and expectations regarding a woman – being good, docile, homemaker, knowing how to cook, etc.) and not with politics or occupying positions of power.

A subject of criticism and sarcasm as regards the female Romanian prime minister was also her inability to answer questions. Examples of such articles: *The interview that made Viorica Dăncilă famous in Brussels. Asked to describe her political style in three words, she used 39* (original title in Romanian:

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Interviul care a făcut-o pe Viorica Dăncilă celebră la Bruxelles. Întrebată să își descrie stilul politic în trei cuvinte, a folosit 39, published on the website of news agency *Mediafax*, http://www.mediafax.ro/, 16.01.2018); *Let's laugh – let's cry with Viorica Vasilica Dăncilă. English of the dock worker and answers worthy to the "night of mind" from the new premier* (original title in Romanian: *Să râdem – să plângem cu Viorica Vasilica Dăncilă. Engleză de baltă și răspunsuri demne de „noaptea minții" din partea noului Premier*, published on the local news website *Ghidul Arădean*, https://www.ghidularadean.ro/, 17.01.2018); *Mrs. Vasilica, a huge national shame* (original title in Romanian: *Doamna Vasilica, o imensă ruşine națională*, news website *Ziare.com*, http://www.ziare.com/, 08.03.2018).

The controversial statements of Mrs. Dăncilă constituted also the theme of many articles analyzed and the reason for criticism and irony of the media. Among her controversial assertions, made in the time frame January-April 2018, and critically media covered, can be mentioned:

a) Considering Pakistan and Iran as EU Member countries. Example of article addressing this subject: *Viorica Dăncilă, a large-scale blunder: "We do not interfere with the problems of the Member States, Pakistan and Iran"* (original title in Romanian: *Viorica Dăncilă, gafă de proporții: „Nu intervenim în problemele statelor membre, Pakistan şi Iran"*, *Realitatea.net*, https://www.realitatea.net/, 17.01.2018).

b) Comparing those who criticized Romania's detachment from European values with people with autism: *Viorica Dăncilă learned from Dragnea to offend the autistic people. The association "Autism Romania" knocks her down* (original title in Romanian: *Viorica Dăncilă a învățat de la Dragnea să jignească autiștii. Asociația „Autism România" dă cu ea de pământ*, published on the aggregate website *Noizz.ro*, https://noizz.ro/, 16.02.2018); *Viorica Dăncilă, a big blunder. The hard reaction of an association after the prime minister's statement* (original title in Romanian: *Viorica Dăncilă, gafă de*

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proporții. Reacția dură a unei asociații după declarația premierului, published on the news website *Huff.ro*, https://huff.ro/, 16.02.2018). The later decision of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD), according to which the expression used by Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă did not discriminate people with autism but fell within the limits of "freedom of expression", was also critically debated in some media. Examples: *UPDATE NCCD: Viorica Dăncilă did not discriminate. NCCD President Asztalos Csaba: "I am not proud at all of today's decision"* (original title in Romanian: *UPDATE CNCD: Viorica Dăncilă nu a discriminat. Președintele CNCD, Asztalos Csaba: „Nu sunt mândru deloc de decizia de astăzi"*, national newspaper *Adevărul*, https://adevarul.ro/, 26.02.2018); *NCCD is washing Dăncilă. The statement on the "autists" within the limits of freedom of expression* (original title in Romanian: *CNCD o spală pe Dăncilă. Declarația despre „autiști", în limitele libertății de exprimare*, regional newspaper *Info Iași*, https://infoiasionline.ro/, 26.02.2018).

c) Referring to the minimum pension in Romania as being ten times higher than in reality: *The premier Viorica Dăncilă, a new gaffe after "autists": She announced that the minimum pension will increase from 5,200 lei to 6,400 lei, from July 1st this year* (original title in Romanian: *Premierul Viorica Dăncilă, o nouă gafă, după „autiști": A anunțat că pensia minimă va crește de la 5 200 de lei la 6 400 de lei, de la 1 iulie anul acesta*, national tabloid newspaper *Libertatea*, https://www.libertatea.ro/, 25.02.2018).

Other topics that are found in the themes of articles as reasons for criticism and especially for irony from the journalists are those that have nothing to do with the skills of Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă but refer only to her outward appearance and her fashion tastes.

A first subject in this category, discussed in numerous press articles, was the comparison that the journalist and writer Cristian Tudor Popescu has made, starting with prime minister's hairstyle at the time, in a telephone interview at the Evening Journal on January 16, 2018, on *Digi24 TV* channel, between the

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premier and the monkey specie hamadryas baboon. The comparison itself, the interview in its entirety (in which C. T. Popescu made also other statements that could have been considered defamatory), the rapid own ex officio referral of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) regarding the journalist's statement, the fine that the journalist was given by the NCCD, as well as the ironic response of C. T. Popescu to the fine that he received (and which he later contested), were taken over and discussed in various articles from different media, some of them having the same title, such as: *Cristian Tudor Popescu compared Viorica Dăncilă with a monkey – VIDEO* (original title in Romanian: *Cristian Tudor Popescu a comparat-o pe Viorica Dăncilă cu o maimuță*), published on 17.01.2018 on the websites: *Știri pe surse*, https://www.stiripesurse.ro/; *Știri de Cluj*, https://www.stiridecluj.ro/; *B1 TV*, https://b1.ro/. The prompt own ex officio referral of the NCCD was noted and addressed in articles such as *CTP, Viorica Dăncilă and the baboon. How does the journalist defend himself against NCCD's accusations* (original title in Romanian: *CTP, Viorica Dăncilă și pavianul. Cum se apără jurnalistul în fața acuzațiilor CNCD*, *Digi 24 HD*, https://www.digi24.ro/, 19.01.2018), and his fine of 1,000 lei was discussed later in articles such as: *The baboon and the Teleorman* (original title in Romanian: *Pavianul și Teleormanul*, published on the opinion platform *Republica*, https://republica.ro/, 01.02.2018) or *"Hamadryas baboon". The reaction of C. T. Popescu after he was fined by NCCD* (original title in Romanian: *"Pavian cu mantie". Reacția lui C. T. Popescu după ce a fost amendat de CNCD*, *Digi 24 HD*, https://www.digi24.ro/, 01.02.2018). In this latter article, the ironic response of C. T. Popescu to the fine he received (and which he subsequently contested) from NCCD is quoted and commented: "If you tell your wife one day that her hairdo looks like an angry cat fur, you committed harassment. Ah, I said Mrs. Dăncilă's hairstyle bears a resemblance to the capillary ornament of the hamadryas baboon, which is a monkey. And? What's the problem? If I would have said it resembled a

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mushroom or a jellyfish, would I have committed harassment? Why with the cat, the fungus and the jellyfish there is no problem, but with the monkey is? Does not this mean discrimination and disfavoring the monkey in relation to other animals and plants?". Other articles have also more or less ironically debated the theme, such as those that have reported the rise of the number of searches on Google for that species of monkeys. Example: *CTP has made the hamadryas baboon famous: Google searches exploded after the journalist was fined* (original title in Romanian: *CTP a făcut celebru pavianul cu mantie: căutările pe Google au explodat după ce ziaristul a fost amendat*, article published on the aggregate website *Pagina de media.ro*, https://www.paginademedia.ro/, 01.02.2018).

Some media have also ridiculed the look and the fashion taste of the prime minister, by comparing her with a peasant woman or a housewife, or even calling her "fish wife" (*țață* in original in Romanian), a pejorative word used to designate a tasteless, vulgar woman: *The secrets of fish wife Viorica, the new premier proposed by SDP* (original title in Romanian: *Secretele Țaței Viorica, noul premier propus de PSD*, the news website *Flux 24*, https://www.flux24.ro/, 16.01.2018) or *The peasant woman Vasilica – Viorica is a lady beside Cosette* (original title in Romanian: *Țăranca Vasilica-Viorica e o lady pe lângă Cosette*, the national newspaper *Național*, http://www.national.ro/, 18.01.2018).

Evaluative media coverage contexts (2): Positive aspects related to the female prime minister

Although sporadic, there were however also some positive remarks in the media about the first Romanian female premier. Noteworthy is that most of the positive remarks in the Romanian media about Mrs. Dăncilă referred to her outward appearance, especially her fashion taste and her hairstyle. In other words, what in many media was criticized and ironized, in some other media was praised or appreciated. It is worth mentioning that most of these positive remarks

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about the outward appearance of the prime minister can be found in articles published in tabloid newspapers, characterized by a journalistic style based on sensational news, gossips and rumours about celebrities and public figures, as well as by excessive use of attracting attention photos (Burleson Mackay, 2017). Such an article, with the title: *Look what an elegant premier we will have! Viorica Dăncilă loves accessories and handbags* (original title in Romanian: *Uite ce premier elegant vom avea! Viorica Dăncilă adoră accesoriile și genții*e), was published on 19.01.2018 by the tabloid *Click!* (https://www.click.ro/), with numerous photographs and explanations about premier's preferences regarding clothing and accessories.

Other tabloid newspapers drew the attention, also in a positive way, to Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă's change of hairdressing, as in the articles: *Viorica Dăncilă, change of look. The designated prime minister changed her hairstyle* (original title in Romanian: *Viorica Dăncilă, schimbare de look. Premierul desemnat și-a schimbat coafura*, the tabloid *Libertatea*, https://www.libertatea.ro/, 23.01.2018) or *Radical transformation of look. How the appointed Romanian premier, Viorica Dăncilă, publicly displayed herself!* (original title in Romanian: *Transformare radicală de look. Cum s-a afișat în public premierul desemnat al României, Viorica Dăncilă!*, the tabloid *Cancan*, https://www.cancan.ro/, 23.01.2018). The same change was also noted in other media, such as the television channels PRO-TV and Kanal D, although in a more neutral way than in tabloids: *Viorica Vasilica Dăncilă, change of look before occupying the chair of Victoria Palace* (original title in Romanian: *Viorica Vasilica Dăncilă, schimbare de look înainte de ocuparea fotoliului de la Palatul Victoria*, *PRO-TV*, https://stirileprotv.ro/, 23.01.2018), respectively *How did the nominated premier, Viorica Dăncilă, appeared at a meeting with UDMR's leaders. Everyone noticed this change* (original title in Romanian: *Cum a apărut premierul desemnat, Viorica Dăncilă, la o întâlnire cu conducerea UDMR.*

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Toată lumea a remarcat această schimbare, *Kanal D*, http://www.stirilekanald.ro/, 23.01.2018).

Although no comparison has been made with the media coverage, in the same conditions (nomination, first months in office) of a male prime minister, it can be said, that, probably, the outward appearance, the clothing, the hairdo, etc. of a man do not attract the same attention of the media, being much less frequently mentioned by journalists. A possible conclusion, which requires further research to confirm it, is that media attention to the external appearance of a person in a position of power is much greater when the person is female, thus confirming the social gender-related expectations and roles: a woman, even in a position of power, must "remain a woman", that is, she should strive "to look good"; in the case of a man, if he is a good leader, makes good decisions and has the desired results, the external aspect is more or less negligible.

Of the 162 articles analyzed, I could notice only one article that makes a more detailed analysis of the negative, criticisable, and vulnerable elements, but also of the positive aspects and of the hopes related to the first female prime minister in the history of Romania. This article, titled: *Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, beyond hairdressing, Romanian blouse [embroidered peasant chemise/ shirt] and Teleorman* (original title in Romanian: *Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, dincolo de coafură, ie și Teleorman*), was published on 17.01.2018 by the women's magazine *Elle* (https://www.elle.ro/). Thus, at the beginning of the article there are listed the aspects criticized by other media in connection with the prime minister: **"**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă has been SDP's proposal for the post of prime minister of Romania after the resignation of Mihai Tudose, a reason for a lot of websites to analyse ... the hairstyle (which is unfortunate), the outfits (with folk influences) and the native place, Teleorman, the county that gave the country also the leader of SDP, Liviu Dragnea". Although, at first glance, interpreting the explanatory brackets, it may be understood that Elle also adheres to these criticisms, reading the article further, we find a dismantling of them in the

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analysis made under the subtitle: Thence, who is Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă? According to this analysis, "her affinity for Romanian blouse *[embroidered peasant chemise/ shirt]* is less superficial than seems now", and "the talks about her hair resemble dreadful those who were done around the budget Hillary Clinton dedicated to hairdressing, for example". Moreover, there is a second part of the article, with the subtitle: Still, and a good part, in which there is drawn attention, as few media have done, to the fact that Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă: a) is the second woman nominated by SDP for the post of prime minister, after Sevil Shhaideh and b) (in a later edit) was appointed prime minister, becoming thus the first woman to take up this position in Romania. The rise of a woman in a position of power is remarked positively in the article, there being highlighted, as I have not encountered in other media, the change that this fact represents and the hopes that derives from it regarding the various problems faced by women in Romania (domestic violence, women's dignity, etc.): "We are in a country where Parliament was, two decades after the Revolution, composed of an enormous number of men and a few women. So, we could say that any woman in a position of power is good. [...] We can give this woman a chance – until she decides to cancel it by herself".

Conclusions

The purpose of the research presented in this paper was to investigate the media coverage of the first female prime minister in Romania's history, starting with her nomination for this position and continuing with the first months of her mandate. Through the content analysis method, the major characteristics of the media coverage were outlined, and the main topics and issues covered on the subject were delimited. A particular interest was given to the way in which the Romanian national and regional media (re)presented the first female premier in her first months in office, the extent to which she was seen as being part of the group of those "strong" women who managed to join the social elite of politics

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and who are about to become a new model for femininity – hegemonic femininity, as defined by some authors (Meuser, 2010; Scholz, 2010).

A first conclusion that results from the content analysis is that the national and local press in Romania did not consider and did not (re)present or media construct the first female prime minister as a strong and capable person, who managed on her own to have an ascending political career and to accede due to such qualities in the highest executive position in Romania. Instead, most articles highlighted the lack of her qualities, her deficiencies on multiple areas, her failures, as well as the dubious or at least suspicious means and motives, such as the consistent donations to SDP, which led to her political rise. She was not media represented as a model of a strong woman, but rather as a model of a docile, obedient female, servant to the interests of a strong man who in fact leads not only a party, but also Romania.

Therefore, it can be said that the media constructed image of the first female prime minister in Romania does not fit into the image of hegemonic femininity in the sense defined by M. Meuser (2010) and S. Scholz (2010), because such femininity would be supposed to be no longer agreeing with the subordination of the own gender, to no longer align with the masculine interests, but, on the contrary, to assume roles of autonomy, self-reliance, and authority. However, such attributes, according to the analyzed media reports, do not characterize the prime minister in question. At the very most, the first female Romanian prime minister can be seen, in the media's view, as illustrating the emphasized femininity (in the sense of R.W. Connell, 1995), whose main purpose is to support the supremacy of hegemonic masculinity, by acting to promote the primacy of men's interests and contributing to maintain the subordination of women in society.

Without doing anything to change the image of women in Romania or at least to show her qualities and her own authority and power, the female prime minister, as she is covered by the media, appears rather as the opposite of a strong

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woman, completely or at least largely under the control of powerful men, who make the decisions behind the scenes and have, in reality, the power. According to many media, through her actions, the female Romanian premier has shown that she unconditionally supports the party leader's interests and that her purpose is to obey and implement his plans (such as those relating to the changes to the Penal Code). Such facts have determined many of the articles' authors to portray her as not the holder of a position of power, but only as a political "puppet".

As regards the topics covered primarily relating to the prime minister, besides those concerning political activities, there are to be noted the themes that highlighted her blunders and mistakes, especially the linguistic and logical ones, but also those of thinking and knowledge. According to information from the media, Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, both as a European Parliamentarian and as Prime Minister, has made many faux pas, gaffes, solecisms, errors and provoked a lot of awkwardnesses, showing many linguistic loopholes, but also deficiencies as concerns logic, and political and general culture. As a result, it can be said, that her media coverage, both in the first days after the nomination, as well as on occasion of her appointment and in the first months of her term of office, turned into a real "hunt" of mistakes and blunders, who have become in many news the leitmotiv associated with her actions and her person in general. In this context, many of the articles analyzed had a critical and ironic tone regarding the female premier, being a way to banter and, in some cases, even to offend her. As mentioned, a single article out of the total of 162 analyzed drew the attention and debated that she is the first female prime minister in the history of Romania, and that, beyond the various criticisms, reservations and doubts about her, afterwards "any woman in a position of power is good" (quotation from the article in question: *Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, beyond hairdressing, Romanian blouse [embroidered peasant chemise/ shirt] and Teleorman*, *Elle* magazine, https://www.elle.ro/, 17.01.2018).

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The investiture for the first time of a woman as prime minister of Romania has raised, therefore, the interest of the media, discussions and debates on various political and personal aspects. However, the fact that, for the first time in its history, Romania has a female prime minister, it has not been highlighted as such in many mass media, but other elements, rather controversial, were predominantly emphasized and debated. Among them there was to be found the assertion that her political rise and the support necessary to maintain her position of power is owed not so much to her competences as to her submissiveness and docility to the men who take, in fact, behind-the-scenes decisions, and which, therefore, have in reality power.

Thus, at least analysing the media constructed portrait of Romania's first female prime minister, it can be concluded that she does not illustrate the hegemonic femininity, which would be strong and resolute, and could occupy an equipotential position with that of hegemonic masculinity. In other words, in Romania, despite the presence of a woman in the highest position of executive power, there has not yet emerged a hegemonic femininity, that, over time, could influence the structural logic of gender relations in society.

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