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GENDER IN FOCUS:
(NEW) TRENDS IN MEDIA

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Table of contents

Cerqueira, C.; Cabecinhas, R. & Magalhães,S, I. (2016). Gender and media: where do we stand today? In C. Cerqueira; R. Cabecinhas & S. I. Magalhães (Eds.), *Gender in focus: (new) trends in media* (pp. 5-11). Braga: CECS.

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Gender and media: where do we stand today?

"Freedom is not enough. What I want has no name yet"
Clarice Lispector

Nowadays, the public discourses about gender equality are commonly accepted in Western society. In fact, we live in an era of "equality illusion" (Banyard, 2010) because the mainstream discourses incorporate gender in the agenda, conveying the message that feminist struggles are unnecessary today. At the same time, postfeminism (McRobbie, 2004) gains importance and demonstrates the intricacies of a neoliberal, highly individualist culture that subtly imprisons the freedoms that it is supposed to grant (Gill & Scharff, 2011).

However, back in 1978, Gaye Tuchman used the expression "symbolic annihilation" to refer to how the media represented women. The author refers to a "symbolic annihilation" because sometimes it is so hidden and subtle that it becomes difficult to perceive – and to be fought. Much has improved since then; yet a lot remains the same. Over the past decades there have been marked changes in gender relations, in feminist activism, in the (media) communication industry and in society in general (Byerly, 2013; Carter, Steiner & McLaughlin, 2015; Gallagher, 2014; Gallego, 2013; Krijnen, Álvares & Van Bauwel, 2011; Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015; Lobo, Silveirinha, Subtil, & Torres, 2015; Ross, 2009; Silveirinha, 2001; Van Zoonen, 1994, 2010). Now, in a globalised and media saturated world, the gendered picture is, consequently, different. The contemporary grammar is marked by diverse and complex tensions (van Zoonen, 2010).

These transformations have led to the flourishing of academic production in this field, which continues to grow worldwide.

> The field is characterized by a plurality of different approaches and perspectives: different theoretical perspectives,

> different epistemological commitments, different understandings of power, different conceptualizations of the relationship between representations and 'reality', and different understandings of how media images relate to individuals' sense of identity and subjectivity. (Gill, 2007, pp. 7-8)

The *Gender in focus: (new) trends in media* Book was born out of the aim of making a recent contribution that may enrich the bigger picture. It encompasses a selection of articles presented in the homonymous international conference held in June 2014 in Braga, Portugal, with over 100 participants from 22 different countries. It sought to bring together new insights into this research area, especially those that explore the interrelations and negotiations between media and gender through the use of interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches. This conference was organized under the project *Gender in focus: social representations in Portuguese generalist newsmagazines* that integrated two main axes: products/producers and receivers (e.g. Cerqueira, Magalhães, Santos, Cabecinhas & Nogueira, 2014; Magalhães, Cerqueira & Bernardo, 2012; Santos, Cerqueira & Cabecinhas, 2014).

The Book, as the title implies, is about power, institutions, communication, popular culture, technology, activism, and resistance. It explores the complex and sometimes conflicting relations established, contemporarily, between the fields of gender and feminism, and the sphere of (media) communication. It does not purport to cover the various dimensions that permeate this field of research. In fact, it would be practically impossible given its heterogeneity and constant mutations.

The volume presents itself as an Book with a clear overview of theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches and empirical applications into the field of gender and (media) communication. It comprises diverse perspectives from different (inter)national scholars, aiming at engaging in a transnational and intersectional discussion. Another compelling feature is the inclusion of chapters produced by junior, senior and highly recognized scholars in applied studies of (media) communication sciences centred in a gender framework, which reflect the evident activity in this area of research, namely an explicit political implication in the way of producing science. The common goal is the need for a social change that crosses discourses and practices and empowers groups and individuals. Those who research into this area, which crosses gender (and inherently feminisms) and communication, cannot, in our view, alienate themselves from an epistemological position that questions matrices of oppression and privilege. In this sense, we think that this volume, based in its academic and socio-political relevance, becomes a useful reference for diverse social agents, such as communication sciences students, researchers, media professionals, civil society organisations and policymakers in different contexts.

The resulting volume is composed of four sections, which articulate the focal points on gender and media studies. Section I - Gender and Communication - is dedicated to the state of the art ranging from statistics to publishing. It begins with *Stasis and Shifts in Feminist Media Scholarship* by Carolyn Byerly, in which the author reviews patterns in women-and-media research and points towards new directions. Next, in the chapter *Gender and Communication: Problematizations, Methodologies, Intersections,* António Fernando Cascais discusses this area of research as plural, characterized by interdisciplinary, but with a need for more crossroads. In the chapter *Gender, Sex and Sexuality in Communication Journals: A Critical Overview of Current Discursive Practices*, Zara Pinto-Coelho and Silvana Mota-Ribeiro explore diverse conceptualizations of those three concepts and of their (inter) relationships within communication research.

Section II - Gender representations - gathers articles from different contexts and with diverse material around gender representations in the media. The chapter *Giving Voice to the Patient in Vegetative State: Biopolitical Intersections of Discourses on Human Life and Female Body*, by Cláudia Álvares and Adalberto Fernandes, suggests a reflection on the Portuguese online media representations of two cases of young women diagnosed with vegetative state for a long period of time. Subsequently, Yaiza Janssens, in the chapter *Sex-Role Stereotyping and Sex Discrimination Regulation in Advertising: The Belgian Case*, analyses adds and their contribution to the discussion on (semi-)legal mechanisms for the regulation of advertising sexism in the Belgian context. The chapter *Cher's Music Videos. Gender as Performativity*, by Orquídea Cadilhe, presents the way Cherilyn Sarkisian's "Cher" music videos are a powerful source in helping her question and deconstruct classical representations of gender, carrying a message of empowerment to women and other minorities and proving that Cher's performance has strong social and political connotations.

Section III - Gender and News - focuses on journalism and its multiple dimensions. *Sensitive to others: emotions, care and gender in the construction of news*, by Maria João Silveirinha, seeks to untangle reason and emotion in the production of news as she recalls the historical and contemporary gender dimension of news production. In the chapter *Framing Gender and Women Politicians Representation: Print Media Coverage of Spanish Women*

Ministers, Núria Fernandez-Garcia explores the media treatment of cabinet members in Spain, from 1996 to 2011. Carla Baptista, Ana Cabrera, Teresa Mendes Flores and Carla Martins, in the chapter *Feminine politics at the Parliament: addressing questions about political and journalistic representation*, tackle the political representation and media visibility strategies of Portuguese female deputies across various periods of the Portuguese democracy, from 1975 to 2002.

Section IV - Gender and Media Reception - combines chapters from the point of view of the publics and analyzes its importance for a cognized practice. In the article *'Silence No More': Online Gender Related Activism in India*, Adrija Dey explores the importance of social media in relation to women rapes, by presenting a case study from 2012 in India. Finally, the chapter *Women and digital Reading: The Gendering of Digital Reading Practices*, by Carla Ganito and Cátia Ferreira, provides a quantitative analysis of women's digital reading practices collected through the online survey of 16 countries in 2013, offering new insights into how women are defining new developments in the transition from print to digital.

This collection of chapters brings a critical overview for the contemporary interrelations between gender and communication and clearly demonstrates the major challenges faced by this area of research, at a time characterized by new, old and contradictory discourses. After all, we've come a long way, but this area of research and activism is still loading... So, where do we stand today?

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Finally, we would like to leave some words of appreciation to the authors of the chapters in this Book, as well as to the expert panel of reviewers, for their major contributions. A brief comment on the editorial policy of this Book would highlight that the authors, and their personal voices and discourses, are of major importance for us; therefore they were entirely respected regarding the use of English and its variations, but also had a crucial role in obtaining the copyright to the reproduction of image or text.

We would also like to thank Communication and Society Research Centre (CECS), based at the University of Minho, Portugal, for all the support given during the project implementation and the diverse activities conducted. Finally, our warm thanks to the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) for supporting the project *Gender in focus: social representations in Portuguese generalist newsmagazines* (PTDC/

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I. Gender and communication studies

Byerly, C. M. (2016). Stasis and shifts in feminist media scholarship. In C. Cerqueira; R. Cabecinhas & S. I. Magalhães (Eds.), *Gender in focus: (new) trends in media* (pp. 15-27). Braga: CECS.

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Stasis and shifts in feminist media scholarship

Abstract

Originally a keynote speech at an international feminist conference, the article reviews patterns in women-and-media research and poses new directions. Over forty years of feminist analysis of media, researchers have focused disproportionately on women's representations and excluded the structural causes for those representations. The author emphasizes the need for macro-level investigations in communication law and policy, industry structures, and financing to better understand the gendered power dynamics that cause women to be underrepresented in media decision making positions and in serious news and programming.

Keywords

Women and media; feminism and media; feminist theory of media; global women's media issues

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[1]As feminist media scholars living in today's age of new media, with seemingly unlimited formats for interpersonal and mass communication, we are challenged in our critical research agendas to locate women's interests, to discern whether those interests are being served, and to ascertain the gendered relations of power that control media industries. Above all, we are faced with creating scholarship that is useful to those in the academy as well as feminists working in popular movements for greater equality.

A good starting point for such assessment, as well as for setting research agendas, would be to identify what our feminist media scholarship

[1] This article is adapted from the author's keynote speech given at the Gender in Focus Conference, Braga, Portugal, in June 2014.

currently emphasizes in its investigations. One international gathering recently provided an opportunity to do this. The "Gender in Focus" conference, held in Braga, Portugal, in June 2014, convened feminist media scholars from nations in Europe and other regions to discuss feminist media research. Examining the titles of 114 presentations scheduled for this conference (not including those of keynote speakers), I found that the vast majority – nearly three-fourths – appeared to be analyses of gender representation in media texts. Substantially fewer focused on other aspects of women's relationship to media; these included media activism (10%), media audiences (8%), and employment (7%). The titles of papers suggested there was little or no attention to matters of policy, finance or the ever growing problem of conglomeration, i.e., the structural aspects of the women-and-media relationship that critical scholars would be particularly concerned with.

Admittedly, this was a small sample associated with a single event and not strongly scientific in its analytical approach. If each paper had been individually examined in terms of its substantive content, the results may have been different. However, while only a glimpse, my observations at this conference easily mirror the longstanding trend of women and media scholarship around the world. As I have explored in greater detail elsewhere, the tendency has been for feminist media scholars over some 40 years to emphasize representational issues of women in the media to the neglect of deeper questions related to the contexts and relations of power that produce those representations (Byerly, 2012). This trend of privileging representational over structural issues – the latter involving power relations – illustrates what I define as the stasis in women-and-media scholarship. I will trace and problematize this trend in the following discussion, while also pointing out the important shifts that have taken place along the way, particularly over the past decade.

1. Origins

Women and media research at the global level goes back to the 1970s when feminism emerged as a world movement, aided in no small way through the United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985. Delegates who met for the first of three UN Decade for Women conferences in 1975 in Mexico City articulated – among other things – the first feminist critique of media. That critique was very basic and clear in its three main points. First, delegates said, women were omitted from the serious news of the day.

This referred to the silence and invisibility that Gaye Tuchman (1978) would later call "the symbolic annihilation of women in the mass media". Second, they said, women were misrepresented in media when they did appear in news, advertising and entertainment. This referred particularly to the problem of sex role stereotyping that showed women in mothering and caretaking roles, as helpless victims, or as over-sexed jezebels. In truth, women have always had a broader range of social roles and identities, and we have actively contributed to community and nation building – where were those representations? Third, delegates said, there were too few women in the media professions that created these messages and images. The assumption here was that if more women had greater control over the creative and decision-making processes within the news and other media, there would be increased visibility, more accurate representations, and a larger view of women's problems and social contributions (Byerly, 2012).

Delegates in Mexico City set forth a program of action that called on the United Nations to study women's representation in advertising, news, and television, and to launch programs that would better enable women to take control of the messaging and imaging processes and to increase global news flow about women. By 1980, UNESCO had funded a series of studies that would become the foundation of our international academic literature on women and media[2]. In succeeding years, various UN agencies would also fund training programs for women journalists and would underwrite projects like the five Women's Feature Services, the subject of my own dissertation research nearly 25 years ago (Byerly, 1990; 1995).

That first critique of the women and media problematic was important. It put media content on the global feminist agenda in a clear and compelling way, and it called for strategies to put women more directly in charge of the making of media content. In addition, it associated women's access to media with women's participation in the public sphere, and it opened avenues for women to expand their access both through traditional news and through alternative media (Byerly, 1995). With this emerging array of media concerns, it remains a question as to why feminist scholars have remained as focused as they have on analyzing mainly what they see (i.e., media representations) rather than the wider range of issues associatd with those representations – i.e., decision making structures, gender relations in media professions, women's media ownership patterns, and feminist grassroots

[2] See, for example, Mieke Ceulemans & Guido Fauconnier, *Mass Media: The Image, Role and Social Conditions of Women* (Paris: UNESCO, 1979); and Margaret Gallagher, *Equal Opportunities: The Case of Women and the Media* (Paris: UNESCO, 1981).

activism the world over that has challenged media portrayals and employment practices associated with women's ability to be hired and advanced.

This is not to downplay the seriousness of the imagery that we see or the messages that hear in news, television programming, advertising and other media every day. These bombard us, engage our imaginations, and shape our perceptions of ourselves, each other and the world. For these reasons, representations of women in the media matter and they will remain legitimate research concerns for feminist scholars. At the same time, we must recognize that feminist media research could be asking harder questions, questions that interrogate why so many problematic messages continue to exist to distort and misrepresent us, who is creating these messages and images, and what is being done to change the situation? Also not to be overlooked are the questions about where things have improved: How have women's representations become more egalitarian in different media outlets and different nations over the years? What are the conditions that allow such change to occur? What are the levels and forms of women's participation in media companies' decision-making at both management and governance levels? How do national laws, government-media relationships, political framework, and culture shape media representations and women's ability to enter into the professions and advance? To what extent do women own media outlets today? Does women's greater control over media companies and production result in more favorable news coverage and representation?

2. Levels of Analysis

These questions have implications for determining whether and how the feminist scholarly agendas have changed over time. One way to gain a better understanding of both the statis and the shifts in the women and media research is to organize that research by the levels of analysis that define the kinds of studies we undertake. These include the micro, meso, macro and external levels of analysis.

Most research on representation, i.e., on the image, portrayal and other messages of women contained in media texts, comprises the micro-level of media analysis. Micro-level analysis tends to be descriptive, considering things like how much and what kind of news coverage women and women's issues receive, whether women are being sex-role stereotyped, and whether content has a feminist perspective, among other things associated with the visual and auditory aspects of the text. Micro-level analysis has been important over the years because it has allowed scholars to document the extent to which women's exclusion and stereotyping have persisted over time, and when and how these have improved. On the other hand, the descriptive nature of most micro-level analysis typically offers little in the way of explanation for how media content is created, who is involved or what effect it has on those who consume it. Nor does it examine the larger media environment shaped by the political economy of finance, laws and policies – an environment within which media companies operate. Micro-level analysis was first set forth in the 1970s in collected volumes like Tuchman, Daniels and Benét (1978) *Hearth and Home*, and, as discussed earlier, it remains a staple of feminist interrogations into the popular culture.

It is not clear why feminist scholars have devoted disproportional emphasis to image and other representational research and tended to neglect other dimensions of women's relationship to media. One possibility may be that analysis of texts is relatively inexpensive and readily achieved. For example, images and printed messages are easily gathered from sources of popular culture, or by using university data bases like EbscoHost or Lexis-Nexis, and these can be examined using fairly standard procedures of qualitative or quantitative analysis. Time required is also undoubtedly a factor, with most representational studies able to be started and finished within a matter of weeks, and authors thus able to produce conference papers, book chapters and journal articles in a relatively short time frame. The cost of such research is also minimal.

By contrast, studies that involve field work (e.g., chasing down source material or conducting interviews and/or focus groups), or that require purchase of data are both more time consuming and more expensive. In addition, as research designs become more complex, the steps involved also increase in number, and the time required to complete the work lengthens. Many scholars are pushed by their departments to produce quantities of work for advancement through their academic ranks, with less emphasis placed on the depth of the scholarship. In addition, scholars whose institutions provide little or no funding, and who may work in nations with few external monetary sources for their research, encounter resource barriers to the pursuit of more complex research. Even so, feminist media scholars with many years of experience in media fields, and who have developed collaborative networks within and across nations, have made substantial progress overcoming these problems, as shall be seen shortly.

This is also not to say that there have not been advances, i.e., shifts, in the approach that some scholars have taken in their micro-level research.

Several examples will serve to illustrate the ways in which studies that begin with micro-level concerns can proceed toward a deeper analysis by complicating their research questions and methodological procedures. One such example might be found in the mixed methods approach taken by Jenny Kitzinger (2004) in her studies conducted over a period of years, determining first how sexual assault is framed in the news, and then how actual news coverage affects the feelings and knowledge of female survivors of assault. Using both textual and framing analysis to examine the content of news about sexual assault, she then conducted dozens of focus group interviews with sexual assault survivors. In the end, she addressed nearly all levels of media analysis – micro, meso, macro and external – in her research.

A second example may be seen in the Global Media Monitoring Project, to begin its fifth round in 2015. The GMMP, which is sponsored by the World Association for Christian Communication, in Toronto, Canada, has been conducted every five years since 1995 and is the most extensive ongoing mechanism for tracking the amount and kind of news about women around the world. In its 2010 round, 107 nations participated, and the project expanded its methods for data collection and analysis. Thus, the output provided much more thorough information about the number of women's bylines, issue-focus of news, gender aspects of photos and other images, and whether stories contained a feminist perspective. In addition, the GMMP report also placed each nation's findings in relation to trends in the media industries, such as mergers and concentration of ownership, and the possible impact of these on women's inclusion and portrayal in the news. This effort to consider women's representation in news within the context and relations of production that produced that news signals an important shift in this important longitudinal cross-cultural research (*Who Makes the News*, 2010).

Another advancement, or shift, in micro-level research may be seen in scholarly efforts that try to place problematic imagery of women within the relations of production that create that imagery. Within US society, where race relations have historically permeated all institutions, Black feminist scholars have been especially concerned with the persistent stereotyping of Black women by mainstream media industries, particularly television and music. Black feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (2004) took on the second of these by problematizing the exploitation of Black bodies in the hip hop music industry, considering not just the hyper-sexualized, sometimes violent stereotyping of Black men and women artists and models, but also by questioning who profits from those images and lyrics, and how popular culture helps to reinforce unequal racial positions within (US) society. Collins' work thus situates problematic sexist and racist imagery within a critical political economy framework that helps to show how the subordination of women and people of color by industries owned by White rich men produce a situation she calls the new racism.

Research concerned with the generation of content fits within the meso-level of analysis. It is at the meso-level where the gender politics in production of media texts is located, as well as issues of women's employment and role in creative decision-making about content. In other words, it is at the meso-level where production values and newsroom routines exist, and where, in Stuart Hall (1973) language, messages are encoded with meaning, that is, ideologies are introduced into the media texts that audiences will later consume. Thus, who is doing the encoding becomes a key to better understanding whose meanings are instilled in media texts. For many years, there was very little research on women's media employment, newsroom cultures or gender politics within the relations of production. Studies tended to be small-scale and statistical in nature with little contextual information to explain the findings.

Feminist scholars have taken increasingly greater interest in women's employment in media industries these last 20 years with both regional and global-level studies. Under UNESCO funding, Margaret Gallagher (1995) published the first global baseline study of women's employment with her survey of 237 companies in 43 nations. Such a broad international effort would not be seen again until 2011 with publication of Byerly's (2011) study for International Women's Media Foundation, an investigation of women's status in 522 news companies in 59 nations. While the two studies differed in many ways, they both tried to provide context for their data in order to explain why women had excelled or lagged behind in the respective nations whose media they examined. My own research (i.e., the IWMF-funded report just cited) enabled me to commission researchers in 29 of those original 59 nations to interpret their nations' findings in light of related studies, cultural traditions, government-media relations, and other factors for a second book, the *Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Media* (Byerly, 2013). And, in 2013, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) commissioned European feminist scholars Karen Ross and Claudia Padovani (2013) to conduct a study of the 29 nations of the European Union in relation to gender equality in media organizations' decision making. That report, *Advancing Gender Equality in Decision-making in Media Organizations*, provides survey data from 99 companies on women's roles within the companies' structure, as well as detailed information about gender equality laws, history of women in media professions, and individual company policies on gender.

Add to these studies recent feminist research on gender politics in the newsroom culture by a number of feminist scholars like Karen Ross, Marjan deBruin, Louise North, Monika Djerf-Pierre, Juana Gallego, and Barbi Pilvre, among others. Their meso-level work has expanded our understanding of how established male values and ways of doing things dominate even as women advance in number and seniority within media organizations. These recent studies mark not only an expansion of interest in meso-level analysis of women's relationship to media, but also a maturation process within feminist media scholarship in which research designs are more complex and findings more extensively interpreted.

A particularly important aspect of media analysis – and by far the least developed in feminist scholarship – is macro-level analysis. This is the realm of institutional and financial arrangements that shape the media environment. It consists of industry, national and international policies and regulatory mechanisms; financial mechanisms; ownership patterns; and organizational structures which together help to explain how media operate and perform. It is macro-level feminist research that would determine things like whether laws protect women's employment, or regulate violence against women in television programming, or enable women to own media companies today. As media industries converge their technological platforms, concentrate their ownerships, and globalize their reach, where do women fit in? Feminist scholars are challenged to accomplish what US sociologist Saskia Sassen (1998) urged us to do nearly two decades ago: make women visible in every level of the global economy, whether as skilled workers building computers and digital TVs, as media professionals stuck at the glass ceiling, or as marginalized would-be owners of companies who cannot get a foot in the door of today's conglomerated industries.

Women's relationship to the policy apparatus is possibly the most neglected area of feminist media research, and the need for such is begging. Addressing this challenge, Margaret Gallagher (2014) surveyed the past three decades to discern how women were systematically excluded from international policy forums on media, including the New World Information Order debates (of the 1970s and 1980s) and the World Summit on the Information Society (2003 to the present). Among other things, Gallagher points out that while feminists increasingly engage with the media policy domain, the powerful actors within that domain show little interest in feminist analysis of policy issues (Gallagher, 2014, p. 461). This suggests a need for scholars to track feminist activist efforts to influence policy in women's interests and to continue to advance those analyses to challenge the power structures that seem so resistant to change. A number of scholars, most notably Canadian researchers McKercher and Mosco (2008), are refining and using political economy theory and analysis to examine problems in women's media labor. And a number of useful national-level studies, such as Alison Beale and Annette Van Den Bosch's (1998) comparative analysis of gender in media policy in Canada and Australia, and Aimée Vega and Patricia Ortega's (2013) in Mexico, have undertaken research to argue for greater national-level gender sensitive media policies as well as to document women's activism to have such policies adopted.

In spite of these advances, the macro-level remains the most under studied area of the women and media relationship. The need for a more decided shift to greater attention to macro-level issues was suggested to me most recently when I was editing the *Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism* and discovered that 19 of the 29 chapters' authors noted that media conglomeration – something produced through neoliberal political and economic policies – was a problem in their nations and that it affected women's employment in newsrooms. Louise North (2009) in Australia represents something of a trailblazer in this regard with her study of news workers' response to company downsizing occurring when a larger news company buys out a smaller one. The situation demanding investigation and theorizing is this: As men's control over ever vaster empires of media and other companies expands, so does the consolidation of their economic dominance and political influence. In the US at present, we are seeing the number of owners of broadcast stations decline through conglomerate buyouts, with women and racial minorities' ownership now slipped into the low single digits (Byerly, Park & Miles, 2011). And, we are not surprisingly also witnessing the industry executives, lobbyists, and lawyers rise in influence within our national Congress, the legislative branch of government, and in the administrative branch, where the regulatory processes are found. Industry attorneys wrote what became the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the law that created the legal basis for deregulation, which the Federal Communication Commission subsequently incorporated into ownership rules. These two events led to a frenzy of mergers and acquisitions among US-based media companies in the late 1990s and to the present time. This process of conglomeration has brought the US-based media ownership landscape to one dominated by five or six giant media conglomerates[3].

The last level that concerns the women-and-media relationship is the external-level of analysis, which investigates the ways that women use and are affected by media at both individual and societal levels. A major genre of external-level research is the audience study, with most of this genre involving ethnographic techniques such as interviews and participant-observation, but some also taking a political economy approach. Audience research has contributed to our knowledge of how women interact with media texts and, in some cases, with the reporters who create them. Parameswaran (2013) whose own work has complicated the genre of audience research over the years, takes stock of the evolving nature of the study of female media audiences, observing that the genre "has thrived and expanded to include a range of audiences, media genres, modes of audience engagement, and institutional and international sites of reception" (p. 13). Her observations come to life in work like that of Youna Kim (2014), whose research on the Asian female media audience utilizes a complex approach that includes ethnographic interviews with women from ages 20 through 50, and an analytical framework informed by political economy and the politics of neoliberalism and globalization. Similarly, Sahar Khamis's (2014) interviews with female journalists in Egypt, Syria, Libya, Yemen and Bahrain investigates the professional, political and activist dimensions of their reporting of events associated with the Arab Spring uprisings between 2011 and 2013.

Instead of shrinking, feminist scholars must be fully engaged with our critical scholarship that documents the problem and its effects, that identifies points of intervention and resistance, and that produces a range of useful studies for activists and public interest lawyers to use in challenging the problem. This is an arena where feminist scholars can contribute in most of our nations today, if we begin to develop our research strategies now.

3. Summary

Feminist media scholarship has undergone a maturation process from the 1970s to the present time. While attention remains fixed disproportionately at the micro-level of analysis, where concerns are primarily with women's representation in media texts, there have been shifts toward a

[3] For a fuller discussion of media conglomeration in the United States and the problems it has generated for democratic society, see John Nichols and Robert W. McChesney, *Dollarocracy* (New York: Nation Books, 2013).

more complex set of questions and frameworks of analysis in this form of research. In addition, research agendas and methods have also expanded at the meso- and macro-levels. However, in the era of new technologies and rapidly changing ownership structures, the large frontier for feminist scholarship lies decidedly in the last of these. Gendered relations of power both within and across our societies require more vigorous examination at the macro level of media research. One of the things that will enable that is the strong scholarly networks formed by working relationships that have developed among feminist researchers. These began informally through communication associations like International Communication Association (ICA) and International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), but formalized as one or more scholars developed specific research projects and secured funding to conduct it.

All of the global-level studies cited in this essay are examples of the work arising from the formalization of feminist research networks. Ross and Padovani's (2013) coordination of the European Union-funded study *Advancing Gender Equality in Decision-Making in Media Organizations* is one example of what such arrangements can produce. Ross and Padovani engaged colleagues, most of whom they had already established working relations with earlier, in the 28-nation study. My own coordination (Byerly, 2011) of the massive 59-nation study *Global Report on the Status of Women in News Media*, for the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) is another example of international collaboration. The IWMF study involved 160 researchers and statisticians, many of whom I knew or located through years of networking at international meetings. Most recently, the largest-scale project to date has launched. In 2014, Janet Wasko and Aimée Vega Montiel, IAMCR president and vice president, respectively, led formation of the Global Alliance on Gender And Media (GAMAG), a research entity to be housed in and supported by UNESCO. The group held its first steering committee meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, in November 2014, to begin discussions of GAMAG's research agenda and to define ways it will advance issues into United Nations-sponsored meetings on women, as well as meetings of the World Summit on Information Societies (WSIS). At this writing, GAMAG's members, who include myself, are still in active discussions to develop the direction of our research programs. Once the details are worked out, and UNESCO's administrative and funding roles are clarified, GAMAG-affiliated researchers are expected to undertake some of the challenges that have been identified in the preceding discussion.

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Gender and communication: problematizations, methodologies, intersections

Abstract

Gender/ Feminist/ Women's Studies, as well as Gay, Lesbian and Queer Studies, in addition to some already well-established scientific areas in academic curricula – of which Cultural Studies and the Communication Sciences themselves are excellent examples – all have emerged from the classic domains of the Social Sciences and the Humanities. This emergence does not amount, however, to mere disciplinary specialization compelled by the real specificity of its objects that have gradually grown more differentiated and clear-cut. The disciplinary fragmentation at stake is a thematic and methodological one, as it constructs news forms of questioning rather than well-defined objects, and emphasizes intersections rather than separatisms. It therefore acquires an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary character, in such a sense that interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are not boiled down to mere mechanical cooperation between established disciplines; rather, they have forged critical categories that, notwithstanding, provide for a decisive – yet unacknowledged – contribution to their renovation, whilst their gatekeeping practices cannot but simplistically and wrongfully detect disciplinary transgression. Nonetheless, the new inter- and trans-disciplines relentlessly strive for the invention of persuasive contexts that aim to apply their own situated knowledges beyond their original settings, thus facing a slightly understandable resistance also arising from the Communication Sciences themselves that frequently commits them to a precarious status of disparagement, if not outright dismissal. The latter, moreover, is not always avowed, but to a large extent provides an explanation for their still fragile formal establishment at national level, despite their already solid development in respect of practitioners, publications, theses, research projects and courses. In a way, both the hardships that they face and the horizons that open up to them are not different from the ones that were already presented to Communication Sciences at their inception – and that ultimately allowed for the particular status that furthered their development, more than hampered it.

Keywords

Gender; Queer; academe; LGBTQI

Until very recent times, Gender / Feminist / Women's matters, as well as Gay, Lesbian and Queer matters, have not earned the consideration and concern – I would not dare to go as far as to say: the respect – they deserve in Communication Sciences in Portugal and in the scientific and academic community of communication, a consideration and a concern that the Communication Sciences can greatly profit from. I willingly admit that such a grim picture has started to change, but a long way has still to be traveled. We should remind ourselves, however, that the field of Communication has not been at the forefront of the hosting of gender and GLQ issues at the international level, and that areas such as Psychology, Sociology, Cultural Studies, Literature and the Arts have gotten ahead. What might be called a "communicational bias" could be accounted for sustaining the attitudes towards gender and queer matters prevailing in our midst. It consists in believing that, as far as the Communication Sciences are concerned, the essential questions that are to be addressed by research and teaching are related to the representation of women and LGBTQI people in the media, to their visibility in the public sphere, as well as the role played by the media in that visibility, and to the extent that the media convey social perceptions and public representations. Already a narrow interpretation of the role of the Communication Sciences, this biased approach completely avoids self-reflexivity, since it ignores the role and responsibility of communication and the media in the very construction of public representations and in the shaping of social perceptions, as if the media and communication were mere conveyors and not creators. Authors Cláudia Álvares and Maria João Silveirinha put this problem into perspective for us. Cláudia Álvares very justly calls our attention to the simple, but very often overlooked, fact that "(m)ore interesting than affirming whether or not women are actually visible in the public sphere, is, to my mind, the fact that matters of the public sphere continue to be more prevalent than those of the private" (Álvares, 2010a, p. 38). Also, Álvares stresses that the problem may not be visibility per se, or one of a simplistic, oppositional approach of the divide visibility versus invisibility, since the significant proportion of space that is currently been allocated to women in the public sphere is counterbalanced (to say the least) by the fact that "the same proportion of space is not allocated to 'private' issues, as if woman must travesty herself to a patriarchal conception of power and visibility so as to be heard" (Álvares, 2010a, p. 38). In this line, Álvares couldn't be more enlightening when she concludes that:

> Indeed, the internalization by newspapers of the feminist dictum 'the personal is political' would be equivalent to a

> Freudian 'return of the repressed' (...) whereby texts would perhaps cease to be symptomatic of a need to express the forbidden idea that both men *and* women share a private sphere, the relevance of which has been systematically downplayed due to its habitual connotation with the feminine. (Álvares, 2010a, p. 38)

The same applies to LGBTQI issues, it must here be added, for they are systematically seen as being all about "sex" and "sexuality", which is invariably attributed to the private sphere, while, by the same token, their public representation is somehow turned to be "obscene", to the extent that it always entails what is perceived to be a revelation of intimacy. The question of visibility would then rather be a question of *what kind* of visibility, and we are well aware that the struggles around visibility actually stand for highly politically charged struggles for meaning. In this line, one could – must – also note that the Communication Sciences can only be enriched by their ability to study the construction of gender and queer visibility in whatever discursive and non-discursive cultural product where it occurs, instead of just the media, namely when (really: often) such cultural products play an undeniable role of mediation in social relations (Álvares, 2007, p. 287).

In turn, Maria João Silveirinha (2001) reminds us, in the most insightful of terms, that the media play a crucial role in the symbolic struggle for the meaning and for the interpretations in which the social movements find themselves ever more involved, thus, should I add, becoming impossible for them to avoid giving its due importance to a clever politics of language in their resistance strategies. In fact, according to Silveirinha (2001), the studies on the relations between social movements and the media tended to approach the media as intrinsically manipulative instruments and consequently dismissed a privileged space of the social construction process, except for an eminently instrumental perspective. Silveirinha (2012, p. 98) adds that, in such a line of thought, the media studies, as well as the public policies for that matter, have focused on the broadcasting of stereotypes about women and gender (the same goes for media studies on the stereotyping of LGBTQI persons), on the assumption that public attitudes change as soon as cognitive deficits concerning inequalities and sexist representations are corrected (the same applied to the stereotyping and discriminating of LGBTQ persons). In this respect, one can only agree with Silveirinha, who states that the issues concerning the communicative inequality and imbalance between women and men is far greater than the problem of women's invisibility (or, could one add, the problem of LGBTQI persons invisibility, for that matter) as subjects of action (Silveirinha, 2012, p. 99). The same goes for LGBTQIs, who have always been the object of extremely visible stereotyping and biased representation, rather than subjects of action. In fact, the recurrent and insistent focus on women's misrepresentation and invisibility in the public sphere, as well as the misrepresentation and invisibility of LGBTQI persons, is as misdirected as it is misleading:

> Communication, in fact, is much more than the production of images: it is the exchanging of messages that concern our lifeworld and that coordinate our experiencing it in an inclusive horizon that gathers us as rational and autonomous human persons To think communication is, therefore, to think the possibilities we have of sharing our needs and our vindications in a space that, since it is largely filled by the media, ought to bind them to be open to our concerns as women and men. However, and precisely because that implies, at least in part, a connection to the mediatic space, the visions that it gives back are always shaped by logics of their own that put into question the very notions of private and of public that ground, for instance, the notion of public space. (Silveirinha, 2012, p. 99)

Feminist studies, as well as, should I add, queer studies, of the media and the public sphere, should stress the interdependence between the media and social movements, against a background of growingly complex mediation processes. A feminist standpoint, and the queering, of media and communication studies, should therefore retrieve an "analysis of media in the terms of its communicational structures as elements of the public sphere, instead of mere technological and economic tools for the production, broadcasting and consumption of information" (Silveirinha, 2001). In this sense, a fundamental fact about the role of the media should be acknowledged: their ambivalence. Silveirinha emphasizes, once more, that the media convey deeply rooted stereotypes and prejudices (when they're not responsible themselves for the shaping of them) that create an hegemonic sense of the traditional visions of identities, thus contributing to the social construction of a definition of the "reality" of identitary relations that tend to prevail over other, alternative visions. At the same time, the media are a fundamental tool of modern life's reflexivity to the extent that they are an expression of the communalities that reflect in multiple public spheres with their correspondent actors and forms of political action, turning it into something more than a mere metaphor for theatricality (Silveirinha, 2002, pp. 13-14). The Janus-faced character of the media in modern democracy consists in the fact that, on the one hand, the media can be accounted for the massifying and homogenizing effect of an integration process that provides no room to differentiated action e allows no visibility to differentiated identities; all the while, and on the other hand – and in this Silveirinha builds on the feminist revision of the Habermasian notion of public sphere (Álvares, 2010, p. 26, 38), as a plural space and an intermediate structure connecting the political system to the private sectors of the lifeworld and to its functional systems – the media can be accounted for creating subaltern publics – or "subaltern counter-publics" (Silveirinha, 2002 , p.7) – by fueling the activation and the expression of a civil society that generates new communalities that produce new meanings for the larger community through the sharing of alternative lifestyles that frequently expand trans-nationally: "The mass media have always had a potential for creating and nourishing cultural communities related to already discreet social groups (...) thus reinforcing a sense of shared cultural identity" (Silveirinha, 2002, p. 9). Although I gladly acknowledge the basic post-habermasian assumption that modern communication – along with everything that it entails – stems from the constitutive lack of the originary community, and that it is overrun by the nostalgia that relentlessly nourishes its utopian drive, and although I fully subscribe to the notion of communication as an reflexive instrument that is absolutely indispensable to the collective cooperation that constitutes the ultima ratio for the very existence of the human community as the warranty and medium for the survival of each one of its members, I cannot prevent myself from considering that any critical inquiry aimed at scrutinizing the exclusionary processes that its claim to universality gave rise to can leave untouched the very formulation of such a claim and overcome exclusion simply by resorting to a process of broadening progressively the scope of universality so as to accommodate ever more differentiated subjects and forms of action. A particular attention must be given to the fact that exclusion might start inside the very criteria of admission to the community of communication and be relayed by the very definition of cooperative action that it implies. This concern, one that might be regarded as extreme, radical, intricate and far-fetched, has risen from the historic evidence of rejection (on the grounds of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, culture...) and it has become all the more pressing in the course of the shift from a politics of identity to a politics of the performative in Gender and Queer theory. Bearing this in mind, I would like to subscribe to, and all along qualify, Silveirinha's statement according to which

> contemporary political action that evolves around identity cannot be understood without the movements that focus on communality (whether it is grounded in common experience, shared oppression or natural fact) for instance women, persons with a certain ethnic background, sexual orientation, etc. and who organize in response to the rejection from incorporation in the universal community that is promised by capitalist liberalism. (Silveirinha, 2004, p. 292)

The performative turn in the Social Sciences, and the subsequent shift from a politics focusing on identity to a politics focused on performativity, have taught us that there's no identity without the identification process from which it performatively results, be it self- or hetero-identification. The most important role of the media as an instrument of recognition must therefore be acknowledged, and not solely a role of misrepresentation of stigmatized, subaltern, and ultimately dehumanized, identities. Even if, and above all when, social movements take upon themselves the task of interrupting, throught the imposing and impinging of their own alterity on, the all-encompassing mediatic thrust to fuse irrevocable otherness in universal sameness, for the media not only use, but they evolve in the very wider medium of language itself, which "is not a narcisic means through which we can project ourselves in others, but instead, that in the ethical relation to be established with the other, language plays the fundamental role of inquiring, questioning, allow the other to manifest on his/her own terms" (Álvares, 2010b, pp. 244-245). Accordingly, the basic, structurating question that must ground every mediatic representation, as well as guide all research on the media, is not "What are you?", but rather "What do you want?". Furthermore, and considering that identity is performatively constructed by the social movements along deconstructive, reconstructive and ressubjectivating strategies of resistance (or a Butlerian "politics of the performative"), against symbolic dismissal, stereotype, injurious speech or inaugural injury (Butler, 1996), the former question should even be refined as: "What do you want *to be*?" Only on these grounds can we address the other on the base of *the difference that binds us*. From this, a vast horizon of research possibilities unfolds before our eyes.

The "communicational bias" does not suffice, however, to explain the reticence or the resistance offered by the Communication Sciences to Gender and Queer Studies. It's not difficult (at all) to detect amidst our domain a line of reasoning that elaborates on a succession of claims that have already been heard coming from other scientific domains and according to which gender and queer matters: a) lack specificity in themselves that; b) might substantiate a clear-cut differentiation from well established fields of knowledge from which they ultimately borrow objects, methods, lines of inquiry...; c) thus reasserting their status of intrinsic dependence towards the former and d) the intrinsic futility of endeavouring to set them apart from the established fields of knowledge because they are unable of providing for any relevant innovation or qualitative improvement beyond what is already known and that has been acquired through the proper widely accepted and proven ways; e) therefore Gender and Queer Studies have more to gain from their inclusion rather than from their extrication from established fields that do better, and always have done better, whatever they would never do on their own to the advancement of knowledge.

Such an epistemological self-absorbed closureness of the Communication Sciences has a direct and immediate bearing on the resistance to the integration Gender and Queer Studies in the area's academic curriculum. Notably, seems to be most alien and unintelligible from where the Communications Science stand are the extremely productive results and effects of the de-naturalizing and de-essencializing critical and reflexive programme of Queer Theory – the "queering" – brought about by the so-called "performative turn" that comprised a true politics of knowledge and allowed for the synthesis of feminist and gay and lesbian inquiry and the subsequent revision and rethinking of the groundings of the former identity politics. This ultimately opened up a space of self-reflexivity that allowed, in turn, that both gender and queer inquiry engaged in the rethinking of social and political movements in the horizon of their possible intersections, thus contributing for the emergence of interseccionality as both a major theoretical and political concern, in that it proves to be a fundamental tool to address the issue of the multiplicity and diversity of the intertwining patterns of subordination/privilege relations (Nogueira, 2011, p. 69)**:**

> Interseccionality manages to explain the complexity of all identities. (...) A critical and interseccional approach implies a high degree of complexity in what regards research. (...) And if different positionings can be found to face such complexity, why not join them together and put them to use in order to produce a knowledge that is always open to self-questioning, always critical, always aware of the possibilities of reification, even if they are simply temporary or provisional categories or assumptions and only used strategically?

This having been said, Nogueira and Oliveira call our attention to the fact that, in spite of its biased interpretations, in no way intersectionality is to be reduced to ready-made superpositions of identities and their subordinations or mechanical crossings with their correspondent easy and immediate political coalitions and homologies (Nogueira, 2011, p. 72; Oliveira, 2011, p. 51). I would say that such is the state-of-the-art with which Gender and Queer Studies make themselves available to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work inside the national Communication Sciences whose estrangement from these epistemological debates is responsible for their adamant attitude towards what they cannot but regard as having nothing to be retained from or learned with.

As the matter of fact, gender and queer are not simple descriptors, but critical categories, categories that have developed a critical theoretical apparatus that does not simply translates into more fashionable terms whatever has already been canonically conceptualized in the Communication Sciences, or any other field in the Social and Human Sciences for that matter:

> The study of gender (...) is no residual scientific category, but instead a specific mode of scrutinizing and analyzing all areas of social reality. (...) From the epistemological standpoint, Gender Studies are fundamental, for they counterbalance the ages-long tendency in which the production of knowledge had the masculine principle as its norm. (Schouten, 2011, p. 9)

But this is probably the most difficult claim to sustain before a distrusting academic audience that is not at all convinced that the critical apparatus developed inside Gender and Queer Studies can also be put to use in, and make extremely relevant contributions to, other fields in the Social and Human Sciences. It is no minor or easy task to: "shed light on the dynamics and complexity of the concept of gender and demonstrate that it is not a 'done for' or 'consensual' term, simple to define and easy to put to operation" (Pereira, 2012, p. 30). In actual fact, state of the art Gender and Queer Studies – at international level – are the outcome of a true epistemological revolution that is yet to be acknowledged by national Communication Sciences. The resistance of the latter to such a revolution comes out of the fact that it happened in the outside of their realm, a realm that already is under considerable suspicion from the outset. In other, more concrete and simple words, the Communication Sciences tend to maintain an essentialist, totalizing, falsely universalistic approach of gender and queer matters that has long been questioned and revised in the domain of Gender and Queer Studies themselves.

In this respect, I wish to emphasize that what is at issue here is a "defense and illustration" of Gender or Queer Studies, which has already been done – elsewhere, much better and by much more qualified people than myself – but, instead, to argue for the opening up of Communication Sciences, at both epistemological and institutional level, to the subjects, to the concepts and critical methodologies and to the problemizations proper to gender and queer matters. Such an opening would be instrumental in countering the true epistemological absence – in a sense equivalent, in the Communication Sciences, to what has been called, in Sociology, the need for a "Sociology of absences" – (Santos, 2000, p. 229) that does not simply amount to a fortuitous omission, but constitutes a self-defeating bias, a deliberate cognitive twist that seriously jeopardizes the process of the production of knowledge in the Communication Sciences. I should also stress that I am not pleading for a formal recognition of Gender and Queer Studies apart from the Communication Sciences or any other domain, as a necessary precondition of their evolving, but rather for a recognition of their specificity inside the Communication Sciences in order to prevent the overall effect of closeting Gender and Queer Studies in the "you know what" academic and scientific ghetto of irrelevance and desultoriness.

Gender and Queer Studies have sometimes been charged with the responsibility for their own ghettoization. In this regard, John D'Emilio's claim, made more than twenty years ago, stills holds true for the present national context: "Another important strategic issue envolves the choice between mainstreaming and ghettoization" (D'Emilio, 1992, p. 171). And it continues to be as true now as it was back then, and as unachieved now as it was then, that mainstreaming is the ultimate end towards which all efforts must be directed. In the north-american context, D'Emilio that complete integration would be a long-term goal, a step-by-step process, achieved through the commitment of individual faculty and researchers who incorporate new knowledge and new perspectives in their teaching and research practice, but one that could only succeed through the collective concourse aimed at the recognition of the specificity of Gender and Queer Studies: "Without them, we won't have the critical mass of intelectual workers or the 'free' intelectual space to do the work that will make the curriculum reform someday feasible" (D'Emilio, 1992, p. 171). The correctness of mainstreaming notwithstanding, I would like to remark that the divide (Tavares, Coelho & Góis, 2011, p. 31) between separatist, ghetto-bent programmes (commonly associated with political engagement in social movements, either feminist or LGBTQI) and integrationist, mainstreaming programmes (commonly associated to epistemological criticism as it is practiced in academe), instead of being a clear-cut, unequivocal, sharp-edged distinction (which amounts to saying: the possible alternative), is rather intersected and crossed by other options and operating strategies. I particularly have in mind the fact that the political engagement associated to separatism is often less forceful and threatening to the academic disciplinary structuring, with all its borders, gatekeeping practices, strong hierarchical power relations, etc.), than epistemological criticism that is usually seems to trigger off, in a rather more precipitous way, methodological transgression and interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary contamination and intersection. The latter are much more apparent in Gender and Queer Studies than in the clear-cut dominions of the other Social and Human Sciences, in which it's not unusual to see authors who, in spite of positioning themselves overtly and assertively in a way that is normally looked upon as "ideological", "politicized" and "engaged" (and, therefore, taken to be incompatible with the neutrality, disinterestedness, impartiality, distancing and objectivity of science), by no means infringe the power arrangements and balances that ground both each disciplinary cutting and the relations between disciplines. In other words, it seems to us that it is less dangerous to practice a Sociology, a Psychology, a History, etc. that is assertively ideological and politicized, than practicing a politics of knowledge capable of hurting the integrity of disciplinary structuring.

Another issue, still concerning the possible divide between ghettoization and mainstreaming, could deserve a note – but exactly that, just a note: the difference between Gender Studies and Queer Studies bearing directly on such divide. Although not in an open manner, it has been suggested that the coalition of Gender, Women's and Feminist Studies with Queer Studies (a tacit assumption that I've been keeping all throughout this text) is somehow detrimental to a successful integration of the former in academe and, furthermore, that an integration and dissolution of queer matters inside Gender Studies would be worth contemplating. It is important to remark at this point that no similar complaint and suggestion have ever been uttered on the part of Queer Studies, which, according to John D'Emilio,

> will find itself confronting one problem to whose solution the experience of ethnic and gender studies offers no clues – the issue of visibility, of the closet, of coming out. Although there is no inherent reason why only a gay man or

> lesbian would teach a gay studies course or do lesbian-related research, and no inherent reason why only gay and lesbian students would enroll in such courses, the fact is that these choices are often interpreted as a de facto declaration of identity. (D'Emilio, 1992, pp. 171-172)

At national level, it is now acquired that Gender Studies are not a domain solely for female faculty to engage in; however, an equivalent recognition concerning Queer Studies is far from being achieved, in spite of the known fact that national authors who research and publish in the field, some of whom are the most prominent in it, have never publicly vindicated any kind of identitary affiliation in what regards sexual subjectivity, communitary inclusion or any kind of related biographical trait whatsoever. Should we ask ourselves how difficult is this to understand and accept? And why hasn't it yet become trivial among us? To a large extent, the situation of Queer Studies practitioners today bears quite a resemblance to the one (and often quoted) described by Teresa Joaquim back in 1987, in the study where she revealed that the majority of the Portuguese women scholars of the time wouldn't want their image to be associated to Women's Studies because of its fragile deployment in the Portuguese academe (Tavares et al., 2011, p. 35). As to the melting of queer matters in Gender Studies, it should be acknowledged, all along with the chronological seniority of the latter, that if queer matters were to be spontaneously addressed inside them, they would have been long ago, under the initiative of gender researchers themselves. And it simply didn't happen. As to why, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has made a good, definitive point about it, in Axiom 2 of her *Epistemology of the Closet*: "The study of sexuality is not coextensive with the study of gender; correspondently, antihomophobic inquiry is not coextensive with feminist inquiry. But we can't know in advance how they will be different" (Sedgwick, 1991, p. 27). Moreover, what might be regarded as a kind of coalition, be it strategic or merely circumstantial, between Gender Studies and Queer Studies actually stems, to a great extent, from the erosion of previously prevailing feminist epistemologies and gay and lesbian epistemologies, under the influence of queer theory and its de-essentializing and de-naturalizing programme that completely revised the notion of "women", "gays" and "lesbians" as the political subjects on which Feminist and Gay and Lesbian Studies greatly depended upon until then. This might be (one of) the reason(s) why Gender Studies could be (mis)understood as a "depoliticization of the field": "It's also important to point out that not all gender studies are based in a neutral standpoint and that there even are several paramount publications in the field that advocate for a strong tie with feminist epistemological frameworks" (Tavares et al., 2011, p. 31). Queer theory criticism allowed existing feminist epistemologies to go far beyond the "exposure of androcentrism that questions the universal masculine 'neutral'" (Tavares et al., 2011, p. 33), which, along with the struggle for women's visibility as an object in the Social and Human Sciences, occupied most feminist criticism from the 1970s on in Portugal. Tavares, Coelho and Góis acknowledge precisely this when they say that the epistemological questioning (which is to say, a critical feminist theory) is part of a second phase in the process of the establishment of studies on women in Portugal (Tavares et al., 2011, p. 32), although "it has to be said that the epistemological debate in the Social Sciences in Portugal has had little consequence as yet" (Tavares et al., 2011, p. 34).

It has also been emphasized that the tardiness of the emergence of Gender Studies, and Queer Studies even more so, is due to the weakness of social movements in Portugal, to the profound financial frailties that were prevalent all the way down to the nineteen-nineties in the universities and that have prevented the channeling of budgets to financing new fields of knowledge, and ultimately to the late institutionalization of Social and Human Sciences in the country. This is far from untrue. Nevertheless, more remains to be said about it. To a large extent, Gender and Queer Studies have followed the road traveled before them by such areas as Cultural Studies and the Communication Sciences themselves, in the sense that they have faced the same kinds of challenges, just in different periods of time. Somehow, the incipient and heroic status of contemporary Gender and Queer Studies, that still have to fight for their threatened existence in our country, re-enacts the particular status of the Communication Sciences (or Cultural Studies, for that matter) that once evolved from the whole of the long established areas of Social and Human Sciences. This is why an uncomfortable feeling of estrangement derives from the fact that certain lines of criticism, and sometimes even a subtle hint of antagonism, are coming from the Communication Sciences, the ones that have suffered exactly from the same misunderstandings emanating in their day from well established fields of the Social and Human Sciences. More openness was to be expected from former targets of academic incomprehension. A closer look on the emergence of Gender and Queer Studies might shed light on the fact that they have not stemmed from mere disciplinary specialization, compelled by the real specificity of its objects that gradually have gotten more and more differentiated and clear-cut. The disciplinary fragmentation in question here is a thematic and methodological one, as it constructs problemizations and intersections rather than objects, therefore acquiring an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary character. In all actuality, emergent domains (Cultural Studies, Post-colonial Studies, Feminist, Women's and Gender studies, GLQ Studies) are incompatible with disciplinary self-absorption. In fact, they're born out of "methodological transgression" (Santos, 1999, pp. 48-49), not at all unlike Cultural Studies, Post-Colonial Studies, etc. and, in quite some respects, for sure, the Communication Sciences themselves. Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity cannot be reduced to mere mechanical cooperation between established disciplines, but rather have forged critical categories that, all the while, provide for a decisive, although unacknowledged, contribution to their renovation, whilst their gatekeeping practices cannot but wrongfully detect disciplinary inconsistence in such a process. Nonetheless, the new inter- and transdisciplines relentlessly strive in the "invention of persuasive contexts conducive to the application of methods outside their natural habitats" (Santos, 1999, p. 49) beyond their original settings, thus confronting a little understandable resistance that frequently commits them to a precarious status of disparagement, if not outright dismissal. Moreover, although it is not always avowed, this explains to a large extent their still fragile formal establishment at national level, in spite of their already solid development in what regards practitioners, publications, theses, research projects and courses. In a certain way, both the hardships that they face and the horizons that open up to them are no different from the ones that were already present to Communication Sciences in their inception and that ultimately allowed for the particular status that furthered their development, rather more than hindered it. Gender and Queer Studies are the new "indisciplines", very much in the same sense that the Communication Sciences started to be long before them. It so happens that what cannot but be perceived by the public eye as the opacity of power relations inside academic institutions is nourished, and all the more so in our country, by the stark corporatism as well as by the by no means splendid isolation of the academic milieu, the majority of which (with few exceptions) keeps regarding with utter suspicion and discomfort any opening to the larger social community that might entail any involvement with issues that are perceived as fracturing. If many of the issues and subjects of study in the gender and queer area are ranked, whether rightfully or wrongly, in that category, the ones that immediately raise political questions are totally and automatically regarded as wholly, unmistakably political. This means that the simple fact of approaching them from a theoretical standpoint allows for the contamination of the prerequisites of scientific rigorousness by undesirable political considerations, and this ultimately gets to be perceived as a gesture that jeopardizes academic neutrality, objectivity and independence.

One can recognize here the roots of the contemporary programs of ressubjectivation developed by queer theory and that inspire lesbian feminist, gay and transgender movements that are commited to a politics of the performative that has completely reformulated the terms of the question of the subject of feminism and LGBT struggle. It has been noticed, and I wish to acknowledge it here, that, in a very characteristic and significant way, the difficulties in welcoming and assimilating Gender and Queer Studies, profoundly shaped by post-structuralist critical trends, by the national Communication Sciences in particular, as well as in the broader domain of the Social and Human Sciences in general, can be said to be in direct relation to the low degree of their exposure to the pragmatic turn, to the superficial reception of the contributions of such thinkers as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, or Gilles Deleuze, and to the ensuing discussions most deeply influenced or shaped by Derridean desconstructionism, Foucauldian power/knowledge inquiries and Deleuzean post-psychoanalytic programs, and to the lack of awareness concerning the subsequent essentialism versus constructivism debate. Not surprisingly, it is not uncommon, at national level, to meet scholarly audiences that seem to be hearing some things for the very first time, since they tend to translate them to grids of intelligibility they're more familiar with, which in turn has the discouraging effect of giving them the impression that there really isn't anything new in what has just been conveyed to them and which is frequently expressed in the opinion that what they are witnessing is just a matter of foreign academic fashion. This is quite easy to notice in the Q&A aftermath of conferences. State-of-the-art discussions and arguments between well-informed, knowledgeable opponents very seldom arise and most of the times audiences' reactions reveal that people simply miss the point because that are not really aware of what is being talked about. Widespread intellectual deafness makes true ravages in the Portuguese academe.

Which brings us to the other meaning of fracturing in the aforementioned fracturing question(s). And that has to do with cognitive shock. It must be stated from the onset that every emergent domain does not simply add to pre-existing well established fields of teaching, of theoretical inquiry and of empirical or field research; they do not only expand them, build upon them, resume or complete whatever they started; they also need to break with whatever concepts, notions, biases, acquired and consolidated certainties that ultimately prevent them to arise, they need to challenge the prevailing paradigms of thought that hinder their becoming intelligible. Which is to say, they derive from true Kuhnian anomalies that paradigmatic science cannot accommodate except through its own crises and its subsequent profound epistemic shifts, never as if it were just a question of adding one more item to your usual curriculum. They entail unavoidable struggles against the gatekeeping practices of established fields, and – a concept borrowed from the Sociology of Science is very much in order here – this all implies a "boundary work" (Felt, 2000, pp. 268-271), consisting on the negotiation of the ultimate meaning, relevance and authoritativeness of the scientific endeavor centered on the struggle between the forces that reject novelty and the forces that are ready to accommodate it. This is why we must counter the approach of gender and queer issues

> as a question that the Social Sciences discovered at a certain time, and not as a contested subject, that only gradually, partially and hardly has asserted itself as a recognized and respected object of study and one that has been at the core of important and intense epistemic struggles at the heart of the social sciences. (Pereira, 2012, p. 28)

In actual fact, the issues that presently can be determined to pertain to the scope of Gender and Queer Studies did not arise spontaneously or sediment gradually inside of various already existing fields (Psychology, Sociology, Literary Studies...). If it were so, gender and queer issues would have been taken up inside those disciplines by the competent experts in the course of their usual business. It never happened that way and could never happen that way, very much unlike a claim commonly held against Gender and Queer Studies' practitioners who are often blamed by their closeted opponents and detractors of unnecessarily breaking up with the established fields of knowledge inside which they would have been let free, undisturbed and untroubled, to develop their research agendas. Not so. The former were never peaceful acquisitions in the calm waters of the regular puzzle-solving Kuhnian processes that make for disciplinary routine. There never is and never can be a proper, "low profile", inconspicuous, innocuous, acceptable or palatable way of starting to do Gender and Queer Studies. If nothing else, this can be objected to our detractors, frequently disguised of friendly advisers, that accuse us of counterproductive provocation, unapologetic self-marginalisation or candid, voluntary self-exclusion: if such path were to exist, it would have been taken long ago by the very same that argue in favor of it. This does not entail that wise concessions, or tactical retreats, are not in order, and that step by step advancements are not the best way to ensure a steady progress towards full recognition and acceptance. They all are. Academic integration being the ultimate goal, however, it is precisely that which raises, if not aggressive resistance (seldom, actually), covert antagonism for sure (the most common), and all the more effective for that matter.

The fact that Gender and Queer Studies have constituted themselves in an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary form, rather makes patent their politically charged origins, rather than masks them. Their ultimate goals are the criticism and transformation of social, political, cultural, economic, and ethnic situations that intersect gender and sexuality. This implies that they stem from the recognition of such realities and the social agents and political subjects whose existence were made possible by such situations and that pursue such goals both outside and inside academe. This might explain why the resistance that Gender and Queer Studies are faced with is nevertheless quite stronger than the one the Communication Sciences were once confronted by. I would fully subscribe to the idea that

> (o)ne of the signal achievements of the campus turmoil of the 1960s was the recognition that the universities are not ivory towers were individuals engage in the disinterested, dispassionate and detached pursuit of knowledge and truth. Rather, universities are intimately connected to the society of which they are a part. They are capable of producing change, to be sure, but they can also reflect, and reproduce, the dominant values, beliefs, habits and inequalities of their society. Everything we do – the research questions we formulate, the research process itself; where we publish our results; the courses we decide, or are told, to teach; the books and articles we assign – represents choices that individuals make. These choices reflect a particular view of the world, of our society and of how things ought to be. (D'Emilio, 1992, p. 162)

As it can be easily inferred, the Portuguese academe remains considerably impermeable to Gender and Queer Studies and it is used to producing antibodies against what Jeffrey Weeks called the "*standpoint position(s)*" (Weeks, 2000, p. 9) ground the rationale that make Gender and Queer Studies possible and which ultimately imply that anyone who commits himself or herself to them has to position himself or herself inside his or her own field or discipline in terms of a politics of knowledge. We all know this is not something you can get away with undamaged or untouched. Must we remind ourselves that we are at war when we are massively pressured to tell our students to leave the country because there's simply no place for them here? The price of peace, however, is something we are very well acquainted with in times of crisis: established fields quietly fade into obsolescence in the illusion that nothing relevant is going on in the areas they regard with the usual contempt and thus preventing themselves to acknowledge the very materials that are so needed to their own renovation. This is precisely what should be seen as a valuable asset and all argumentation in favor of Gender and Queer Studies should be guided by an emphasis on the loss that would ensue from ignoring or refusing their contribution to, and their relevance

> for the cross-fertilization of ideas that they encourage, and for the reconceptualization of experience and knowledge that they provoke. That means that we should be working to scramble the traditional lines of division between fields of knowledge: new issues don't necessarily require new methodologies, but innovation should be seen as a valuable asset. (D'Emilio, 1992, p. 170)

One final consideration, concerning the younger generations of scholars that are doing Gender and Queer Studies at national level – and given the fact that it is mostly a young generation that engages in these areas – through whom the indispensable innovation in scientific research and higher education is to come. The fact of their not having a formal and permanent professional tie that might allow them to pursue a career in the national R&D or Higher Education systems, if, on the one hand, provides them with a considerable latitude and freehand that bears no comparison to what their installed fellow colleagues experience, on the other hand, it also curtails their possibilities of earning and profiting from institutional expression and, therefore, their capacity of effectively influencing in any way academic attitudes towards Gender and Queer Studies. As it should be obvious by now, in no way is here at stake the intrinsic scientific excellence of this young generation of researchers, who often have published and presented papers at both national and international level, who have gone through very demanding evaluation processes totally unknown to the older generations who most likely would never be able to meet the same criteria and strictures that the former became familiar with as they have submitted to scrutiny by national and above all international referee committees and a certain number of whom presently have even richer and rather more diversified resumés than their senior fellow colleagues who have professional ties to the Portuguese Higher Education system. Finally, the concourse of the endogamic fencing in of national universities and the policies of financial control and budgetary restriction imposed upon them and the national R&D system under the pretext of overcoming the present economic crisis cuts short any expectations of professional integration for the younger generation of researchers in the very system that trained them, and, consequently, any prospect of renewal, so much needed for the very reproduction of the educational and R&D systems themselves. The quantitative and qualitative gaps that set apart national universities and research centers from their international partners cannot but grow wider under the circumstances. Fragile areas such as Gender Studies, and Queer Studies all the more so, seem to be hovering over the void. Instead of promises of change, they stand as the weakest links to be disposed of. A growing feeling that a dead end of overall unwantedness and unpreparedness for what lies ahead cannot be averted. Hopefully, the future will prove me wrong.

The future, yes. Maybe one can never be ready for the future. Besides, we're never there yet. But at least we should be prepared to meet the demands of our present.

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Gender, sex and sexuality in two open access communication journals published in Portugal: a critical overview of current discursive practices

Abstract

The links between gender, sex and sexuality and their relevance are theoretically and politically problematic (Richardson, 2007). One of the difficulties in understanding their interconnections is that these terms are often used differently and ambiguously by different authors (and even by the same authors). This article reports the results of an analysis of the articles published in open access communication journals with known impact factor, edited in Portugal and published between 2005 and 2012. The diverse conceptualisations of those three basic concepts and of their (inter)relationships within communication research are identified. The complexity and the intricate (and often implicit) nature of both the meanings of these categories and their relationships underlie and justify our attention and further research.
What the findings suggest about the current communication research into gender issues published in the two journals surveyed is that the 'Gender differences discourse' (Sunderland, 2004) is the most pervasive discourse (also) in academic practice. Additionally, they show that gender and sex are mainly taken for a fact, not a question that is worth being studied. The editors of these journals, as well as the scholars submitting manuscripts, need to be more aware of the traditional nature of the theoretical and methodological choices that they make regarding gender- and sex-related issues, as well as of the relative lack of attention to sexuality as a research subject.

Keywords

Gender, sex, sexuality, communication journals

1. Introducing the present study

The terms 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality' have been used in a variety of ways in social sciences, and particularly in the field of communication studies — to such an extent that it is often difficult to make sense of what people mean by each of them. Indeed, many texts do not include a definition or a discussion, and even less so a problematisation, of what is meant by the terms 'gender', 'sex' or 'sexuality'. This situation has come to our attention as it raises several problems. Firstly, it is rather odd that, in academic texts that account for scientific studies or that reflect on the topic, the reader is not introduced to the concepts used, neither is s/he situated in terms of the approach adopted concerning what they mean. Secondly, the well-known particular ambiguity of these concepts makes it all even more surprising. Additionally, the question of what this entails is anything but obvious. On the one hand, the multiplicity of meanings and disputes about the terms and their interconnections can be vital to a creative theorisation and empirical work. On the other hand, it may lead to confusion, and compromise theoretical and methodological rigour. Over time, disputes can take on a life of their own, and prevent a fruitful debate and a healthy dialogue. Some scholars find the multiple meanings of these terms to be confusing and ambiguous. Others, who prefer one of the two terms (either 'sex' or 'gender') to the detriment of the other, will react to the non-preferred term with ambivalence or disdain, while others seek to depict their complementarity and interconnections. It is precisely this variety and openness, on the one hand, and boundedness, on the other, that deserves our attention. To move forward, we must first ask some questions and choose a field within which our empirical analysis will be conducted. The questions that we seek to address in this article are: *How do communication scholars conceptualise the terms 'gender', 'sex', and 'sexuality', respectively? Do they relate them in some way? If so, how do they cast these relationships?*

Our aim is to identify the multiple meanings of these terms and forms of interconnection among them, by means of a survey of communication journals published in Portugal. Two reasons underlie our choice to focus on communication journals published in Portugal: firstly, as communication researchers doing gender research in Portugal we felt the need to deepen our knowledge about the state-of-the-art of this topic in our country, even if it might be expected that, due to the pressure of internationalisation and the dominance of English language in higher education and research (Pinto-Coelho & Carvalho, 2013, pp. 4-14), the place of publication does not attribute a particular authorship nationality and working language; secondly, we thus hope to take a step forward towards a mutual understanding and an interconnected network among this research community, and to reinforce gender awareness among the community of communication journals' editors in Portugal. The study presented in this chapter encompasses the first step of a long-term research project that aims to assess the state-of-the-art of this topic and investigate how communication scholars have addressed it[1].

We begin by focusing on the need to discuss sex / gender / sexuality terminology, by providing an overview of both the state of the art of this discussion in Portugal, in the fields of social sciences and the humanities, and the debate about the struggles over these meanings. Subsequently, gender research and terminology are historically framed within communication studies, vis-à-vis feminist media studies and gender and media studies, and specifically in communication research in the Portuguese context. The methodology of this study is presented and explained next. The research analysis and findings are then discussed, by exploring each of the topical categories under which the articles of the corpus are grouped:

1. 'Where is sexuality in gender?'
2. 'Gender or sex: why should anyone care?'
3. 'Where are dynamics and diversity in gender and sex?'
   a) Gender as a 'coatrack' of sex
   b) Gender as sex segregation.

This chapter concludes by discussing the research findings and pointing to future research.

2. 'Gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality': why quibble over the terminology?

We are both researchers in the field of communication sciences. The first work that we published together dates from 2006 (Pinto-Coelho & Mota-Ribeiro, 2006), and was motivated by our interest in deepening our understanding of these categories and their relationships, from a critical discourse and social semiotics perspective (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Lazar, 2005; Van Dijk, 2011; Wodak, 1997). But eight years of study, discussion and

1 This research project (starting in the current year) is harboured by the Communication and Society Research Centre (CECS), University of Minho, Braga, Portugal. Its full corpus includes all the Open Access Communication Journals that are published in Portugal: R*evista Comunicação e Sociedade, Estudos de Comunicação/ Communication Studies and Observatorio (OBS*) e-journal*. We have focused on OAJs due to their wider readership potential.

empirical research did not put an end to our 'gender trouble' (Butler, 1990). As is well known, the amount of ambiguities and confusions associated with the use of these terms across the discourses of social sciences, and in addition in the feminist discourse, is enormous, and has been identified by some authors as reasons for concern. In Portugal, Amâncio (2003), one of the main references in the field of psychologically rooted gender studies, wrote an article about this problem. Macedo, in her research into the area of literary studies, contributed to a study conducted by Braidotti (2002, p. 285) on 'the uses and abuses of the sex / gender distinction in European feminist practices'. Ferreira (2013), a sociology scholar, made a presentation in France about the use of the term 'gender' in Portugal.

It is certain that Portuguese does not help when it comes to 'gender' as a linguistic term due to its multiple referents — masculine / feminine (as a grammatical category), literary genre, or other kinds or types in the sense of collection of things, beings, facts, situations, etc. Nevertheless, the fact appears to be that, in Portugal, the term 'gender', meaning 'social sex', has been assimilated into common speech and media discourse (Braidotti, 2002, p. 293).

The struggle over the meanings of the terms 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality', their relationships, and the direction of their articulations is well known. It is a reality that goes far back to the inception of the feminist movement, at least more systematically, and that has taken different forms over the years (Cameron, 2009; Rahman & Jackson, 2010; Richardson, 2007), but it is too complex to even allow us to get a grasp of them at this stage. The jury is still out on what is the best or the 'correct' definition of these terms, on the theorisation of their interconnections and, in the case of the sex / gender distinction, of the value of the distinction itself. It should be stressed, however, that the meanings of these terms are not just randomly generated, but correspond to different ideological positions and have been generated in the struggle over these positions. It can be added to this that these terms do have a number of meanings, but they are not endlessly variable in meaning, and the meanings that they have tend to cluster together in a small number of main families.

A helpful starting point to identifying those families consists of delineating some feminist history of the terms, but this is not the aim of the present study. Nonetheless, the present analysis builds upon our readings on the subject produced by scholars from different disciplinary background, national (cited above) and international (e.g. Cameron, 2005, 2009; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Mikkola, 2012; Nicholson, 1994; Richardson, 2007). What is important to retain, however, is that the struggles over the meanings of these terms are ideological struggles that take place in discourse and are evidenced *in* language texts. An analysis of this nature, which is based on the texts of research articles, can thus shed some light on this issue. But these struggles are also *over* language in the sense that having the power to determine which meanings are 'correct' is an important aspect of social and ideological power, and therefore a terrain of ideological struggle (Fairclough, 1989, p. 88). Therefore, it is necessary to see the existing use of the terms 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality' as reflecting the victories and defeats of past struggles, as well as stakes that are the object of the struggle. Deciding amongst different meanings of the terms 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality', and of their interconnections, is thus neither a merely theoretical, nor a linguistic exercise; it is directly related to deciding upon political strategies for contemporary movements on gender and sexual politics (Almeida, 1995; McElhinny, 2003).

The goal of this study is not to pinpoint the best, the most helpful, or the 'correct' definition of these terms; this study aims to provide an overview of the state-of-the-art of this field, and contribute to a healthy dialogue among scholars and pave the ground for cross-fertilisation. In so doing, we are certainly not claiming some privileged all-seeing perspective, but merely making some tentative suggestions on what might be seen from different vantage points. We consider, like Rubin ([1984]1999), that sex and gender should not be conflated, and following Jackson and Scott (2007) we approach gender and sexuality as analytically distinct. We also believe, like many other authors (e.g. Rubin, 1975), that they are separate systems, which are interwoven at many points; they have a particular kind of mutual dependence, which no study of either can overlook (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Cameron & Kulick, 2003). It is precisely this kind of inter-implication that has been the focus of our research for several years, with a particular interest on the role that media discourses and visual images play in that process.

3. Gender communication research and the problematisation of the discursive use of 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality'

To the best of our knowledge, the use of the terms 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality' remains an unexplored territory in the communication field, although the research conducted by Van Zoonen (1994) on feminist media studies, and by Gill (2007), Silveirinha (2004) and Thornham (2007) on gender and media, to name only a few, shed some light on the matter.

In Portugal, the overview of the historical evolution of gender communication studies is under-researched, in contrast with the work already done on the evolution of gender studies in the Portuguese social sciences research. Notwithstanding the fact that they have different concerns and use different approaches, Almeida (1986), Amâncio (2003), Ferreira (2013) and Rodrigues (2009) have identified the 1990s as the moment when the interest in gender issues took off, and the first five years of the current century as its consolidation phase. This also included the adoption of masculinities as an object of study.

Although the aim of our study is not to trace this evolution, based on the knowledge and on the information that we have been collecting so far it seems to us that gender issues started to be a part of the communication studies research agenda later than it did in the research agenda of other social sciences. Only in the third national conference of SOPCOM (the national association of communication scholars that took place in Covilhã in 2004), together with the VI LUSOCOM and II IBÉRICO's conferences, did we witness for the first time the organisation of a thematic table on gender issues. But then, as now, gender issues did not stand by themselves, that is, they always came together with cultural studies. The relevance and the meanings of this fact are, of course, an open question at this stage of our research[2].

4. Methodology

To examine how communication studies' researchers use the terms 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality', and cast their relationships, we focused on theoretical, methodological or data-based articles to discern the analysts' treatment of gender, sex and sexuality as theory, methodology and data. Thus, we excluded introductory sections of special issues, commentaries, and article and book reviews.

Using current scientific journals' quality criteria, we selected two major journals in communication studies that are indexed in international databases, that have an established history of publishing, and that are open access, with a known impact factor[3]. The scholarly journals that

[2] Interestingly, since this paper was written, in the IX SOPCOM Conference (Coimbra, 2015), "Gender and Sexualities" was autonomously considered as a thematic panel. This was as a result of a new workgroup being created within the scope of the Association, named "Gender and Sexualities".

[3] The impact factor of these journals was measured in a study done by Rafael Repiso and Emilio López--Cózar (2013). In this research, the authors present a ranking of Communication journals covered by

we included in our research are: *Revista Comunicação e Sociedade* (biannual, bilingual journal, published in Portuguese since 2000, and in Portuguese and English since 2012), which is indexed in *Qualis* and *Latindex*; and *Observatorio (OBS*)* e-journal (published since 2007, quarterly, with articles in Portuguese, English, Italian, Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Italian and French), which is indexed in the international databases *Scopus*, *Scielo Portugal*, *EBSCO* and *Latindex*. All articles were collected from each issue of the e-journal *Observatorio (OBS*)* published between 2007 and 2012, and from *Revista Comunicação e Sociedade* published between 2005 and 2012. The corpus collected includes all the articles containing the words 'gender' or 'sex' or 'sexuality', as well as semantically related words (e.g. 'sexual', 'male(s)', 'female(s)', 'men', 'women', 'woman', 'girl(s)', 'boy(s)', 'masculinity', 'femininity', 'masculine', 'feminine', 'sexism', 'patriarchal', 'heterosexuality', 'transexuality', 'gendered', etc.). This search took into account the specificity of each of the languages of publication accepted by the selected journals (Portuguese, English, Italian, Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Italian and French). This was particularly interesting as we could actually be more familiar with the various words used to refer to the concepts in different languages. We excluded from our corpus all the articles in which the use of the terms was reduced to an occasional single reference with no further theoretical, methodological or analytical considerations.

Based on these criteria, a total of 83 articles from these selected journals were collected and included in the corpus: 59 from *Observatorio (OBS*)* e-journal (2007 to 2012), and 24 from *Revista Comunicação e Sociedade* (2005 to 2012). 15 out of the 59 articles published in *Observatorio (OBS*)* were written by Spanish scholars. This is the international community that published most articles related to the topic of our study in this journal, whereas the Brazilian researchers were predominant in *Revista Comunicação e Sociedade* (8 out of 24 articles).

The data analysis procedure consisted of three main steps. Firstly, we read in full half of the articles, each, and we have taken notes, guided by the core question of how 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality' were defined — and, moreover, how the relationship between them was conceptualised, either explicitly or implicitly, either in the theoretical or in the methodological / analytical components of the corresponding articles. Secondly, we designed

Google Scholar Metrics (GSM) from 2008 to 2012. It corresponds to the H Index update made in 2012 for the period 2007-2011. 'The result is a ranking of 354 communication journals sorted by the same H Index, and mean as discriminating value. Journals are also grouped by quartiles' (Repiso & López--Cózar, 2013).

a set of categories for each of the terms and for their relationships after re-reading the articles and comparing notes taken in the first step. For the terms 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality' — and their relationships —, the categorisation was initially guided by the extant categories in the literature, although we remained open to the emergence of new categories, as the analysis suggests. Thirdly, we engaged in a process of reciprocal exchange of the data between the two of us, and reviewed the classifications done by each, resulting in the final categories we have agreed upon.

5. The discursive use of the terms 'gender', 'sex' and 'sexuality' by communication scholars in the OAJs under review

Overall, the analysis shows that 81 out of the 83 studies that we reviewed are empirically grounded, thus following a long-term tradition in the field of communication studies (Van Zoonen, 1994, p. 16). Another crucial result arising from the analysis of the data is that the terms 'gender' and 'sex', as well as corresponding semantically related words, are rarely explicitly defined or theorised in detail, as if the authors and the editors of the articles believed that this knowledge and opinions were known or easily derivable by the recipients. Therefore, based on a contextual account of the articles, we had to infer the implicit or entailed meanings of the terms, a practice that is well known amongst discourse researchers. This is a fact that does not preclude a high level of interpretive variability, a problem that the previously detailed coding process both revealed and solved.

The analysis also revealed that the number of articles focusing specifically on sexuality is considerably low (14 articles). We grouped this set of texts under a topical category, which we named 'Where is sexuality in gender?' (see Table 1).

An additional crucial result is that around 46% of the articles reviewed (38 out of 83 articles) are not in the middle of any 'gender trouble'. That is, gender-related issues are not, by themselves, a reason for concern, or an object of study. In this kind of research, the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are used interchangeably. We have classified this set of research under a category named 'Gender or sex: why should anyone care?'.

Studies specifically focused on gender, concerned with gender as a social issue worth being analysed, show a considerably higher degree of heterogeneity. None of them presents itself (at least, not explicitly) as being grounded in a feminist tradition. These studies were classified under two separate sub-categories: 'Gender as a 'coatrack' of sex' (Nicholson, 1994, p. 81) and 'Gender as sex segregation'. Both these sub-categories were organised into a global common category named 'Where are dynamics and diversity in gender and sex?'. This global category and its corresponding verbal formulation indicates the lack of an alternative perspective over women's identity that contrasts with the one that we identified in the body of research classified under this category: that is, an approach to women's identity/gender as something fixed, biologically or not, and that has an ontological status, a basic, fundamental grounding called sex.

TOPICAL CATEGORIES	
Where is sexuality in gender?	14
Gender or sex: why should anyone care?	38
Where are dynamics and diversity in gender and sex? - Gender as a 'coatrack' of sex - Gender as sex segregation	31 25 6

Table 1: Topical categories resulting from the analysis of the corpus (83 articles).

5.1 Where is sexuality in gender?

The analysis reveals that the number of articles focusing specifically on sexuality-related issues is rather low (only 14 articles). A variety of questions is addressed: the production and use of pornography in different media; young people's use of new screens and sexually explicit content; lesbian discourses in the context of media and health; women's visual ads, the gender gaze or compulsory heterosexuality; intimacy TV and private/public spheres; erotic relations between women and men and mythologies; sexual practices and confession; sexual health prevention and reproductive rights; gay and lesbian identities; representations of queer identities in films.

Two tendencies stand out in this set of articles: meanings and terms related to sexuality tend to be used fuzzily (e.g. interchangeable use of the terms 'sex', 'sexuality', 'sexual orientation' — across authors and by the same authors), and (as a result?) concepts are neither fully explained, nor are their connections problematised.

The term 'sex' is used often in these studies with the meaning of 'having sex' or other kind of erotic activity, and other semantically related terms point out to sexuality, such as 'sexual behaviour', 'sexual content', 'heterosexuals', 'lesbians', 'sexual orientation', etc..

The term 'sexuality' itself overlaps either implicitly or explicitly with sexual orientation, as in the case of 'heterosexual sexuality' (Morais & Oliveira, 2012, p. 43). Sexual orientation, and therefore sexuality, is presented dichotomically, as articles construct people as either heterosexuals or homosexuals (sometimes reference is made to bi-sexuality, but also as a self-contained category, as a third way). This reinforcement of the norm, which most authors seem to take for granted, is also apparent, since sexual diversity, heterogeneity and fluidity are rarely mentioned and even less taken as a central point in this group of articles. Santos and Ribeiro's article does mention 'gays, lesbian, transsexuals' and emphasises transgression, but the authors do not seem to escape the polarisation of homosexuality and heterosexuality, as magazines and their audience are presented as either homo or hetero, and other possible orientations / identities are referred to within the context of 'the homosexual magazine' (Santos & Ribeiro, 2012, p. 59).

Additionally, the problematisation and/or emphasis on sex-gender-sexuality interconnections are almost non-existent, and when they do exist, this is not done explicitly. Those interconnections are not explained but taken as a fact, therefore naturalising them and rendering the intricate nature of their linkage invisible. This, in our opinion, goes to show that even authors working in the communication field who centre their research on sexually-related issues do not fully embrace those interconnections as something worth deconstructing, either because they are not fully aware of their relevance and/or because the theoretical perspectives that frame most of these studies are not politically-oriented.

However, it is important to emphasise that, in this set of articles, other perspectives and approaches do appear: three of the studies are clearly inspired by the theoretical shifts associated with the work of Judith Butler (1990, 1993). Also, sexuality is sometimes put into question and problematised by a 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, [1984]1999) perspective, but only insofar as it is 'queered'.

These articles express different perspectives at play, and therefore methods used do vary, spanning from surveys to interviews. However, what can be broadly referred to as the analysis of media content is overwhelmingly the most widely used resource for research, meaning that the majority of these articles are data-based. This can be explained by the tradition in gender research, especially within communication studies, of conducting research into media 'images of women' (Thornham, 2007, p. 6) or media 'representations' (Gill, 2007, p. 7; Van Zoonen, 1994, p. 12), which is particularly relevant in this set of articles.

5.2 Gender or sex: why should anyone care?

The articles in this category are typically statistical social sciences studies, designed to capture variance, mainly in the production, perceptions, uses and media impact (TV, internet, DTT, mobile phones, Facebook and other social media, websites, blogs, etc.).

In this research stream, the terms 'sex' and 'gender' (or their plural inflections, 'genders', 'sexes') are used interchangeably as synonyms to name individual characteristics of the population being surveyed. Likewise, in these cases the aim is to measure statistical variance between women and men. 'Gender' and 'sex' (or 'genders' and 'sexes') are used in the same article by most of the authors, with no apparent criteria for using either one or the other, although a small number of authors use either 'sex' or 'gender' consistently (even if no additional information is provided for their choice, or no explanation is given as to what they mean). More importantly, the analysis of this set leads us into concluding that gender and sex are implicitly conceptualised (a) as coextensive — that is, women are human females, men are human males; and (b) as pre-given or as a matter of fact.

Similarly, gender and/or sex are selected by the authors of the articles as one amongst other measures / variables (e.g. age) to capture the intended variation in surveys, which are the most widely used research resource in this set of studies. In general, the reasons for selecting the sex variable are not explained, or are explained by resorting only to generic statements such as 'sex influences', 'has an effect', 'impacts' (on such and such); only exceptionally does this take the explicit form of an hypothesis. A well-known criticism directed at the studies that use the categories of 'male' and 'female' as demographic variables in social surveys is their reduction of sex to a crude sexual disphormism. This necessarily excludes transsexual and intersexed individuals, and can be rather misleading in terms of survey accuracy — not to mention the processes of symbolic exclusion and invisibility of those who do not fit bipolar, opposing views of sex / gender, which entails many and complex political issues.

Within the previously defined context, we have identified some major difficulties in this body of research. The presentation of results as 'there are / there are not differences or similarities between men and women' without further explanation (and moreover without previous theoretical considerations) might trigger in the mind of certain readers, the 'so what?' question. But for other readers this assertion of those facts may trigger and sediment stereotyped or even normative explanations or meanings. Providing the readers with this kind of 'freedom' allows them to fulfil the missing link

— or links — with whatever social knowledge about gender they may have at their disposal to give some kind of sense to the quest and to the results.

For instance, Cardoso and Amorim (2010, p.1), in an article designed to "assess the degree of innovativeness of adolescents from 12 to 17 years old for the technologies (...)", state that "[t]he data show that groups of males aged between 12 and 14 years old are more likely to innovativeness". No explanations are provided for this finding, and no reference is made to its relevance; why the sex variable entered the equation in a research focusing on adolescence and innovativeness can only be wondered.

There are other cases where the authors use the terms 'gender' or 'sex' freely to refer to male and female differences in the use or perception of 'such and such', together with ideas such as 'gender access gap' (Tabernero, Sánchez-Navarro & Tubella, 2008, p. 286) or 'sex equality' (Faustino, 2009, p. 197). These choices enable notions of socially constructed structures without an adequate theoretical basis or appropriate reflection. It is as if man / woman measures and their statistical significance confirm these unobserved and unmeasured social phenomena. This kind of move prevents an entire and clearer understanding of social phenomena and gender issues at stake.

5.3 Gender as a 'coatrack' of sex

In this category, the terms 'gender' and 'sex' are used in the form of a couple, with two opposite poles linked to each other in a continuum. The term 'gender' is used to refer to social and psychological attributed differences, as well as to a social division. The term 'sex' refers to sexes, that is, to differences between women and men, female and male, or bodily differences. Gender is conceptualised as a construction that needs to be analysed as such and as an effect grounded on human sex, that is, on sexual differences between human females and males. The relationship between female, woman and femininity, and between male, men and masculinity is thus taken for granted, and therefore no further problematisation is necessary.

These are studies that belong to a classic, long-lasting communication studies research tradition into women's images, and that can (but do not necessarily) include (at least not explicitly) a concern with gender inequality, i.e. with gender as a social division that entails social hierarchy. This set of articles includes typical data-based studies of 'women's image' or 'women's portrayals', which address questions such as stereotypes (appropriate female and male attributes, social roles, activities), sexist content, invisibility or distortion. They may resort or point to the socialisation thesis — the so-called 'dominance story' or the 'cultural difference story' (Cameron, 2005) — and may be articulated with (or supported by) a media effects analysis through some kind of reception study.

An example that appears to be problematic in the sense of being ambiguous is a study conducted by Pereira and Veríssimo (2008) about the existence of women stereotypes in ads and a group of students' perceptions of the ads. It is a good illustration of how we can be trapped by the conjoining of the particularities of one's language, due to what can be named a lack of attention, to say the least. The authors use the phrases 'stereotypes **of** gender' ('*estereótipos **de*** género') to mean differences between the 'social roles' attributed to (real) women and men, and 'stereotypes **by** gender' ('*estereótipos **por*** género') to refer to differences of representations according to each sex (portrayed) in the ads, using thus the term 'gender' with both meanings. This is a linguistically correct use of the phrases, but also one that can be considered problematic or unclear, as it might conflate stereotypes (a social concept) with the 'characters' that one sees in the ads.

5.4 Gender as sex segregation

In this category we include data-based studies that focus on investigating the presence or the omission of women in media representations and in media-related organisations. Although the authors may explicitly invoke the meanings associated with gender as a 'coatrack of sex', their focus is on social divisions. Furthermore, when it comes to name the referent of this hierarchy, they use the terms gender and sex – or sex related terms (e.g. 'women / men'; 'female / male') — interchangeably. The work of Alejandra Hernández, Marta Martín-Llaguno and Marina Beléndez (2009) is a good example of this. In this article, the authors address the issue of 'sex segregation', the relative presence of women and men in the Spanish advertising companies' workforce, and treat it as equivalent to or as indicative of a 'gender gap' — or a barrier to gender equality. By linking gender to sex in this way, it is assumed that femininity and masculinity are features that (only) women and men have, respectively; that is, they each possess specific and essential qualities that define what they are, their whole being and essence, and it is this alleged reality that produces their actions. This is why it is assumed, in this article, that more women in the advertisement workforce will mean a change in the way they work, or on what they have to offer. However, if reasoning the other way around — that it is our actions that produce one's gender, and that gender is an unstable position, something that is done and performed in particular ways in particular contexts, under particular circumstances, opportunities and limitations —, then the increase of female presence in the Spanish advertising workforce does not necessarily mean ungendering that area of work (as it does not mean in journalism). This is because it is not enough to be a woman to change patriarchal organisations (Marshment, 1993).

This kind of studies, notwithstanding their social relevance, would certainly benefit from a change in their conceptualisations of gender and sex, and of their interrelationships.

6. Concluding remarks: towards a deeper understanding of current discursive practices of scholars and editors

What the findings suggest about our current practice as communication scholars dealing with gender issues is that differences are (still) the 'holly grail' of gender research. The 'Gender differences discourse' (Sunderland, 2004) is the most pervasive discourse, not only generally, in social practices and interaction, but, surprisingly (or not), in academic practice, too.

Additionally, gender and sex are mainly taken to be a fact, not a question that is worth being studied. When gender is questioned, the set of articles classified under the category 'Where are dynamics and diversity in gender and sex?' indicates that sex (men and women) is seen as the only referent of gender, as being previous to gender, and as an immutable fact: 'sex is sex is sex'. The underlying assumption is that there is no gender without sex. The relationship between gender and sex is thus seen as being linear, unidirectional and continuous, and the interconnections between gender, sex and (hetero)sexuality are an issue for a residual number of researchers only.

Sex (having sex related acts, or just suggestions, hints of sex; pornography; objectification; pulsions) is that which matters the most regarding sexuality. When sexuality is questioned, it is queered, that is, interrogated within the framework of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, [1984]1999), and it is not (with only a few exceptions) denaturalised within a gender framework.

Our analysis thus demonstrates that the differentiation between gender and sex as both descriptive and analytical categories is a viable marker for characterising two distinct approaches in communication studies. It also sorts through for some of the confusions regarding the terms 'gender' and 'sex', and their relationships. It is clear that the studies reviewed would benefit from a stronger and more diverse theoretical ground on gender, sex and sexuality issues. We aim to encourage scholars to use the concepts more precisely, as well as to improve the clarity of the relationship that they envisage and about which they write, even if they do not do so intentionally. By recognising differences and common ground between the descriptive and the analytical approaches, we think that future research will be able to create more innovative hybrid theories that combine the advancements of both fields of research.

To conclude, we strongly believe that the editors of these journals, as well as scholars submitting manuscripts, need to be more aware of the traditional nature of the theoretical and methodological choices that they make regarding gender- and sex-related issues, as well as of the relative lack of attention to sexuality as a research subject.

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II. Gender representations

Álvares, C. & Fernandes, A. (2016). Giving voice to the patient in vegetative state: biopolitical intersections of discourses on human life and female body. In C. Cerqueira; R. Cabecinhas & S. I. Magalhães (Eds.), *Gender in focus: (new) trends in media* (pp. 69-83). Braga: CECS.

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Giving voice to the patient in vegetative state: biopolitical intersections of discourses on human life and female body

Abstract

This article focuses on media representation of two cases of young women diagnosed with vegetative state for a prolonged period of time, the North-American Terri Schiavo and the Italian Eluana Englaro, and on how their bodies became signifiers of moral panic, embodying a threat to prevalent social norms through the possibility, which came to be concretised in both cases, of their being disconnected from the feeding tubes that maintained them alive. The bodies of these two patients, with "no evidence of awareness of self or environment and an inability to interact with others" (Multi-Society Task Force on PVS, 1994, p. 1500), and reduced to basic biological functions, such as breathing with preservation of sleep-wake cycles, became the site of conflicting discourses on life, namely on definitions of life, the kind of life that deserves to be kept alive, the role of political and social institutions in the preservation or elimination of such life, and, ultimately, on what it means to be human. Textual analysis of Portuguese online news on the Schiavo and Englaro cases will focus on the variety of biopolitical factions that articulate their own views on the legitimacy of life and the conditions of such legitimacy. These discourses, although not strictly gender-oriented, lend themselves to gendered readings, not least because these two cases involving young women were deemed as particularly newsworthy in the media, to the detriment of many other such cases that exist, involving individuals who are neither young nor women.

Keywords

Vegetative states; biopower; ethics; gender; voice

1. Introduction: the voiceless female martyr

This article focuses on media representation of two cases of young women diagnosed with vegetative state for a prolonged period of time, the

North-American Terri Schiavo and the Italian Eluana Englaro, and on how their bodies became signifiers of moral panic, embodying a threat to prevalent social norms through the possibility, which came to be concretised in both cases, of their being literally disconnected from the feeding tubes that maintained them alive. The concept of moral panic is usually connected to fear of criminal deviance, or a threat to social order, frequently fostered by the media (Cohen, 1972; Krinsky, 2013; Young, 1971). Likewise, as regards the issue at hand, there is fear that machine disconnection correspond to a form of deviance due to ending a life that is organically alive, despite no longer being equated to 'good life'.

More specifically, the perceived threat to social order is that human intervention, through the disconnection of a feeding tube, might be sealing the fate of patients who, despite having, apparently, severely impaired cognitive functions, are still capable of carrying out some vegetative physiological functions with life-support treatment. The fact that this issue is seen as managed by either the courts on the one hand or by the State, in both cases, means that the threat it represents may be subject to social and political control. In the process, the voice of other parties in the media, such as family members, involved in the case are ignored in favour of the traditional institutions that regulate biopower on a macro level. By biopower we mean the regulation of "a set of processes", implemented from the late eighteenth century onwards, relating to "the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population", "the mortality rate, longevity and so on" (Foucault, 2003, p. 243). Lastly, the Schiavo and Englaro cases invite ethical self-formation to the extent that both imply the necessity to rethink ethics in light of the distinction between human life and inhuman survival and the ventriloquisation of a (female) body deprived of agency.

Marie Theresa Schiavo was diagnosed with vegetative state in 1990, after a cardiac arrest at the age of 26, and was in that condition until 2005 when the life-sustaining treatment was withdrawn. Similarly, Eluana Englaro was diagnosed with vegetative state in 1992 at the age of 21, as a result of a car accident, and was in that condition until 2009 when the life-sustaining treatment was withdrawn. Both end-of-life decisions were made in a context of strong litigation and of intervention of the high representatives of the State, George W. Bush in the Schiavo case and Silvio Berlusconi in the case of Englaro. The bodies of these two patients, with "no evidence of awareness of self or environment and an inability to interact with others" (Multi-Society Task Force on PVS, 1994, p. 1500), and reduced to basic biological functions, such as breathing with preservation of sleep-wake cycles, became the site of conflicting discourses on life, namely on definitions of life, the kind of life that deserves to be kept alive, the role of political and social institutions in the preservation or elimination of such life, and, ultimately, on what it means to be human.

We want to argue that, in these two particular cases, such debates were inextricably linked to discourses on gender, resuscitating a particular Christian iconography on the suffering of the voiceless female martyr, who through divine intervention managed to transcend her 'nature' and thus temporarily "gain the right to speak as temporary "prophet[s]"" (Vance, 2000, p. 92). Indeed, where in the case of the female martyr faith implies a choice that wills absolute passivity to the will of God, implying issues of self-sacrifice and self-willed martyrdom which may connote both narcissistic gratification as well as masochistic humiliation (Blum, 1991, p. 444), in these particular cases being reduced to basic corporeal functions lends these women to complete colonisation of will by conflictual discourses of biopower.

These women are therefore the product of modernity, in that they are conditioned by the affordances of a technology in the foucauldian sense, translating as "a practical rationality governed by a conscious aim" (Foucault, 1984, pp. 255-256), which takes the governmentality of life as its object and its objective. In other words, the aim of managing and controlling the health and life of citizens becomes indissociable from a biopolitical project that accompanied the rise and consolidation of the idea of the modern State.

For Agamben, the concentration camp is metonymical for the political space of modernity, which opens "when the state of exception becomes the rule", operating outside the realm of the law, or community, where *every* citizen is potentially reduced to naked life. Under the state of exception, the living body becomes "the rule and criterion of its own application" (Agamben, 1998, p. 173), meaning that the living body becomes an end unto itself, transcending the rule of law. In such situations, the ethical ceases to exist, because life is considered in absolutist terms and the difference separating human life from inhuman survival is not taken into account.

The paradox of the camp lies, then, in its 'inhabitants' finding themselves "stripped of every political status and wholly reduced to bare life', while simultaneously inhabiting 'the most absolute political space ever to have been realised, in which power confronts nothing but pure life, without any mediation" (Agamben, 1998, p. 171). The deprivation of political status, the loss of voice, thus provides the ideal space for the exercise of power "to make live and to let die" (Foucault, 2003, p. 241). We argue here that the vegetative condition in which Terri Schiavo and Eluana Englaro found themselves constitutes one such site in which discursive regimes of truth vie for such power over purely biological life.

On the basis of textual analysis of online versions of Portuguese newspapers, we will try to understand the intricate biopolitical exercise, on the part of the legislative, executive, judicial, familial and ecclesiastical powers involved, to ventriloquise the voices of both Schiavo and Englaro, often conferring on the latter desires that emanated from particular understandings of the most simple physiological manifestations as signalling something other than simple, pure 'naked life'.

2. The body as prison: being without voice

> Contemporary biopolitics centres not on death but on 'life' – that is to say, it is organized around dilemmas concerning human vitality: human rights to life (a dignified life, a quality of life), the equality of all humans as particular kinds of living creatures (human rights), the value of life, the future of life, and what can be done to the lives of some to facilitate the lives of others (pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, stem cells, organ transplants, donations of body parts). (Rose, 2007, in Rose, 2013, p. 4)

While the 'psy' sciences influenced individuals' understandings of self during the 20th century, becoming crucial to the way they lived their lives as well as to their governance by authorities (Rose, 1999, p. 92), towards the end of the 20th century another ethic, that of biology, has become salient, connected to the belief that "key features of our identity as persons are (were) grounded in the flesh" (Rose, 2013, p. 7).

This is additionally interesting from a gendered perspective because of difference feminism's idealisation of the female body as articulating an autonomous biological essence external to any socio-cultural mediation (Plaza, 1978, p. 7). Irigaray, for instance, points to the realm of the symbolic order that prevails in the Western context as condemning woman to mutism. As such, she attempts to think up a form of writing that mirrors the female body as referent, in its materiality, so as to emancipate woman from the straightjacket of linearity which prevents her from expressing "concrete and embodied experience" (Giardini, 2003, p. 14). The female body is thus the source that inspires Irigaray, Kristeva or Cixous to write back against 'speechlessness'.

Paradoxically, in the two cases that we are analysing here, the body, reduced to utter passivity, is, by force of circumstance, the only instrument that could be seen as speaking for itself: it is apparently not capable of being symbolised by its owners in its materiality, contrary to what Cixous attempts to achieve by creating an *écriture feminine* that "allows feminine desire, the language of the body, to reconstitute expression as a revolutionary movement against the masculine rhetorical structure that has defined language over time", thus resisting phallocentrism (Alexander, 2011, p. 1). The owners of these bodies in vegetative state have no choice but 'to let' others speak in their place and be subjected to the materiality of a phallocentric 'tube-rape' (Beyerstein, 2005, in Protevi, 2009, p. 127) (the percutaneous feeding tube of artificial hydration and nutrition).

Thus, while for difference feminists being grounded in flesh, or naked life, is celebratory due to drawing women closer to a 'self-directed' definition of identity (Stone, 2004, p. 10), for Terri Schiavo and Eluana Englaro being reduced to naked life is a tragedy. We would argue that these latter cases are particularly disturbing because they shake certain conventions that some circles of Western academia have come to accept regarding the emancipatory potential of the body, not so much from a difference feminist but more from a postfeminist perspective. The latter seeks to engage with traditional sexualised female stereotypes in a playful, light-hearted manner, in the attempt to define a 'new subjective space for women' that reconciles femininity with feminism. Postfeminist subjectivity involves the staging of a sexualised feminine body that reconstructs feminist 'autonomy and agency' so as to transform women's past sexual objectification into a subjectification (Genz, 2006, pp. 344-345) that is willful and not passive.

Reduced to zöe, natural life, the vegetative body is a body that matters (Butler, 1993) not in a postmodern performative sense that actively wills experimentation with different identities, but rather as reified materiality. Nor is this materiality that of Donna Haraway's cyborg, which breaks down the human/animal or organism/machine dichotomies (Teyssot, 2005, p. 78) in the search for an emancipatory post-human figure that is capable of breaking away from the constrictions of both gender and sex. While the vegetative body reduced to zöe is indeed animalised in its pure systemic physiological functions, it simultaneously does not transcend animality through technology: rather, technology extends and perpetuates the vegetative's body animality, and it is only with the switching off of the 'machine' that the body emancipates itself from itself. Contrary to the vegetative patient who can be characterised as void of subjectivity, Haraway's hybrid 'inappropriate/d other' enjoys "the relative freedom of movement of the subjects-to-be regarding a position of otherness that they neither fully occupy nor completely adjust to" without losing the 'power of agency' (Prins, 1995, p. 357).

3. Textual analysis of online news: the subject sous rasure

The bodies of Schiavo and Englaro are indeed erased of any mark of subjectivity in their representations in the media, and either one is often described as 'a woman in a vegetative state', reduced to a medical condition. Erasure is a given fact in Portuguese online news coverage on these cases, allowing, in the Schiavo case, for a battle over biopower among her parents, her husband, the courts, the governor of Florida, the North-American Parliament and Government and, in the Englaro case, for a biopolitical dispute among the Italian Government, the Italian Presidency, the courts and the patient's father (Fernandes, unpublished).

The online versions of the Portuguese newspapers *Correio da Manhã* (*CM*), *Diário de Notícias* (*DN*), *Expresso*, *Jornal de Notícias* (*JN*) and *Público* focused on evidence or not of consciousness in the description of the mind and body of these two women, equating any sign of consciousness with vitality. In short, evidence of consciousness was used by the media as a discursive strategy to justify the need for the maintenance of life, often using illocutory techniques to intensify the suffering resulting from a slow, agonising death from hunger and thirst (when there are doubts about the capacity of this type of patient to experience or not those sensations (McCullagh, 2004, pp. 231-232).

Online news description of the two cases, illustrated in the examples below, privilege voluntary movement capabilities as indicative of consciousness. In both cases, there is an attempt to delegitimise the judicial biopolitical decision to terminate artificial hydration and alimentation:

> Based on changes in facial expression, her [Schiavo's] parents believed in recovery. (*JN*: 23-03-2005)

> … her [Shiavo's] parents, supported by various Catholic organisations, affirmed that Terri is conscious. (*JN*: 22-03-2005)

> Terri Schiavo's parents argue that their daughter is sensitive to stimuli. (*JN*: 31-03-2005)

> Terri Schiavo's parents and sister believe that their family member's health can improve, based on the reactions that the patient presents. (*Público*: 18-03-2005)

> It is a defeat for Eluana, a young woman who lives, who breathes autonomously, who wakes up and sleeps, who has life', affirmed the president of the Pontificial Academy for Life, Rino Fisichella, to the Vatican Radio. (*DN*: 15-11-2008)

Description of the sedation of both Schiavo and Englaro draws attention to the fact that the classification of a patient as being in a vegetative state preserves a legitimate doubt as to whether or not the capacity to feel pain and experience suffering denotes the existence of consciousness. In both cases, the Catholic Church played an active role in campaigning for the maintenance of life-sustaining treatment of the two women on the basis of the idea that their capacity to feel pain implied that they were alive:

> "Her [Schiavo's] pain is that of humanity's, the slow and terrible agony of Terri is today the agony of the sentiment of God, the agony of His love which envelops those who are most frail," writes the *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican official newspaper. (*DN*: 22-03-2005)

> In the *Corriere della Sera*, one reads: "The media campaign of the Catholic Church changed the perception of the agony of the young woman [Englaro]". (*Público*: 8-02-2009)

> Last Friday the doctors stopped feeding and hydrating her [Englaro], only giving her sedatives so as to not let her suffer. (*Expresso*: 9-02-2009)

However, the fact that Schiavo was not sedated at the time of the withdrawal of the life-support treatment (Fins, Illes, Bernat, Hirsch, Laureys, & Murphy, 2008) illustrates that the expression of doubt as regards the capacity of a vegetative patient to feel pain was less of an issue at the time of the Schiavo than the Englaro case, indicating that certainties about the vegetative state tend to erode with new investigations.

Newspaper articles emphasise that the patients' capacity to feel both pain and pleasure are the target of an attempt at silencing by the courts, and they seek evidence in physical and physiological manifestations to buttress the belief that such patients should not be 'disconnected' from life.

> Schiavo – who had had Holy Communion during Easter with a drop of wine –... . (*CM*: 29-03-2005)

> Eight days ago, when the feeding tube was withdrawn from Terri, she emitted a few sounds, which her parents interpreted as words. According to the [their] petition, such sounds meant "I want to live", and, as such, a request was presented at court to authorise the administration of liquids so as to verify that possibility. (*JN*: 27-03-2005)

> The father of the patient, Bob Schindler, guaranteed yesterday that his daughter reacted when he gave her [Schiavo] the news. "I told her that if she was ready, she should run down for lunch, and she gave me a big smile," affirmed Bob. (*CM*: 22-03-2005)

More than scientific, the frequent descriptions of the patients' body, pointing to fatigue, hunger, thirst, dry mouth, scaling skin, are essentially biopolitical in that they signal a camp where both life and the will to live is disputed:

> A woman in a Miami hospital is about to die from hunger and thirst. This is the slow death of a person, not of a vegetable, and the world assists, impotently, through TV and newspapers. (*L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican official newspaper, quoted in *JN*: 22-03-2005)

> The patient received Holy Communion, last Sunday, under the authorisation of her husband, Michael Schiavo. Nevertheless, the patient could not swallow the host, due to having a very dry mouth. She was then given a drop of consecrated wine during the mass that was celebrated in the centre of intensive care for terminally ill patients. (*JN*: 29-03-2005).

> On the thirteenth day of hunger and thirst, Theresa Marie Schiavo died. (*DN*: 01-04-2005)

> The minister for Reform, Umberto Bossi, reacted saying that a person [Englaro] should not be "left to die from hunger and from thirst". (*Público*: 10-02-2009)

> The person responsible for the Pontificial Council for Health Care, Cardinal Lozano Barragán, equated the ruling

> by the Italian Supreme Court with the condemnation of Eluana "to a monstruous end", a "homicide, in which she will be left to die from hunger and thirst". (*DN*: 15-11-2009)

Despite the possibility of the necessity of sedation, linked to an irreducible 'biological limitation' (Multi-Society Task Force on PVS, 1994, p. 1501) that limits what can effectively be said about the consciousness of another person, the medical sources in both the Schiavo and Englaro cases are those portrayed by newspapers as most radical in defining the vegetative state:

> "To family and friends, and to less experienced doctors and nurses, patients in persistent vegetative states seem quite normal," explains Dr. Ronald Cranford, specialist in Neurology and Bioethics. "Their eyes are open and they move during periods of wakefulness. There can be spontaneous movements of arms and legs, and sometimes such patients seem to smile, laugh, make sounds and adopt other facial expressions," explains the doctor, accentuating, nevertheless, that all these signs are simple automatic reflexes and neither expressions of consciousness nor will. (*CM*: 22-03-2005)

> The neurologists contracted by her husband testify that Terri Schiavo is in a permanent vegetative state, but not brain-dead. She cannot think, speak or react to anything close-by. She presents non-cognitive functions such as breathing, circulation and blinking. (*Público*: 30-03-2005)

> "The vegetative patient does not have consciousness of self nor relational life," explains to *Público* the specialist in internal medicine, Luís Campos. "S/he does not establish communication". (*Público*: 11-02-2009)

> According to physicians, Englaro died, in fact, on the day of the accident, when she lost all her faculties. (*DN*: 9-02-2009) ... cognitively, she does not exist; she does not feel. (Oncologist Ferraz Gonçalves from the Oporto Portuguese Institute of Oncology, *CM*: 15-02-2009)

The medical descriptions of the patients erode them ontologically, reducing their bodies to bare life and to a condition of being "static and undead" (Reno, 2014, p. 22), "faceless and voiceless" (Žižek, 2005, p. 160) and "deprived of the capacity to die" (Žižek, 2008, p. 9).

The diagnosis itself has an effect beyond the bed of the patient, due to defining his biopolitical condition. This bare life enters into political calculus by becoming an object of biopolitical decision over whether life should be maintained and what kind of life should be preserved. Eluana's father, Beppino Englaro, declared: "she is only a body in the hands of those who assist her" (*DN*: 15-11-2008). And this is indeed what one regime of truth maintains, that the patient in vegetative state has already died, continuing to exist 'only' as a 'body'.

Despite all the quotes above essentially reducing the patient's vegetative state to bare life, none more so than then Italian prime-minister Silvio Berlusconi's description of Englaro as a 'young woman' still "capable of having babies" (*DN*: 9-02-2009) draws attention to what, in his perspective, Englaro maintains as crucial to her essence, that of the female capacity to produce and bear children, independently or not of the fact of being in possession of cognitive functions. What is salient, then, in the latter quote is the fact that this woman is still capable of acting as a vessel of life, bringing forth new life into the world and, as such, her being artificially kept alive is fully justified. Berlusconi thus emphasises her sexual, rather than her gendered identity in an urge to reinforce the body's biological life as the object and objective of modern biopolitics, stripping that very body of its gendered political status in the process.

4. Conclusion: act of care or deficit of agency?

Because the vegetative patient's life is bare, lived out crudely, her – either Schivo or Englaro's – voice results from a biopolitical decision that is based on the voice of legal power instead of her body's manifestations. The biopolitical decision to end the life of these patients shows that they are spoken for by a variety of biopolitical factions that articulate their own views on the legitimacy of life and the conditions of such legitimacy. These discourses, although not strictly gender-oriented, lend themselves to gendered readings, not least because these two cases involving young women were deemed as particularly newsworthy in the media, to the detriment of many other such cases that exist, involving individuals who are neither young nor women.

The news-value of 'personalisation' has led the newspapers analysed to filter information on vegetative states through the lens of these two individuals, taking recourse in a '"human interest" frame' which, by eliding contextual differences and particularities, draws attention away from more profound political issues (Wright, 2012, p. 291). The tendency towards personalisation of such cases in the media contrasts with the rejection by the North-American and Italian Governments of the wishes that these *particular* patients had expressed in the past of not being artificially fed in similar medical conditions, thus erasing the voice of individual, subjective will in the decision of euthanasia.

This refusal to engage with these patients' voice prior to the latter having lost consciousness reduces them to being the object of an 'ethic of care' that revolves around their complete dependency, which in turn naturalises the self-sacrifice of those who 'care'. In the case of Schiavo, the North-American Government attended to the appeals of the patient's parents to 'save' their daughter from the courts, and the Portuguese news pieces analysed depict this appeal as a legitimate act of care. Such acts of care efface the association of care with 'institutional confinement, limited social engagement, partial citizenship, disempowerment and exclusion', as well as the fact that the recipients of an act of care 'are ontologically doomed to a deficit of agency', thereby living '"tragic" lives' (Hughes, McKie, Hopkins & Watson, 2005, p. 261). Independently of sex or social status, objects of care are represented as the 'feminine other' within the masculine imaginary (Hughes *et al*., 2005, p. 262) that distinguishes the mainstream journalistic context, and it is thus not surprising that the gendered aspect of these two particular cases may have contributed to their newsworthiness. In effect, as a woman, Schiavo was not allowed to abandon, even in vegetative state, her carers, with her parents accepting the possibility of amputation of their daughter's four limbs if necessary for her survival.

Additionally, the vegetative state of Schiavo had resulted from cardiac arrest, caused by a potassium imbalance and leading to brain damage due to lack of oxygen, brought about by a binge-eating disorder (Hansen, 2012, p. 99). As such, by having been unable to resist a social context that seeks to fit women's body into 'normalised' parameters, Schiavo may be considered as ventriloquised before suffering brain injury, having this very ventriloquisation resulted in her vegetative state. Schiavo was, moreover, undergoing assisted reproduction treatment before occurrence of the acute brain lesion. The fact that her obstetrician failed to diagnose her bulimic disorder while subjecting her to fertility treatment may have contributed to Schiavo's cardiac arrest, leading her husband to file – and win – two lawsuits for medical malpractice (Hook & Mueller, 2005, p. 1450; Wolfson, 2005, pp. 41-42).

It can hence be suggested that this physician, alongside Schiavo's husband and parents failed to acknowledge the importance of the ventroliquisation over Schiavo's body that caused her to remain silent concerning her bulimic eating disorder. This silence is again witnessed in relation to her fertility treatment, the latter which, as "arbiter[s] of values and standards relating to women's reproduction and motherhood" (Crowe, in Nordqvist, 2008, p. 278), treated the specificity of Schiavo's body as invisible in the urge to exert over it a normalising, disciplinary technology of control. Already in a vegetative state, Eluana Englaro is further subjected to ventriloquisation by discourses of reproduction on the part of prime-minister Berlusconi (*DN*: 9-02-2009), who singles out the patient's 'normalising' capacity to conceive as placing her on the side of 'life', understood as living 'nature', as opposed to the technological, or the artificial (Nordqvist, 2008, p. 279), perceived as Artificial Hydration and Alimentation (AHA). The ethics of care and its ontological destitution of agency, the personalisation of gendered news value and the attempt at ventriloquising voiceless patients thus intersect at particular 'nodes' of journalistic discourse, revealing that the vegetative state is indeed a topic that deserves to be addressed in gender studies.

The fact that the cases here analysed hark back to certain female stereotypes, linked to silence, passivity and suffering, which are abundant in various cultures, make them particularly disturbing. This is compounded by the objectification of the body which, contrary to most critiques of objectification, does not exude erotic vitality but rather the sadism or masochism of *thanatos*, the death drive. This body symbolises the hybridisation of human life and inhuman survival, of life and death and, as such, is a virtual space of possibility that begs for political action to be taken in its regard. Such action reveals itself as particularly difficult due to hybridisation being susceptible to multiple readings and ventriloquisations, many of which defy the biopolitical logic. Ventriloquisation can be an act of responsibility, the radically ethical capacity to make 'the decision of the other in me' (Derrida, 2005, pp. 128-129). The multiple voices that speak for Schiavo and Englaro in the polis (medical, political, juridical, familial, scholarly, religious and journalistic, among others) seek to take charge of this responsibility, being represented in the Portuguese press as vying for one of the polarities of biopolitical institutionality, that of either crudely killing or obliging to live, contributing, in the process, to frame the termination of life-sustaining treatment as a threat to the socially prevalent moral order.

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Sex-role stereotyping and sex discrimination regulation in advertising: the belgian case

Abstract

This study adds to the discussion (semi-)legal mechanisms for the regulation of advertising sexism in the Belgian context. Presently, Belgium does not have specific legislation against sexist advertising. The gender advertising legislation currently includes general anti-discrimination laws and industry self-regulation. The Jury for Ethical Practices in Advertising is Belgium's self-regulatory body. Its decisions are based on the International Chamber of Commerce's Consolidated Code of advertising and marketing communication practice, the Belgian national advertising codes and 'all applicable statutory regulations'. The aim of this study is to determine whether this existing system of self-regulation is an effective and successful mechanism to ward off sexism from advertising. For this purpose, 125 cases were selected from the judgments issued between 1999 and 2012 about advertising that were considered gender-unfriendly by complainants. Their analysis served to clarify how the Jury deals with such complaints and whether they give concrete substance to their standards through their practice. The arguments and criteria used by the Jury were measured against a more theoretical definition of sexist advertising based on academic literature. The results support, at least in part, the conclusion that this mechanism has some serious shortcomings and that there is need for serious (legal) intervention in the existing system.

Keywords

Sexist advertising; self-regulation; Belgium; gender discrimination

1. Introduction

The study reported here adds to the discussion on (semi-)legal mechanisms for the regulation of advertising sexism in the Belgian context. This contribution is part of a wider project regarding the role of law in the regulation of sexism in words and images. There have been previous researches regarding this topic in the Belgian context, but not from a legal perspective (Magda Michielsens Onderzoekshuis, 2009; Van Hellemont & Van den Bulck, 2009). The aim of the project is to identify and critically analyze existing and potential forms of regulation of sexism in words and images in the Belgian context. The final goal is twofold: firstly, to contribute to the assessment of the success of regulation in this field, and secondly an attempt to define the problem in the form of workable definition of 'prohibited sexism' in Belgian law.

Advertising and street harassment are the two main problems that are associated with sexism in Belgium. In the summer of 2012, the Belgian legislator announced that these problems would be tackled with a major 'anti-sexism law'. The law was finally approved in April 2014 in a reduced 'light-version', eventually leaving out the topic of gender and advertising. This meant that the Belgian legal situation in relation to gender and advertising remained unchanged.

The aim of this research is to determine whether the existing system of self-regulation is an effective and successful mechanism to ward off sexism from advertising. The study data support, at least in part, the conclusion that there is need for serious intervention in the existing (semi-)legal system, and that Belgium would benefit from examining foreign advertising regulation concerning sexism for possible implementation in Belgium.

Part II of this contribution sets out the system of Belgian 'gender advertising law'. Part III lists criteria for sexist advertising to be included in a working definition. Part IV describes the Jury for Ethical Practices in Advertising's assessment of complaints on sexist advertising, the results of the study and a reflection on these results.

2. Background

While countries such as Norway, Sweden and Finland have specific legislation against sexist advertising, Belgian 'gender advertising law' currently includes general anti-discrimination laws and industry self-regulation. Belgium does not seem to have looked to other countries for guidance in the area of regulation of gender advertisements. So far, there is no formal regulation by law of gender advertising. The legislator does not want to intervene: "whereas it is not effective to systematically take legal actions because the criminal legislation would become unwieldy and because it is recommended to find a balance between freedom of speech, creativity and respect for human dignity" (Belgian Senate, 2006).

a) Industry self-regulation

The *Jury for Ethical Practices in Advertising* is Belgium's self-regulatory body. The Advertising Council founded it in 1974 and its secretariat is funded by the advertising sector. Its main task is to determine whether the advertising messages disseminated through the mass media (newspapers, magazines, door-to-door papers, weekly papers, radio, television, billboards in public places, cinema, Internet), e-mailing and/or direct mail and are in accordance with the rules on advertising ethics, for which it relies on Belgian statutory law and on the self-disciplinary codes. The self-disciplinary sanctioning of the Jury depends on the voluntary collaboration of advertisers, advertising agencies and media, and happens out of consideration for 'interests of consumers' and/or 'the image of advertising'. On the one hand, the Jury investigates complaints received from the public, particularly consumers. On the other hand, advertisers, advertising agencies and media can voluntarily request advice. The Chairman of the Jury can submit an advertisement to the Jury for assessment on his own initiative or at the request of one or more members of his Jury, for the purposes of the defense of consumer interests and/or the image of advertising. The decisions and recommendations of the Jury do not have a legally binding character.

Until 2008, the Jury consisted only of advertising professionals. This led to criticism on their effectiveness and to a lack of credibility with the public, as they were both judge and defendant in the regulatory process. Therefore, there was a change in the composition of the Jury with effect from the 1st of January 2008. Since then half of the members represent the civil society, the other half represent the advertising industry.

b) Interpretation of claims and remediation

The procedure (Raad voor de Reclame, 2013) for dealing with complaints has a fixed structure. In the first instance, the advertiser is contacted and he receives a depersonalized copy of the complaint. The advertiser is then given the opportunity to react. In addition to the motives mentioned by the complainant, the Jury may add extra elements, for example based on conflict with applicable legislation and / or self-disciplinary rules. In this case, the advertiser is invited to give his views on these aspects. When the record is completed, it is submitted to the Jury. The Jury investigates the advertisement and decides whether it is in accordance with the laws, regulations and codes to protect consumers. Every advertisement is investigated separately, taking into account all elements of the message, the type of product or service, the target audience and the social, cultural and economic context. The Jury can take three types of decisions. When the Jury is of the opinion that the advertisement does not contain elements that are contrary to statutory or self-disciplinary provisions, no remarks are formulated. This does not imply that the Jury approves the advertisement itself. In case of dispute, the case can be brought to court. When the Jury finds elements that are contrary to statutory or self-disciplinary provisions, it decides that the advertisement should be modified or suspended, depending on the nature and the extent of the infringement. The Jury can also issue an 'advice of reservation', whereby the responsibility to handle is left to the advertiser and the media. The deliberations and records are confidential, but when a case is closed, a summary of the record is made available on the website.

c) Sources for the (self-)regulation of gender advertising

The Jury bases its decisions on the International Chamber of Commerce's *Consolidated Code of Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice* (ICC Code) (International Chamber of Commerce 2011), the Belgian national codes and 'all applicable statutory regulations', based on five basic principles: advertising has to be honest, decent, truthful, legal and show a sense of social responsibility.

In terms of self-regulation, sexist advertising falls partly under the general headings of 'taste and decency' (Article 2) and 'denigration' (Article 12) and partly under Article 4 of the ICC Code on 'social responsibility':

> Marketing communication should respect human dignity and should not incite or condone any form of discrimination, including that based upon race, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation.
> Marketing communications should not without justifiable reason play on fear or exploit misfortune or suffering.
> Marketing communications should not appear to condone or incite violent, unlawful or anti-social behaviour.
> Marketing communications should not play on superstition.

The Belgian national advertising regulations are based on the ICC Code. Like other national advertising codes, it reflects the country's cultural, legal and commercial traditions (Gustafsson, 1993). The Belgian national code of advertising practice incorporated the ICC rules on decency and social responsibility in a set of recommendations about 'Representation of the person' (Jury voor Ethische Praktijken inzake Reclame, 2002), but unlike some other European countries, it did not go further in terms of specific rules on the portrayal of gender. The Jury asks advertisers, advertising agencies and the media to comply with these recommendations. They are based on the Code of the International Chamber of Commerce and supplemented with guiding comments by the Jury.

Regarding decency, the guiding comment states that advertising has to avoid to discredit persons or to exploit them in an improper manner by 'spreading images that violate dignity and contravene decency, so that the public is shocked or provoked'. Further, representations of (parts of) the human body should not be 'indecent or obscene'. Particular caution is required 'when the image is not related to the product and its objective or subjective properties'. The use of nudity in advertising should not seem 'humiliating and degrading'.

In the context of social responsibility the guiding comments recommend to avoid 'contempt, mistrust or mockery, regardless of the ethnic, social, professional or economic category to which a person belongs. Also, 'negative comparisons based on sex, age, race, nationality, social or professional status' should not be encouraged, developed or exploited. Advertising may not ignore 'the abilities, desires and the role of the various human and social groups'. Furthermore, 'attitudes regarding the inferiority or the superiority of a person in function of the social group to which he belongs, as well as encouraging feelings or behaviors that lead to expulsion, intolerance or racism' should be avoided.

Regarding the use of violence, the guiding comments clarify that the use of needless violence, direct or suggested, and every incitement to moral and physical violence, should be avoided. Violence is defined as 'at least all illegal, unlawful and reprehensible behaviors targeted by the legislation'. Direct violence is a depiction of the action of violence itself, while suggested violence is an atmosphere or a context that is the result of an act of violence. Moral violence includes dominant actions and unwanted harassment, both morally and sexually. In all cases, the used statements or representations should not trivialize violence.

The Belgian national code goes further than the ICC code, by adding a recommendation on the evolution of morals and of society: 'Advertisers must constantly take into account the evolution of the morals and should avoid that they would contribute to the perpetuation of social prejudices or stereotypes that go against social evolution or against prevailing ideas within the population'. The guiding comment underlines that all recommendations should be particularly adhered to when stereotypes about social or ethnic groups are used. Suggestions of submission and dependence by which human dignity is affected should be avoided.

The Belgian national code of advertising has an extra set of recommendations about 'Humor in advertising' (Jury voor Ethische Praktijken inzake Reclame, 1992), which is quite extensive compared to other countries. Among other, this is important with respect to pejorative allusions or references based on gender.

Overall, the standards the Jury has to work with are quite vague and do not explicitly mention sexist advertising, nor the principle of equality between men and women. The rules are limited to 'meeting current applicable standards of decency', 'respect for human dignity', 'avoiding discrimination based on gender' and the 'prohibition to humiliate persons or groups of persons'. Stereotyping in general should be avoided, but gender stereotypes are not specifically mentioned. Also, the term sexism is nowhere to be found, and the theme of 'women and violence' is not specifically taken into account. As regards the statutory law the Jury can apply, there are only general anti-discrimination laws that do not specifically deal with advertising.

This invites us to ask whether the Jury and the standards it applies are an effective mechanism to ward off sexism from advertising. The change in composition of the Jury led to the question whether the new composition - while the evaluation criteria remain unchanged - influenced the way the Jury deals with complaints about sexist advertising.

3. Criteria for sexist advertising

To answer the abovementioned questions, the arguments and criteria used by the Jury have to be measured against a theoretical definition of sexist advertising. There is no consensus amongst scholars about a definition of sexist advertising. It depends very much on cultural values and social customs, and on context. It can almost never be neutral. It is very difficult to distinguish accepted from not accepted gender portrayal. It requires very sophisticated line-drawing and fine interpretation of rules (Boddewyn, 1989; Preston, 1997). In the context of this study, I have attempted to list a set of minimum criteria as a working definition of sexist advertising, mainly based on literature, supplemented with advertising codes from other countries, such as Norway, that go much further than the Belgian Code. These criteria focus on the portrayal of gender roles, the use of persons as objects, focus on body parts, product relevance, beauty ideals, humor and violence.

With regard to the portrayal of gender roles in sexist advertisements, women or men are reduced to and defined as certain simplistic gender roles or characteristics that are mainly traditional gender stereotypes and role models. Women are traditionally portrayed as mothers, related to the household, in traditional occupations, while men traditionally appear as breadwinners related to the public life (Cohen-Eliya & Hammer, 2004; Cortese, 2007; Dyer, 2007; Goffman, 1979; Lysonski & Pollay, 1990; Seehan, 2014; Wyckham, 1987). Often, used gender stereotypes ascribe qualities that are perceived as unfavourable or negative to one gender. Examples of this are statements that women are impractical or that men are inconsiderate.

Advertising is also considered 'sexist' when persons, usually women, are reduced to their sexuality or only parts of the body are used, with focus on legs, breasts, faces and hair (Chambers, 2009; Dyer, 2009). Men are usually less often dismembered this way. Often, the bodies are separated into parts that need change or improvement (Kilbourne, 1998). When body parts are shown divorced from the body, this emphasizes that the picture is of the body, not the person, which leads to dehumanization and the perpetuation of the notion that a woman's body is not linked to her mind, soul and emotions (Cortese, 2007; Gill, 2009; Masse & Rosenblum, 1988; Merskin, 2013). This is problematic regardless if the dismembered part of the body wears or bears the item that is for sale (Merskin, 2013).

In case of 'dismemberment', bodies and body parts are usually used as objects. Objectification (Gill, 2008, 2009; Jhally, 1989; Preston, 1998), reification (Boddewyn & Kunz, 1991) or commodification (Piety, 2009; Rosewarne, 2005) also occurs when there is no natural link between the sex of the person and the advertised product or the person's body is only used to attract the public's attention, leading to dehumanization or depersonalisation (Lysonski & Pollay, 1990). Bodies, mainly female bodies (Kilbourne, 2000), are displayed to be consumed (Rosewarne, 2005). The use of bodies as objects is related to product relevance, namely whether the portrayal has a factual relevance to the product being advertised (Seehan, 2014). Product relevance is an important factor, but even if the advertisement is product relevant, it may still be assessed as offensive.

Objectification is linked with body focus (Gill, 2009), the beauty myth (Wolf, 1991), beauty ideals, unrealistic standards of beauty (Sarikaki & Shade, 2011) and the use of the exemplary female prototype (Cortese, 2007). She is young, good-looking, thin, tall, smiling, acquiescent, provocative, sexually available, she has long hair, long legs and she does not have scars or blemishes (Cortese, 2007; Dyer, 2009).

Objectification as such can justify violence (Kilbourne, 1999). Also, advertisements can be considered sexist when they reinforce, trivialize or justify violence against women, as well as submission, dependence and exploitation (Consumer Ombudsman, 2009; Kilbourne, 2000). This can be done through graphic representations of violence (Gill, 2009), naturalization of female bodies in pornographic poses (Merskin, 2013) or expressions of physical or symbolic violence, for example by depicting women in passive poses (with half open mouth, arched back, lying down, with their legs spread) and men in possessive, assertive and active poses (Sarikakis & Shade, 2011).

Another possible criterion for sexist advertising is the misuse of humour at the expense of women and/or gender equality (Cortese, 2007). The fact that an advertisement has a humorous and satirical manner about it does not exempt the advertiser from his responsibility (Consumer Ombudsman, 2009).

These criteria listed in the working definition can be used as guiding principles to lead to findings of sexist advertising in a majority of cases, but they cannot be generalized, since this problem will always be hard to measure, due to context and personal perceptions. Yet, there is one last criterion that might be generalized: advertisements can be considered sexist when reversal of the image, where men take over the role of women and vice versa, would immediately cause irritation, amusement or dislike (Meier, 2012).

4. The Jury's assessment of complaints on sexist advertising

a) Data

Data on complaints about sexist advertising are not included as a separate category in the statistics, on the website and in annual reports of the Jury. There is no annual survey of complaints regarding sexism, keywords such as 'sex', 'gender', 'sexist imagery' or 'sexism' are not used. All complaints are lumped together specific problems are not delineated. This study is limited to the summaries of the judgments available on the website, since the full records are confidential. The cases studied in this research were selected on the basis of their perceived gender-unfriendly nature according to the complainants.

The Jury handles 150-200 complaints each year. Most advertisements receive complaints from one consumer or organisation only (Van Hellemont & Van den Bulck, 2009). Around 30% of the complaints are about 'Representation of the person'. On average, one-third to maximum half of these 30% each year are about the perceived gender-unfriendly character of advertisements. A previous study failed to identify the reason for this low number of complaints: 'either consumers hardly have complaints about female or male image [in advertising] or the Jury is insufficiently known by the public' (Van Hellemont & Van den Bulck, 2009, p. 40). The same study also questioned whether consumers want to express their reactions or complaints through an official complaint. Anonymous complaints are not accepted by the Jury and can thus not be found in the statistics.

A number of judgments on the gender-unfriendly nature of advertising were studied to determine how the Jury deals with such complaints, whether they give concrete substance to the vague standards through their practice and interpretations and whether there is a noticeable difference since the change in composition of the Jury in 2008. The main strategy was to locate their approaches towards the complaints and their arguments or reasons to accept or decline them, and to look whether do more than merely applying their vague guidelines, by using or referring to elements of the working definition.

Between 1999 and 2012 the Jury issued 278 judgments about advertising that was considered gender-unfriendly by complainants. In 99% of these cases, complaints were filed by consumers. Organizations do not file a lot of complaints. In the large majority of the cases, the complaints were about sexism against women. Complaints about discrimination against men are filed very rarely. From these judgments the five largest categories (in which there were 20 or more complaints over the covered period) were selected. At the same time, these categories represent classical themes where many stereotyped views about men and women exist, namely 'cosmetics', 'beverages', 'information technologies and telecommunications', 'motor vehicles and accessories' and 'textiles and clothing'.

	BEFORE 2008	**AFTER 2008**	**TOTAL**
Cosmetics	12	8	20
Beverages	14	10	24
Information technologies and telecommunications	9	13	21
Motor vehicles and accessories	15	8	22
Textiles and clothing	23	15	38
		TOTAL	125

Table 1: Complaint categories and number of complaints per category before and after the change in composition of the Jury in 2008

b) Results

Attempting to draw generalizations from justified and unjustified complaints is difficult. From the data available in the summaries of the cases it is in most cases not possible to determine specifically what is acceptable and what is not according to the Jury. The majority of complaints deals with subtleties and it is not easy to clearly identify characteristics of advertisements found to be contrary to the guidelines.

In the majority of the cases, the description of the advertisement and/or the argumentation of the complainant refer to certain elements of the working definition. Most cases are thus potential cases of sexist advertising if they would be objectively measured against the working definition, still keeping in mind that certain cases are hard to measure, and that there are restrictions because of the limited amount of available information.

Before 2008, the Jury did not find breaches of statutory and/or self-disciplinary rules in 71% of the cases. Therefore, they did not find it necessary to formulate remarks. After 2008, this percentage was reduced to 66%. Overall, the Jury did not formulate any remarks ('No remarks') in a large majority of the cases (85 out of 125). The categories 'Cosmetics' and 'Beverages' appear to be the least problematic, with respectively 19 out of 20 and 21 out of 24 cases that did not receive any remarks. In the category 'Motor vehicles and accessories', just more than half of the cases did not receive any remarks (13 out of 22), while in the category 'Textiles and clothing', one third of the cases (25 out of 38) were considered unproblematic. In the category 'Information Technologies and Telecommunications', more than half of the complaints resulted in an advice of reservation, modification or suspension.

	No remarks		Advice of reservation		Modification / suspension	
	Before 2008	**After 2008**	**Before 2008**	**After 2008**	**Before 2008**	**After 2008**
Cosmetics	11	8	1	0	0	0
Beverages	11	10	2	0	1	0
Information technologies and telecommunications	5	4	2	4	2	4
Motor vehicles and accessories	10	3	2	1	3	3

Textiles and clothing	15	10	3	3	5	2
	52	35	10	8	11	9

Table 2: Outcome of the complaints per category before and after the change in composition of the Jury in 2008

In the majority of the cases where the Jury did not find breaches, they reject the complaints about the sexist nature without further investigation or motivation. Where they do substantiate the rejection of the complaints, the same arguments usually return. A first argument is that the majority of the consumers would not have problems with the advertisement, be shocked by it or would not understand it in a wrong way, or that according to the current societal evolution there are no elements contrary to generally accepted standards of decency. Secondly, it seems sufficient for the Jury that there are no obscene elements, for example that intimate body parts are covered or that positions are not pornographic. When the intimate body parts are covered, this implies for the Jury that there is no breach of the dignity of the woman. Thirdly, humor, take-offs and hyperboles are usually considered as factors that make more bold advertisements acceptable, it even helps when women are literally used as objects/tools. Another element is that a vague connection between picture and text or product is sufficient for the Jury. Even when there is no connection, they do not consider it unproblematic when there are no problems with decency. Where traditional stereotypes are used, the Jury does not consider them sexist or problematic for the perpetuation of stereotypes contrary to the societal evolution, and rather finds them 'funny'. Next, the fact that women are used to praise products for women is not unjustified. Finally, often the jury just concludes that 'the advertisement is not sexist, indecent, humiliating or discriminating, it does not offend the dignity of women or does not perpetuate stereotypes', without explaining or defining what these terms mean.

When the Jury does find an advertisement problematic, that is not always because it is considered to be sexist or disputable from a gender perspective. Where they find a negative connotation that is not respectful vis à vis women, they connect it to the demonstration of good taste or the fact that it can hurt or shock consumers. Another main concern is that certain advertisements might create 'negative reactions of the public towards advertising'. Over the covered period, the Jury acknowledged only once, in 2006, that the image of men and women in advertising is 'part of the current affairs and social sensitivities in the current societal context'. Only in one case of 2007, the Jury literally says that the woman is instrumentalised, reduced to an object, and that therefore, her dignity is breached.

After 2008, the Jury acknowledges in a couple of cases that stereotypes are perpetuated that conflict with societal evolution or the position of women in current society, or that there is denigration against women. In only one case after 2008, they recognize that humor can lead to belittling of women.

While assessing specific cases, references to other similar cases or previous decisions are very rare. The Jury does not apply most of the aforementioned criteria of the working definition, and where they do so, they certainly do not do this in a systematic way. Overall, no references can be found to statutory provisions of Belgian law.

c) Reflection on the results

Since many cases were clearly potential cases of sexist advertising, the Jury had numerous occasions to denounce certain principles, but instead they decided not to formulate comments. Based on the criteria they use, it is impossible to conclude why which advertisements receive comments and others do not.

In general, there seems to be ample freedom for advertisers in the portrayal of women, as long as it is minimally related to the context of the promotion and there are no elements contrary to the general standards of dignity. The criteria used by the Jury are not fixed criteria and they are not defined. It is not clear how the term 'sexist' should be understood, what the 'the current societal evolution' represents, how the concept 'humor' is delineated and how the concept 'functionality' has to be applied. Not only do they not explain what they mean when they use these terms, they do seem to apply them in different ways to similar cases. There is no line in their judgments: cases with a lot of similarities are handled in a different way. There is clearly no consistency nor equality in the handling of the cases.

As Sheehan (2014, p. 91) suggests, "when looking at portrayals and imagery of men and women, it is important to examine a body of advertisements, not just one or two specific advertisements that have imagery that may be stereotypical or in other ways problematic. Stereotypes are created by the continual, extended exposure of consumers to patterns of imagery". By not working systematically, not referring to similar cases or previous decisions, the Jury denounces these principles. The Jury does not seem to be aware of the possible magnitude of the influence of advertising, nor of the potential effect of their decisions. The Jury could have a bigger deterrent effect by creating a stronger precedent-setting value. Certain principles, that are recognized only a handful of times, such as the negative power of humor or the fact that stereotypes can be harmful for women, seem to be forgotten or overlooked when they could be applied numerous times in other similar cases.

The judgments do not always take into account all the elements of the complaints, and certain aspects of the working definition are never applied. For example, the display of body parts and the concept of dismemberment are never addressed, although the Jury was confronted with some very clear examples of the usage of this concept. Other aspects of the working definition are used exceptionally, but not always in the right meaning. For example, product relevance seems to have another meaning for the Jury than the meaning it has in the working definition. The Jury always seems to find a useful link between the display of women and the selling of cars.

Explicit line-drawing is avoided in most cases, possibly because certain concepts are hard to measure or because of personalized interpretations of certain issues (Preston, 1997). Some elements are indeed hard to measure, but there are not even attempts to measure them. For example, the Jury accepts the fact that women are used for female products, without calling into question the beauty ideal, the fact that bodies are displayed in certain ways, or that only parts of the body are displayed.

The Jury does not seem to find it necessary to measure certain aspects of cases, even where they have 'rules' available in the Belgian Code on advertising and the ICC Code. Where these rules are applied, the jury members do not show their willingness to change certain thought patterns or to interpret certain guidelines in greater depth. The Jury refrains from referring to statutory Belgian law, although they clearly state in their regulations that it should be applied and the first principle of ethical behavior is respect of the law (Boddewyn, 1989).

With regard to the cases where they accept there is a problem, the Jury usually does not focus on the structural problem of sexism. Respect is for them more an aspect of good taste and decency than a matter of respect for the equality between the sexes. Their main concern is the reputation of the advertising industry itself, not the sexist nature of certain advertisements. They also seem to focus on the advertiser's intentions, rather than on the impressions of the complainants. The system should evolve more towards a "consumer-redress mechanism" (Boddewyn, 1989, p. 23) Moreover, there is a tendency to refer to prevailing public attitudes and values rather than to emerging or ideal ones (Boddewyn, 1991).

There is no visible improvement in the responses from the Jury to growing criticisms to the use of sex in advertising, and there is little improvement since the change in composition of 2008, while the inclusion of non-industry members (outsiders) is supposed to broaden the perspectives of self-regulatory bodies (Boddewyn, 1991). A lot of sexist – or women-unfriendly advertisements are overlooked.

While the goal of this research was not to recount advantages and disadvantages of advertising self-regulation, it is clear that the effectiveness of the Jury to ward off sexism from advertising is partly limited by the fact that it is a self-regulation mechanism: its scope is limited, its reach is incomplete and its methods are only partially effective. Dominant criticisms to self-regulation and soft-law (Boddewyn, 1989) apply in the Belgian case: the number of cases that is handled in proportion to the overall number of potentially problematic advertisements is very low, relatively little publicity is given to the Jury standards and decisions, many decisions come after the infringing advertisement has been discontinued and the penalties are very mild. Another problem is that in the Belgian case, although the Jury is in theory not the sole arbiter of norms and sanctions on advertising, in practice, it is the only used mechanism. There is need for implementation of other – existing and new – societal and statutory control mechanisms.

5. Conclusion

This study sought to determine whether the existing system of self-regulation is an effective and successful mechanism to ward off sexism from advertising. From the judgements of the Jury it is clear that they apply very vague rules and that they seem to hold on to them: they focus mainly on decency and do not really attempt to broaden the perspectives and definitions within the existing framework. There is a reluctance and hesitation to assume responsibilities in this field. Moreover, it remains underexposed that sexism in advertising is not an incidental, but a structural problem. Even though the existing system of self-regulation has a lot of lacks, it might still be the best medium, it is not clear whether government intervention is appropriate or even plausible. Law works best when supported by a broad consensus and the governments has to be willing to intervene. Further research might include an elaboration of the proposed working definition to be included in the ethical codes and an assessment of other possible options both in and out the traditional confines of law. A thorough evaluation of the complaints against the proposed working definition could reveal the sexist character of commercials in a relatively simple way. As shown abroad, it is possible to develop a system of clear criteria. It might not be 100% fool-proof, but at least it can be objective and controllable. It is important that this problem is taken seriously, while keeping in mind that images where sex plays a role are not wrong per se, but it is important to prevent explicitly sexist manifestations.

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Cher's music videos. Gender as a performative construction

Abstract

This paper aims at presenting the way Cherilyn Sarkisian's - "Cher"'s music videos are a powerful source in helping her question and deconstruct classical representations of gender, carrying a message of empowerment to women and other minorities and proving that Cher's performance has strong social and political connotations. Of particular interest are Cher's video clips of the songs *Believe*, *Strong Enough*, *Walking in Memphis*, and her performance of the song *Perfection* in *Extravaganza: Live at the Mirage* (the first live music video title by her). I will examine how these videos depict narratives in support of hybrid identities by studying her choices of wardrobes, the presence of Cher's impersonators by her side on stage, and the association of her image to that of a cyborg through the use of the auto-tune in a powerful carnivalistic transgression. Cher is able to deconstruct what Mikahil Bakhtin called the "classic body" and prove that gender is performative.

Keywords

Cher; gender performativity; postmodernism; postfeminism; music videos

1. Cherilyn Sarkisian - "Cher" and the history of immigration

A careful look at Cher's socio-cultural background as well as at the history of immigration in the United States (and its impact in the culture of the country) is crucial to understand how her music videos came to be strong advocates of gender as a performative construction.

Cher was born Cherilyn Sarkisian on May 20 1946 in California to an Armenian - American truck driver addicted to gambling and drugs and an American mother with, among others, Cherokee ancestry. They divorced when Cher was ten months old and her mother pursued a career in modeling and acting under the name of Georgia Holt while working as a waitress. The family often moved from place to place with little money. Cher frequently recalls her humble, unsettling origins during interviews.

Since very young Cher expressed fascination for film stars but she would not find many Hollywood actresses she could emulate. She comments that, as a child, her origins made her feel unattractive and untalented. Darker than her mother and half sister, she seems to have felt social discomfort related to her ethnic origins: most of the Hollywood actresses were by then the blonde type and she did not fit in. Napsha (2001, p. 22) cites Cher, "All I saw was Doris Day and Sandra Dee (...) In the Walt Disney cartoons, all the witches and evil queens were really dark. There was nobody I could look at and think, 'That's who I'm like'". Fifty years ago Cher belonged to a "no man's land" and as such, she was the type of woman who was easily unsettling to the national imaginary, even among the "melting pot" of the United States.

Dulles (1965) explores how the 19th century USA, with a predominantly white, protestant, Anglo-Saxon population with a puritan background, started facing the arrival of a new wave of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe who ended up threatening to eliminate the distance between the white and the black. These new immigrants, whom, says historian Matthew Frye Jacobson (1998), earned probationary white privileges, are considered to have contributed to the concept of leisure to a culture that was obsessed with work by developing "less dignified leisure activities", including films and vaudeville. Even so, such media do not directly reflect the experience of these ethnic groups: hiding ethnicity is the natural way to success in the American culture. One of the reasons for Cher to be such a relevant case study is precisely the fact that she did not conform to the rules of Hollywood and is, therefore, among the exceptions.

Winokur (1996) considers that the culture historians who came after Dulles and up to the 80's view the Anglo-puritan culture as the founding half of a binary system: in the other half lay all the other cultural influences. He asserts Althusser and Jameson, among others, study the disparity between history and its representation (or lack of it) by hegemonic groups interested in keeping an "official" history. Lipsitz (1998, p. 99), states, "Wild West shows, minstrel shows, Hollywood films, and commercial advertising have not merely reflected the racism that exists in social relations but have helped produce a unified white racial identity through the shared experience of spectatorship". The ethnic woman is even more marginalized since she fits neither into the category of white nor male.

During her adolescence, Cher realized her looks were usually associated with irreverence and started emulating the Hollywood exceptions she began identifying herself with. By the age of 16 Cher had moved to Los Angeles where she took acting classes and worked to support herself. That same year she met Sonny Bono who was working for record producer Phil Spector. In 1965, at his studios, she and Sonny recorded "I Got You Babe" and traveled to England to promote the single. There, due to their outrageous outfits, they were thrown out of the London Hilton and literally became famous overnight: the song topped the Billboard Hot 100 chart knocking *The Beatles* off. English teenagers began to emulate Sonny and Cher's bell-bottoms, stripped pants, industrial zippers and fur vests that made them look like Native Americans. Cher look-alikes emerged as far back as the late sixties. As referred by Negra (2001), Cher came out in the music world when the "noble" American aimed at identifying himself/herself with histories of oppression. Sonny and Cher, both with ethnic ancestry (Sonny's family was Italian), adopted a way of dressing that questioned the social role of the "outsider". In the 70's Cher, not suppressing her ethnic identity, reinforced her public image when she recorded songs such as *Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves* and *Half-Breed*. She would sing the first dressed as a gypsy and the second as a Native American in the corresponding music videos. In this decade, her solo career, as Morris (2013) states, expressed her uncertainty in what concerned her place in terms of race and class, culminating in a revival of the older Vegas and Hollywood styles: an ethnic exhibitionist transvestism. Negra (2001, p. 3) talks about the ethnic woman in Hollywood as often having been represented as "excessive, hypersexual, primitive, animalistic or exotic". A good example of such ethnic exhibition (although highly different from Cher's) is Carmen Miranda's. Sonny and Cher's marriage, though, was not going so well. When Cher turned 26 she was feeling "she abdicated to Sonny any involvement in her career (...) he was also controlling her personal life (...) she had obeyed him for years, she had never once defied him", says Taraborrelli (1986, p. 148). According to Negra (2001, p. 169), Cher's body was, by the time, presented as an idealized, governed body in agreement with the interests of a white patriarchy. Nevertheless, she considers that "Despite these kinds of maneuvers, Cher's career in the 1970's is often best remembered today for the sharp and unruly public put downs she regularly delivered to her husband". I argue that in spite of talking much less, Cher's words were sufficient to ridicule her husband and for her to come out as the smart woman "on top". I consider the show to play with the carnivalistic inversion of roles (the husband presented as the "fool" and the wife as "sharp", "witty"). Negra (2001, p. 169) mentions, as an example, a sketch from *The Sonny and Cher Show*, the Mannequin Scene, in which Cher and Farrah Fawcett are two mannequins "whose bodies are positioned and adjusted by male workers". I do not consider this scene can be viewed in such a manner since the lines of the male characters are the most ridiculous ones throughout the dialogues (these mannequins do talk to each other and therefore present a narrative of their own, much more coherent and rational than that of their counterparts). The target ends up being the chauvinistic male who treats women as objects. The scene, by deliberately using excess femininity, or femininity as masquerade[1], ridicules the "use" of women as objects of the "male gaze". By recognizing themselves as such objects, these women end up using, in disruptive and challenging ways, the spectacle invested in them as objects of that masculine gaze. The women are in fact presented as strong: the dialogue starts with Farrah Fawcett claiming she can stand staying on her feet for long because it is in her blood since her father was a cigar store Indian, associating strength and endurance with the outcast. In turn, the character played by Sonny makes fun of an homosexual uncle who would love the kind of clothes the "mannequins" are wearing. Ironically, the humans, the two "bozo maintenance men", are known to the "inhuman" mannequins as having horribly cold hands and when they stick a pin "where nobody will get hurt" (Farrah's behind), she does feel pain. The women's stories are linked with stories of other oppressed groups who have to be strong in order to survive. The men, in turn, are the dumb oppressors. As Docker (1994) states, television displays inversion that can be compared to the carnivalesque. When using excess femininity Cher is, as Butler puts it, appropriating the instruments culture offers and using them to work in the opposite direction. Butler (1999, p. 174) refers how Esther Newton in *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* suggests that "the structure of impersonation reveals one of the key fabricating mechanics through

[1] Mary Ann Doane (1991) considers femininity as masquerade is generally employed "to designate a mode of being for the other [...] the sheer objectification or reification of representation" which is, according to her, what happens in the case of Joan Riviere's patient (1929), since, when she masquerades, she "renounces her status as the subject of speech [...] and becomes the very image of femininity in order to compensate for her 'lapse' into subjectivity (i.e. masculinity in Riviere's analysis) and to track the male gaze" (p. 33). When studying the film *The Desire to Desire* Doane argues masquerade "makes visible" the artifice of femininity, that is, what is supposed to remain concealed, the gap between an impossible role and the women playing it. Nevertheless, says Rowe (1995), "she hesitates to evoke laughter, seeing it structured, like spectatorship, at women's expense" (p. 6). Rowe, in turn, argues that masquerade makes clichés both visible and positive within a subcultural group and that it can teach us about the construction of gender within repressive social and symbolic structures as well as how those structures might be changed.

which the social construction of gender takes place" and herself suggests that drag "fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity". She adds, "In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself" (Butler, 1999, p. 175). That said excess femininity does not reinforce a strong division of the sexes but precisely the opposite. Drag is, therefore, perceived as gender parody of the notion of an original and of political significance as inducer of laughter. Identities perceived as fluid suggests, as Butler (1999, p. 176) affirms, "an openness to resignification and recontextualization". In this scene, the image of Farrah Fawcett helps the message come across since, as Roberts (2003, p. 174) points out, her body is linked to ideals of female independence. He considers Fawcett a fantastic icon and sites Mary Rodger's opinion of them, in her book *Barbie Culture*: she claims they "exaggerate what is actual, possible or conceivable" and says "Fantastic icons are capable of realizing people's imagination and requirements". As one of Charlie's Angels in the series with the same name, that is just what Fawcett embodies. Roberts (2013, p. 86) goes on to say "Farrah, despite all of her connections to athleticism is emphatically feminine; her hair particularly represents the extension of femininity to nearly unattainable extremes". Her image has been recoded in camp and drag.

Cher's persona does not fit into the category of a fixed self but rather into that of a fluid one and as a result, right from its early years, Cher's career has been a product of the impact of the immigration that started in the nineteenth century in the culture of the United States. As a minority herself, her performance has been, more specifically, the result of an insurgence against discriminatory acts towards minorities. Consequently, in Cher's performance, race, class, and gender issues seem to get together in a fight for the rights of minorities. Carlson (2004, p. 276) considers that such appropriation is typical of the politics of postmodern performance. Her music videos embody the debates that Postmodernism, and more particularly Postfeminism, is known to bring about, specifically the fact that they question and ultimately deconstruct classical representations of gender.

2. Cher's music videos: proving gender performativity

Queer theories, aiming at challenging mainstream society and its heterosexism, emerged primarily thanks to AIDS related activism such as ACT UP, Queer Nation, and Lesbian Avengers during the 1980's and the early 1990's, as well as to the debates on race and class exclusions within feminism during the 1980's. As Genz and Brabon (2010, p. 124) state, "Foregrounding the politics of difference, queer theory disrupted binary configurations of the subject by advancing a destabilization of identity". Among them is Judith Butler's notion of gender as performativity. Butler (1999, p. 25), defining the concept says, "Gender is always a doing" a "performance that relies on a certain practice of repetition". She argues, gender is nothing but "a stylised reiteration of conventions that eventually become naturalised and consolidated" (Genz & Brabon, 2010, p. 125) and consequently, as Butler (1993b, p. 313) also puts it "all gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation", an "imitation for which there is no original". Instead, there is the idea of an imaginary or fantasized original. This parodic imitation, Genz and Brabon (2010, p. 126) claim, is "an involuntary and imposed production within a culturally restricted space (...) put on as a compulsory performance (...) in line with heterosexual conventions". In this line of thought, femininity is, as Butler (1993a, p. 232) puts it " (...) the forcible citation of a norm". Butler aims at disrupting the acts of citation that the performativity of gender consists of and considers that drag acts as a subversive practice that challenges gender identity since "in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself" (Butler, 1993a, p. 402). Butler (1988, p. 42), says, " (...) if the ground of gender is the stylised repetition of acts through time, (...) then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating". Drag proves that sort of repeating is possible and, therefore, that performativity can simultaneously be theorized in terms of subversion that empowers the subject. Engaging in gender parody, Cher's music videos erode the foundations of standard representations of gender and illustrate such a possibility.

2.1. Playing with make believe

> "Got to go back & polish my Cher impersonation."
> (Cher)

Both gay men and divas share experiences of oppression and insecurity, which brings them close to each other. The fact that the latter are ultimately associated with success stories makes every gay man aspire at being able to do the same. For instance, every time Cher "officially" attains recognition, as it was the case of her winning the Oscar for best actress in the film *Moonstruck*, she wins over stigmatized origins and her diva worship is reinforced. Says Kort (2012) about divas, "They have a hardened, sometimes aggressively feminine side" but "they are almost as hyperfeminine as drag queens" (and he goes on to mention Cher's heavily beaded gowns and overly glittering eye shadow). In 1997 Cher was a guest at *The RuPaul Show*[2] and during the interview RuPaul proffered he loves the fact Cher did the *The Sonny and Cher Show* (with ex-husband Sonny Bono) while she was pregnant with (then husband) Gregory Allman's child, and about to divorce him, plus the fact that she never used to wear dresses as a teenager (she put one on when she went to see the pope). He said, "From that day on I was like, she rocks, she is cool, I am with her forever and that's how it's been. I am Cher. No, she is Cher but I live for Cher. It's the truth" (and Cher laughs). He asks her how the world would be like if it were a woman's world (because of the album *It's a Man's World*). She basically claims there would be more love. And they talk about how she has been doing well in this "Man's World". Cher says,

> I am really glad I'm a woman because I can wear pants and a dress, so can you. It's not my way to be really a bitch but oh, can I, when I want, you know, when I have too, it's all there, I can really be tough. I have to be pushed to be tough. I can be both things and that's why I think it's nice to be a woman. You have this side that is fully developed and then you have to develop the other side.

RuPaul replies, "I think that's why a lot of your fans, specially gay fans really signature with you. Because of the duality. You are as soft as a petal on a flower but at the same time you kick ass". Cher's huge gay fan base understands better than anyone else the fact that she is an advocate of the intertextual body that rewrites itself and that she defends construction in performance.

Both in her performance of the song *Perfection* in the 1992 *Las Vegas Show Extravaganza: Live at the Mirage* (Cher's first live music video title)[3] and in the video of the song *Walking in Memphis*, Cher embraces the concept of replica[4]. The first starts with a female impersonator on stage, making

[2] RuPaul is an American actor, drag queen, model, author, and recording artist.

[3] The video includes footage from her two Heart of Stone specials filmed at Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas.

[4] In his famous essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* Walter Benjamin presents the replica, a reproduction of an original piece of art, as opposed to the original work. The first can never possess what he calls the aura but it is of major significance since when the aura is lost singular authority is also lost and an aesthetic interpretation of the reproducible image is allowed. Cher is comfortable with "replicas" of herself since she knows that her inner self, her aura, is not what she reveals. Therefore, these replicas are depicting the images of the Cher she plays but politically they are highly relevant since they precisely point to the fact that we are always performing a certain identity.

the viewers believe for a while that they are in her presence. Then, the two perform together. The lyrics of the song claim the importance of love over the fight for perfection and speak about the burden society places on the individual, demanding that she/he be perfect, specially on those that are à priori labeled as "imperfect": you are supposed to "(...) be the best, *prove them wrong* (...)".. The subject realizes perfection is worthless if one is incapable of loving/be loved. The song definitely talks about the life of famous people and Cher seems to be specifically talking about herself. She presents herself as someone who is idolized, as a semi-god, yet she understands that is not all. Unlike Mary Shelley's symbol of the Enlightenment (Frankenstein) who ends up lonely because he was unable to love imperfection, Cher embraces these replicas of herself. Cher is telling the large community of her fans that perfection is worth nothing if you disregard the importance of love. As Negra (2001, p. 175) claims, "(...) Cher herself calls upon the images of the multiple Cher, the constructed Cher (...). In authorizing her own quotation, Cher acknowledges herself as fictionalized production, and proffers to her audience a pleasurable plurality". In an interview on the *Early Show* Cher says she was born to *play* herself. They talk about her role in the film *Stuck on You* (a cameo) and she explains she does not identify herself with the character and would never expose her inner self. When the interviewer tells her how great she is, she thanks and says it took her only four hours (to achieve that look).

In Cher's *Do you Believe?* (1999) tour, when introducing the song *Walking in Memphis*, she talks about its video, which is displaying on the giant screen and says, "I made this really cool video where I got to play Elvis, I actually didn't play Elvis; I was Elvis (...) I want to warn you gay guys, don't fall in love with me because I am a really cute guy". Just as the transvestite RuPaul "considers himself Cher", Cher also has no problem in "considering herself Elvis": you have to thank the power of representation to perform gender that allows for the instability of the subject.

The video starts with Cher (dressed as Elvis) arriving by bus in Memphis. A black and white setting takes the viewer to what seems to be Tennessee in the 1950's in a flashback of Cher who is singing sat on the steps of a bus in modern day clothes. She checks in at *Pink Hotel* and displays a poster of Elvis on the bedroom wall. She eventually goes on to sing at a local bar and the video ends with her leaving Memphis by bus. Knopper (2011) mentions how Marc Cohn, the writer of the lyrics and the first to record the song, considers it to be about a kind of spiritual awakening, about a trip where you are different when you leave. He also thinks that it shows his acceptance of everybody in terms of what they believe as well as it defines his conflicting feelings about religion.

Cher's version of the lyrics replaces lines such as "but I'm as blue as a boy can be" with "but I'm as blue as a girl can be", Muriel with Gabriel, "they brought me down to see her" with "they brought me down to see him", "she said: tell me, are you a Christian?" with "he said: tell me, are you a Christian?" and "ma'am, I am tonight" with "man, I am tonight", reversing the acting subject in regard to gender. Interestingly, the song talks about the arrival of a white woman/man in "the land of the Delta Blues" asking W.C. Handy not to "look down over" her/him because she/he is a wealthy person ("got a first class ticket") but, nevertheless, "as blue as a girl/boy can be". Cohn built a bridge between different races and social strata and Cher added the gender issue when she chose to simultaneously make this change and appear dressed up as Elvis, making the song extremely appealing to her gay fan community. The woman in Cher's version (or present day wealthy Cher) is empathizing with the poor black community of Memphis as well as with the gay/transvestite one. And when you are able to "travel" in this manner, just like Elvis and Cher did/does, you raise hope in those that feel the need to cross boundaries - and they turn into believers: "When you haven't got a prayer/But girl/boy you've got a prayer in Memphis (...) Tell me are you are a Christian child?/And I said/Man I am tonight!!"

Cher's version of the song was used in the final scene of *The X-Files* episode *The Postmodern Prometheus*. In this episode Mulder and Scully investigate reports of a mysterious creature (labeled The Great Mutato) having impregnated a middle-aged woman. They find that this "monster" is the genetic creation of a Frankenstein-like doctor. The Great Mutato watches Cher in the 1985 movie *Mask*, and derives comfort from the loving relationship between her character and her son, who has a disfiguring genetic bone disorder. At first he is ostracized but later accepted by his community. At the end of the episode, Mulder and Scully take him to a Cher's concert, where she picks him out of the crowd to dance while she is performing *Walking in Memphis*.

Garber (1992) claims how Elvis's performances used to cause a double scandal: his music was considered too black and his image was effeminate. Wearing eyeshadow he used to mimic Little Richard, impersonating who was, in turn, a female impersonator. His move was read as a cross move in gender terms. Cher, playing Elvis, is playing a man (Elvis) who crossed dressed as a woman because he played a man (Little Richard) who played a woman (because, as above mentioned, he was a female impersonator). Elvis's performance ended up disrupting race and gender and so does Cher's. When she is singing, "I saw the ghost of Elvis", the video displays the face of a black young man, not Elvis's. Garber (1992, p. 10), talking about the politics of transvestism asserts that clothes not only construct but also deconstruct gender and gender differences and claims, referring to Susan Gubar, that for her "the 'third-sex' turns out to be largely a way of securing power for modernist *women*". The lyrics mention the ghost of Elvis roaming Graceland, which alludes to his immortality. Cher is herself associated to this image due to the longevity of her career: she has been called the "Eternal Phoenix" given her capability of reinventing herself during the last five decades and, therefore, of being the perfect example of the subject permanently "under construction".

2.1.1 Cher and the cyborg

Representative work such as that of Donna Haraway on the figure of the cyborg sheds light on the effects of technology on gender and identity and more specifically on the relationship between the cyborg and feminism. Haraway (1991, p. 14) states there is "nothing about being 'female' that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as 'being' female (...)", pointing to its constructiveness. For Haraway (1991, p. 33), cyborg writing is about

> the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other (...) Feminist cyborg stories have the task of recoding communication and intelligence to subvert command and control.

Haraway is criticizing Enlightenment ideas when she ponders how women have historically been set aside from the technological world. Genz and Brabon (2010, p. 147), talking about the postfeminist cyborg of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, consider that

> (...) cyberspace becomes a location where the distinction between the subject and the object, the self and the other, dissolves" and where the Cartesian dualism of the subject is therefore transcended. The politics of the cyborg claim there is not such thing as "one code that translates all meaning perfectly. (Genz & Brabon, 2010, p. 148)

Furthermore, they consider that by blending sexuality with assertiveness as well as hyperfeminine characteristics with 'tough-girl' strength, the female cyborg is able to "transcend the patriarchal limits of 'female identity/femininity" (Genz & Brabon, 2010, p. 150). The paradoxical and sometimes conflicting ideas of the cyborg are very similar to the characteristics of the postfeminism woman since she seems to conform to patriarchy but is in fact reworking it behind a mask of excess femininity, which is frequently attained by cosmetic surgery.

I consider that in the music video of *Believe* Cher raises the issue of gender trouble when she chooses to present herself as a cyborg. Cher's image is, throughout the video, interchangeably linked to that of the cyborg (which in turn contains both the image of the human and that of the machine), the human female, and Jesus.

The lyrics of Cher's 1998 hit *Believe* are about the personal empowerment and self-sufficiency of a girl after a painful break-up. The video starts with a blurry blue image coming out of a black screen – an apparition seems eminent. And then comes Cher, "out of the blue", dressed in a white suit (which gives her a somewhat androgynous appearance) with a headdress that may surreptitiously evoke Jesus's crown of thorns. She is inside some sort of glass cage with her arms half open, a position that is similar to Jesus's symbolic image of welcoming and acceptance, and her eyes are closed. A car with young people arrives. They exit the car, approach her and touch the glass cage: Cher's eyes glow and her hands assume a praying position. As she sings these fans idolize her. Carlsson (1999) points out; a spiritual journey seems to start.

The story of a young couple among Cher's admirers is told as the viewer follows the girl's story (she seems to be recollecting memories of the day she saw him with another girl). Now Cher is presented as human – she is singing and dancing on the stage of a club while the young man and the woman dance to her music. The rejected girl leaves the club and climbs the stairs to the top of the building. She seems to be considering jumping out of it as she sees the couple leaving down below. But Cher intervenes. She once again places her hands in a praying position and then signals the girl to be quite: then Cher shows up behind the girl, the girl takes her place and then walks away. Cher stays in her place and the spiritual journey reaches the end.

The Cher/Cyborg image is linked to that of Jesus and, by displaying herself this way, she is demystifying him and thereby proclaiming the devaluation of the Benjaminian "aura" of the object. Furthermore, she is not only saying this "subject" can be reproduced, she is saying his powers can be "performed" by another "subject". And this subject is an unruly, "gender troubled" one. She is claiming the power of a divine entity can be found in the hybrid campy cyborg. That is how she empowers the "marginal" (herself as well as her followers). Carlsson (1999), commenting on the video, views Cher as an electronic shaman, a modern sorceress using the electronic magic of visual special effects.

Cher's visual representation is consubstantiated by the audio processor auto-tune, which alters Cher's vocals and was used in this song as a deliberate special effect for the first time. From then on the effect became known as the "Cher Effect". Referring to the technique, Dickinson (2001, pp. 334-335) calls it "vocoder"[5], and considers "this sucking of the human voice backwards into the less nuanced scale types of the computer's tone bank gives it a certain cyborg feel" and wonders, " (...) what happens, then, when these two concepts (human and android) overrun each other?". Cher, with a campy performance, is engaging in gender parody and raising questions of authenticity. Dickinson (2001, p. 336) considers the body to be "a fluctuating cultural factor" that is woven from and attracts certain politics that are inevitably present in popular music and its discourse. Performing with these technologies, Dickinson reflects, empowers the performer, as I have mentioned, and also those consuming them (the latter being presented by the strength the girl acquires to move on with her life). What you can look for in religion, it seems, you can look for in a diva (to give you the strength to overcome adversity). Says Darcey Steinke, author of *Sister Golden Hair,* whose main character is obsessed with Cher,

> I think the idea of the Goddesses never really goes away, whether its Cher or some writer I love ... I think she is a goddess actually. It's important to worship; when you worship God or a good life-giving presence, energy comes back to you, so that feels really good. But if you worship a crappy idol ... I feel that draws energy off you.

In this case, Cher's natural voice is impaired by the autotune effect, which takes her further away from traditional associations of women with "naturalness" as opposed to that of men with science. The whole association makes Cher an agent who questions these assumptions[6]. Cher seems

[5] Not vocoder but auto-tune was used in *Believe*. While vocoder is an analysis and synthesis system used to reproduce human speech, auto-tune is an audio processor, which uses a proprietary device to measure and alter pitch in music recording performances. The latter was originally intended to disguise or correct off-key inaccuracies.

[6] Yet, she is interestingly not the scientific subject of the Enlightenment depicted in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*; or the *Modern Prometheus*. Instead, she is, as Chris Carter put it in the episode of *The X-Files* he dedicated to Cher – *The Postmodern Prometheus* –, precisely that, a Postmodern Prometheus. She is a "guilt-free" Prometheus because when she creates "monsters" she does not discard them as imperfections; she loves them unconditionally, which places her on the side of the half-breed.

to be able to combine sensibility with rationality. Performances such as these benefit a feminist politics of representation. In 2000 Madonna obtained similar results recording the song *Music*.

In the video of the song *Strong Enough* Cher is equally presented as a cyborg when she comes alive on the monitor of a man as he starts building a screensaver to the sound of thunder. The campy images of the people transfixed by her appearance on the screen report to Cher's capabilities to empower minorities in general.

3. Cher: of vampires, typhoid mary and the trojan horse in the *Dressed to Kill Tour*

> "The warriors possess the open mouths and the powerful song of the Sirens."
> (Catherine Burke)

Susan Sontag, in her essay *Notes on Camp,* defines "camp" as a sensibility that reveals not in content but in artifice, stylization, theatricalization, irony, playfulness, and exaggeration. She writes, "Camp sensibility is disengaged, depoliticized – or at least apolitical". However, some postmodernists, feminists, and queer theorists have explored the ways that camp, namely the drag show, can trouble the belief that gender is "natural" or inherent and can, therefore, work against heteronormativity. Sontag's theory has been discredited, namely by Judith Butler, Judith Halberstam and Pamela Robertson. Butler (1999) interprets the aesthetics of drag camp as a performative critique of gender. When queer influenced camp exaggerates sexual characteristics and certain mannerisms, it can be said it presents behavior as performative. Halberstam (1998, p. 246) considers gay culture crucial to any discussion of camp because masculinity is perceived as natural, it is "unadorned and unperformed": males performing femininity subvert these "authentic" aesthetics through camp. Pamela Robertson (1996) argues that camp icons such as Madonna and Mae West can and should use pop culture as a political and critical instrument in the deconstruction of masculinity and femininity. That is what Cher does. Through identification with these icons women also take a leap and escape the bounds of reductive views of femininity. Cher becomes the object of gay male gaze when she blurs the lines between artifice and naturalness. By performing excessive gender in a kind of female-female drag she incites a large gay following, camping, and dragging of her. She is, therefore, not objectified the way women are when objects of the heterosexual male gaze. Her image works to empower minorities.

Cleto (1999, p. 5) defines excess as "the engine of critical reflection" of camp and Babuscio (1990, p. 123) claims "Camp, by focusing on the outward appearances of role, implies that roles, and in particular, sex roles, are superficial - a matter of style". Camp means the parodic embracing and recycling of what is rejected or abjected by mainstream culture. Camp refutes fixed meanings and refers, according to Cleto (1999, p. 10), "to a quality of the object not existing prior to its nomination". In Cleto (1999, p. 11) camp is said to take " ... pleasure in 'perverting' all 'original' intention, deviating it toward unpredicted, and often undesired-ends: in short, demystifying the 'myth' of authentic origins".

In the *Dressed to Kill Tour* several of the songs Cher performs are from her most recent album *Closer to the Truth* (2013). By itself, the name of the tour appeals to those who feel they were born trapped in the wrong body: *Dressed to Kill* is the title of the 1980 erotic thriller by Brian De Palma, in which a psychiatrist, although trapped in a man's body, struggled with a "male" side that would not allow him to go through with a sex operation. Nevertheless, when a woman sexually aroused him, "Bobbie", the female side of his personality, would feel threatened. *Dressed to Kill* is also the title of the song Cher performs dressed as a vampire and surrounded by a gothic, burning red setting. Before her performance, a film is shown in which a coffin is opened by two women: Cher is inside, eyes closed and arms crossed. Then she opens her eyes and out she comes. She sits on a thrown and is decrowned. Eventually, she laughs sinisterly, showing her vampire fangs. The lyrics of the song is about a woman who is able to "put a spell" on any man she wants and during the performance she keeps walking towards a male dancer as he submissively walks backwards and lies at her feet. Ultimately, he offers her his neck and she "bites" him: sexual stereotyping is transgressed as, as Sceats (2001, p. 118) states, "conventions of activity and passivity are overthrown": the woman becomes the penetrator and the man the passive recipient. Says Creed (1993, p. 61)

> In my view, the female vampire is monstrous – and also attractive – precisely because she does threaten to undermine the formal and highly symbolic relations of men and women essential to the continuation of patriarchal society.

Due to her constant reinventions, it seems that Cher will never "die" and, in that respect, her image and that of the vampire both represent the "Eternal Other". As Sceats (2001, p. 107) puts it:

> whatever they [vampires] are, it is positively Other (...) Being 'undead' involves an indeterminate permanently ambiguous metaphysical condition that resonates with questions about embodiment and definition, about life, death, and immortality (...) their ambiguity is manifest, their essence contradictory: they confuse the roles of victim and predator.

While Victorian vampirism, she says,

> provided a powerful vehicle for the expression of anxieties about unbridled sexuality (especially women's) (...) more recently it has been seen and used as a vehicle for the expression of homosexual desire and gay culture. (Sceats, 2001, p. 108)

According to Dryer (1988), heterosexual vampirism may connote a gay culture in the sense that the condition is beyond the individual's control and there is tension between "going public" and living a "double life". The fact that a vampire's victim becomes himself/herself a vampire makes vampirism a "contagious disease", an activity that may lead to a plague.

On its June 26 2014 issue the Canadian Calgary Herald published an article about Cher's performance during her ongoing *Dressed to Kill* tour at the Scotiabank Saddledome. The article claims Cher to be "The one source who has and will outlast, outreinvent, outshine, outcostume change, out personality, out fun and (...) out entertain both acts" and goes on to label her the Typhoid Mary of the contemporary, dramatic diva moment. Herself heterosexual, Cher, just like Mary Mallon, plays the role of the healthy carrier who becomes a social threat. They are two ethnic women from a low class background responsible for spreading a social "plague" that, in Cher's case, culminates in an impressive number of gay fans. To perform *Take it Like a Man* during the tour, Cher comes on stage inside a Trojan Horse pulled by men warriors. In her essay with the same name, Monique Wittig, interrogating a male perspective of the patriarchal epic, uses the Trojan Horse as a metaphor for works that subvert patriarchal norms, conventional modes of thought that bring women back into the history they had been denied. Cher, as she did with *Dressed to Kill*, turns to myth to represent and free the marginal gay from oppression, encouraging him to "take it *like* a man". The lyrics, saying, "sometimes it feels; like we've got everything to prove; we make believe; But we rise again to face the truth" is evoking the difficulty gay men face to "come out": they try to pretend they fit into normativity but reality strikes their inner self. She revises it, in that presenting herself as a war machine siren (campily sings dressed as a warrior among other warriors, the male ones seem to be constantly drawn to her and she systematically "forces" them to keep a distance), she does a feminist reworking of the myth. With a successful career that spans 5 decades, she is a successful warrior that has been able to battle strategically, penetrate enemy lines, and cross borders. One can only expectantly wait for the music videos that will be released for these songs and that inspired me to write this section of the chapter. In the meantime, the controversial Conchita Wurst, winner of the Eurovision 2014 with the song *Rise Like a Phoenix*, has chosen to perform Cher's *Believe* in numerous occasions, associating her image to that of Cher, to that of "a Phoenix".

4. Conclusion

In her music videos Cher frequently plays with gender parody and becomes an advocate of Judith Butler's notion of gender as performativity. Cher assumes there is not such a thing as a pure original identity, which parodic identities imitate, but rather, she parodies the very notion of an original in her performances by claiming she is no original herself. The effect is obtained in videos such as those of the songs *Perfection* and *Walking in Memphis* by playing with excessive drag and camp and by alluding to the figure of the cyborg in *Believe* and *Strong Enough*. When it comes to more recent performances, such as those of the songs *Take it Like a Man* and *Dressed to Kill* one is presented with the symbolism of the Trojan Horse and that of the vampire to work in a similar manner. Such performances reflect the manner in which way the society she grew up in viewed the "hybrid" off-white immigrant and how that view strongly impacted her career and, in turn, they are helping reverse, by way of rewriting, such preconceptions. Evidence of the latter is the number of Cher's steady fans throughout her long career.

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III. Gender and News

Silveirinha, M. J. (2016). Sensitive to others: emotions, care and gender in the construction of news. In C. Cerqueira; R. Cabecinhas & S. I. Magalhães (Eds.), *Gender in focus: (new) trends in media* (pp. 125-140). Braga: CECS.

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Sensitive to others: emotions, care and gender in the construction of news

Abstract

In media, as well as in broader society, the focus on emotions is usually associated with women and it seems to be at odds with other prevailing believes on the value of detachment and reason as key to an ethical public sphere that informs rational citizens. Yet, emotions have always been an important part of news narratives. In our paper, we seek to untangle reason and emotion in the production of news as we recall the historical and contemporary gender dimension of its production. Also, looking into the pragmatic challenge to dispassionate ethics we argue that one way of discerning on what makes ethical and compelling news is not necessarily the separation of these two dimensions, but the inclusion of the insights from a feminist ethics of care.

Keywords

Gender, news, emotion, pragmatism, ethics of care

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1. Introduction

In a back edition of a newspaper we read the following news piece:

> The son had just got married and was still celebrating his wedding when he was informed of the death of his mother. He ran home, but his father had already fatally stabbed the wife, age 46, presumably after a jealous rage (...). That was the tragic end to the marriage day celebration of the only child of the couple (...). The suspect, in his 50s, publically consummated the fatal assault, allegedly because he suspected that his wife, who had left him a month ago, betrayed him[1].

[1] Diário de Noticias, 29th August, 2011, online edition. The headline read: "Tragedy. Killed his wife on the same day his son got married" (Tragédia. Matou a mulher no dia em que o filho se casou).

As we read this story, we cannot help feeling touched by the young man's tragic feelings on learning of his mother's murder by his father on his wedding day. We might even feel the father's desperation and jealousy about his wife's alleged affairs, leading him to a "crime of passion". More than simply informing us of (some) the facts of an occurring tragedy, the story details directly speaks to our emotions. In that respect, it is in line with many other news accounts which also obsessively portray and appeal to our emotions.

But did our news story speak to the reporter's own emotions this being the reason why he framed it as such? We cannot know. All we know is this: at some point, someone made the decision that the story made sense from a rational journalistic point of view. And this may have been justified as follows: it was factual, it was unusual in many respects, it involved murder, it was part of the day's occurrences – it was, in other words, an occurrence "fit to print". But in deciding this, the journalist also chose to frame the story not from an angle that focused on the murder of a wife but from the viewpoint of the different emotional states of the victim's living relatives. Here then, we have both emotions and rational decisions conflating in the production of this news narrative. Furthermore, when we analyze it from this viewpoint, a gender issue comes to the fore, as we will later argue.

Starting from this news as an example of the kind of narrative that fills our information sphere, we try to untangle reason and emotion in the production of news and we argue that one way of discerning on what makes an ethical and compelling news piece is not necessarily the separation of these two dimensions, but the inclusion of the insights from an ethics of care.

2. Emotion at the service of news

Crimes, tragedies, natural and manmade disasters and other catastrophes are good subjects for news stories in that they provide human interest and crucial drama which, when incorporated into the narrative, make them particularly attractive and popular. Indeed we may also look at our news story from a news genre perspective, recognizing in it features of the so-called "human interest story". Writing in 1940, Helen McGill Hughes (1981) noted that human interest stories have a 'perennial' interest for the readers. She never actually gave a formal definition of the term, but she referred to stories having a "human angle" which appealed to "the city demos". Hughes, quoting Hearst, noted that they may be considered interesting news in that they attract the mass public as opposed to "the merely important" addressed to small publics (Hughes, 1942). Human interest stories revolve around mostly private issues such as family, marriage, death and other matters that are familiar to the readers' experience and emotions.

That may have been one of the reasons that explains the gender dimension the human" story angle as part of its historical roots which Hughes refers to when investigation these kinds of stories. Indeed, starting in the 1880s, attracting female readers was increasingly important to newspaper advertisers. Editors aimed to appeal to those who wanted to read women's news and newspapers hired women to write lighter news, with an human interest angle: "Even when women did write about politics or social issues, they were encouraged to focus on how events affected people in their everyday lives and to provoke an emotional response from readers, presumably women readers" (Chambers, Steiner & Fleming, 2004). What presupposed this gendered construction of the news was an essentialist view of womanhood that largely corresponds to the prevailing emotion stereotype: women are emotional, man are not. However, what then as today, was at stake as not so much the equation of women with emotion but the gendered power to establish it as the reverse side of men's reason.

The historical gender dimension of the production of news also found its way into contemporary journalism. As Chambers et. al (2004) remind us, during the 1990s female columnists borrowed styles and themes from women's magazine and feature genres, producing confessional stories. As strategic forms of engaging audiences, they rested on bodily understandings of the citizen reader that were in many ways contrary to the enlightened and rational appeal made to those who needed to be properly informed for their rational decision-making processes. Thus, the value of emotions and their gendered dimensions became subject to dispute not only to news critics but also "a serious dilemma for women journalists who have been praised precisely for playing a central role or, as some argue, even leading the way, in changing news agendas and styles and modes of documenting events by 'humanizing' the news" (Chambers et al., 2004, p. 193).

Both in historical and present times, human interest stories have captured ordinary people's experiences and in focusing on the private, they resonated with readers' experiences and understandings of the world and thus they gained a public character:

> by relating occurrences in terms of private feeling, the reporter takes them [the readers] out of the busy realm of affairs. He diverts attention from practical implications, and the reader digests and appreciates the event as someone's

> experience, and the story of it as an end in itself, written for his entertainment like the little human-interest stories. Yet the process is never quite complete; since the happening concerns named persons and places and is recognized as having actually occurred, many readers will take it seriously. (Hughes, 1942, p. 15)

Discussing Hughes's work, Daniel Kaplan also stresses her belief in the function of human interest stories through which ''readers can learn about others like themselves and feel some sympathy and solidarity with others in an otherwise impersonal, disinterested world'' (Kaplan, 1981, p. xiii). Likewise, in a review of the literatures on the genre, Judy Polumbaum reminds us that Hughes portrayed human interest in journalism primarily as a distraction from matters of public consequence but "other analysts regard human interest as a double-edged sword that can either dilute or strengthen attention to consequential issues" and that at "its best, however, human interest journalism can generate awareness of important social issues and problems, bring valuable new voices into crucial public debates, and promote popular involvement in civic affairs (Polumbaum, 2009, pp. 731-732).

This argument is not very different from what some research indicates when considering other closely associated terms such as "tabloidization". Indeed as Colin Sparks (2000) noted, although researching mostly the origins of the mass press, Helen McGill Hughes anticipated the contemporary debate about the so-called "tabloid journalism".

Tragedy, as we have seen, is a rich element of the social fabric that provides constant occasions to produce human interest narratives. It also the perfect motive to captivate media audiences, namely by seeking out their voyeuristic interests and establishing prolonged or episodic emotional states of feelings such as chock, pity or disbelief. In doing this, new media follow the trend of many other media products which base their appeal in emotions and the pleasures gained from mediated experience of witnessing personal experiences. This is not just the case of the confessional talk "shows or the ever" surprising reality shows on TV but also of the many social media that require the voluntary revelation of intimate experiences and feelings, as well as the different manifestations of the trend towards the personalization of politics and social life. "Tabloidization", Sparks (2000) argues, has extended from its historical format of human story narratives of popular press to become part of the larger processes that are changing the more serious media towards approaching the popular formats.

Indeed, recalling our introductory news piece published in a "quality paper", we may establish its mainly episodic and private character as differing considerably from the detached and "objective" style of news. Also, the issue of domestic violence is "buried" down in the narrative, as emotions surface and become the main frame. Thus, as a narrative that seeks "to stimulate senses and arouse curiosity, interest or emotional response in viewers" (Grabe, Zhou & Barnett, 2001) it could be sided with a "sensationalist" or "tabloid style" piece of news that opposes the most serious and "important" news[2]. Indeed, many would argue that this kind of focus on story attributes aimed at triggering emotional responses in audiences is a deliberate strategy to capture higher audience shares which is simply explained by the political economy of the media and has little to do with the seriousness of social and political life.

However, others would say that these narratives are important as they become personally important and in doing so, they can promote better audience engagement. Uribe and Gunter (2007, p. 222), for example, argue that "(these) features in news may not only be a response to external market pressures but could also be related to a motivation on the part of news professionals to produce more engaging coverage of those issues that are relevant for the public debate" (see also for example Costera Meijer, 2001; Langer, 1998; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008).

Before we move to what underlines this dilemma and suggest possible ways to move beyond it, we should consider the issue of emotions themselves.

3. Emotions in (gendered) social life

In media, as well as in broader society, the focus on emotions seems to be at odds with other prevailing believes on the value of detachment and reason as key to an ethical public sphere that informs rational citizens. As Deborah Lupton (1998, p. 3) explains,

> because the emotions are viewed as embodied sensations, they are considered to be the antithesis of reason and rationality. From this perspective, the emotions are impediments to proper (considered) judgment and intellectual activity. Emotional expression has also traditionally been associated with 'uncivilized' behavior, with vulgarity and the lower orders.

[2] Indeed, as Elisabeth Bird has put it, "Tabloid style has come to be understood as a particular kind of formulaic, colorful narrative related to, but usually perceived as distinct from standard, "objective" styles of journalism. The tabloid style is consistently seen by critics as inferior, appealing to base instincts and public demand for sensationalism" (Bird, 2009, p. 49).

Philosophers have long debated the question. For David Hume, for instance, passions are immediate results of life, part of the direct manifestations of living human beings. We have to shift the ethical world of rationality to the realm of emotions. The reason by itself is unable to move to man. It can establish how needs can be fulfilled but cannot move people to action: only passions can set the will in motion. Reason is altogether dependent on pre "existing emotions that furnish motivational force. "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions" (Hume, 1978 [1739], p. 415) is David Hume's fundamental claim against the ideas that practical reason alone cannot give rise to moral motivation. His understanding of passions included some benign ones such as sympathy, which is involved in moral assessment. Our moral judgments are best understood as results of sentiment or feeling, acquired when we take up a "common point of view" (Cohon, 2008) and this common point of view involves sympathy (as distinct from pity). He argued that "no quality of human nature is more remarkable, both on itself and its consequences, than the propensity we have to sympathize with others and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own" (Hume, 1978 [1739], p. 316). Through sympathy men are able to go beyond their own emotions[3].

Kant, on the other hand, criticizes Hume's view that reason cannot ground the will and can only guide it by serving passion. Instead, he grounds morality in practical reason and he sees duty, independently of emotion, as morally binding all rational agents to act.

The same dichotomy of emotion and cognition which, as we saw, stretches back to conceptions of 'Enlightenment modernity' is also the basis of the historical links between emotions and gender. Aristotle, for instance, said that "Woman is more compassionate than man, more easily moved to tears. At the same time she is more jealous, more quarrelsome, more apt to scold and to strike. She is, furthermore, more prone to despondency and less hopeful than men (...) more void of shame or self" respect, more false of speech, more deceptive and of more retentive memory" (cited in Brownmiller, 1984, pp. 207-208). This portrayal of women as lead by emotions continued into the early modern world and later took many

[3] More recently Michael Slote (2007) followed the insights of moral sentimentalists such as David Hume and emphasised that empathy, in particular, is central to in his consideration of moral issues which he views in terms of emotionally involved caring and connection to others. Moreover, "the notion of empathy helps us to integrate both autonomy and respect for autonomy into a comprehensive ethics of care" (Slote, 2007, p. 67).

other forms within family or public life. Simone de Beauvoir would show how this ancient *dualism* between *mind* and *body* was mapped onto the division of the sexes in a way that defined women as "The Other" to men. Men were defined as rational actors and women as closer to nature and inherently emotional, thus requiring control. Indeed, the dichotomy that constructs women as emotional and men as rational is a hierarchy that insists that reason should govern emotion and the "logical" conclusion from this is that men are supposed to govern women. Since de Beauvoir groundbreaking work, other feminists would work to show the cultural natural of construction of the idea of 'emotion' itself as tied to essentialist notions of womanhood (Lutz, 1996).

In the social sciences, sociology was late in in recognizing how important emotions are in understanding the social world (Stets & Turner, 2007). It was not before the mid- 1970s that sociological writing stated focusing upon emotions, namely in the work of Theodore D. Kemper (1978) and others such as C. Wright Mills, George Homans, Richard Sennett and Alvin Gouldner. This tied up to (or helped to shape) the broader move to challenge the dichotomy between reason and emotion and increasingly philosophers, neuroscientists and psychologists have pointed out that emotions are not only crucial to social life (Barbalet, 2002) but play an extremely important role in decision-making. And in recent years, emotions found new allies such as affect, identity, reflexivity and individualization. This 'affective turn' (Clough & Halley, 2007) in contemporary social theorizing can be seen as part of a broader shift in the understanding of 'the social' (Greco & Stenner, 2008).

Also, since the 1960s we have seen a steady increase of theoretical and empirical work under the rubric of 'media and emotions' of which a large part sees the media as causes of emotions (Demertzis, 2011). Often, says Chris Peters, views are based on an undertheorized conceptualization of emotion, conflated with tabloid practices, sensationalism and commercialization (Peters, 2011). In fact, he argues, instead of treating emotion dismissively, we should look into emotions from a sociological conception (in his view as the experience of involvement). Once again, part of this inquiry will be the research into the gender dimension of emotions. As Peters notes:

> If one were to closely examine the rise in popularity of the morning news shows, for instance, one might find that an aspect of their success hinges on crafting a stereotypically 'feminine' style of involvement – more sensitive, jovial, and conversational – precisely because this genre of news

> is temporally aligned with the private maternal sphere of the home. (Peters, 2011, p. 310)

Researching how emotions have been dealt with by media scholars and concentrating in particular on the mediatization of trauma Demertzis himself concludes that "a lot remains to be done towards the analysis of media morality in view of the forthcoming bridging between the sociology of emotions, media psychology, and media ethics" (Demertzis, 2011, p. 95). In an attempt to further one of those connections – the one between emotions and media ethics – we look now into how emotions can establish ethical social links in line with different challenges to the value "free model of decision making implied in the Kantian" inspired ethics. This is the model, as we have seen, by which journalists are exhorted leave their own emotions and in fact any personal believes out of the news, even if emotion is allowed as an effect on the audience perception of covered people and facts.

4. Emotions and the pragmatic challenge to dispassionate ethics

The challenge to 'dispassionate' ethics can also be traced back to the origins of North American pragmatism, which coincided with the Progressive Era. There, we find John Dewey and a host of female thinkers who valued emotions and appreciated them as part of our relational capabilities. For Dewey, the affective is not peripheral to reason or a sub product of ethical life. He writes:

> The conclusion is not that the emotional, passionate phase of action can be or should be eliminated in behalf of a bloodless reason. More 'passions', not fewer, is the answer. To check the influence of hate there must be sympathy, while to rationalize sympathy there are needed emotions of curiosity, caution, respect for the freedom of others (...). Rationality, once more, is not a force to evoke against impulse and habit. It is the attainment of a working harmony among diverse desires. "Reason" as a noun signifies the happy cooperation of a multitude of dispositions (...). (Dewey, 1922, pp. 195-196)

In his writings we find a nuanced concept of intelligence in which the affective is crucial to moral inquiry and to a good moral character. As noted by Gregory Pappas (Pappas, 1993, p. 83) he "does not rule out any emotion as morally irrelevant, but he gives reasons why sympathy is the most important affection for moral inquiry and a good character". With the help of empathy we can get closer to an intellectual point of view, which may be useful for moral deliberation. Putting ourselves in someone else's shoes emotionally is the only way to expand our horizon and determine effectively what others need and value. The organic interaction between emotions and the other virtues of character expands our conception of ethics into the social, as for Dewey, morality is "social" insofar as interaction is a primary fact of everyday moral experience. For him, emotion is public, not private (Seigfried, 1996).

In 1930 John Dewey would also predict that "the growing freedom of women can hardly have any other outcome than the production of more realistic and more human morals" (Dewey, 1984 [1930], p. 276). Here, he acknowledges women's contribution to ethics in terms of common humanity rather than sentimentality or separate spheres (Seigfried, 1996). Yet, contemporary liberal communicative ethics is still guided by a strict focus on reason which does not deal well with their importance to moral judgment as part of our common humanity and human life. As we have seen, this also extends to traditional Kantian news deontology.

Dewey would certainly have based his views and criticism of the universalistic assumptions of traditional ethics on early Chicago pragmatic feminists who also valued emotions, opposing the individualistic nature of justice (Seigfried, 1996). Indeed, care, sympathy and empathy were no strangers to women pragmatists such as Jane Addams who argued that the conditions of interdependence held the promise of civilization, cooperation and coexistence and was closely tied up to democracy. In her words, "To follow the path of social morality... i[mplies that diversified human experience and resultant sympathy which are the foundation and guarantee of Democracy" (Addams, 1907, p. 7). She and a range of other women, worked to build communities that promoted these associations and found room for care based on a pragmatic view of sympathy and feeling. Through interdependence, as a condition of community, she and other pragmatist women recognized and acted upon communal obligations through varied actions, such as being garbage officials, producing research on sanitation, on tuberculosis, on infant mortality or the use of cocaine in Chicago, causing changes in laws and public programs, or engaging personally in helping in childbirth. Addams continually used terms such as "warmth of heart and sympathy" or "human love and sympathy" in association with an ethical form of caring (Anderson, 2004).

5. Feminist ethics and care

The kind of social ethics of sympathetic understanding that Addams describes in *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1907) build upon the modern notion of an ethics of care though which feminist scholarship has more recently discussed the importance of relationships and personal emotional experiences to cultural and political meanings. Care ethics in particular recognizes the moral value of feelings and emotion-based virtues such as empathy and sensitivity[4]. In the 1980's Carol Gilligan (1982) and Nel Noddings (1984) did influential work with a focus on the context of the situation versus impartial deliberation, arguing that ethics should be concerned with how people care about others with whom they have social relationships, not with abstract notions about rights and consequences. They established that the predominant emphasis of ethics must be on caring as a particular sort of substantive moral concern that everyone needs in order to survive and live a good life. When deciding how to act, moral agents need not attend to universal, impartial moral principles but be concerned with others in a contextual way.

Joan Tronto (1987, p. 660) noted the dangers of conservatism in care ethics and posited that "feminists should no longer celebrate an ethic of care as a factor of gender difference that points to women's superiority". Instead, she differentiated between obligation-based ethics and responsibility-based ethics, the latter postulating that the relationship with others must be the starting point (1993). She offered different phases of care that are analytically separate but interconnected in the ongoing process of care: care about someone or something, as openness to acknowledge the need of the other person; caregiving, as a technical and moral skill; care receiving, as the capacity for self" assessment and to react to the way others receive our care. Bringing her work to the field of journalism ethics, Carlos Camponez said that an ethical journalism

> requires sensitive professionals concerned about the world around them (care about), competent professionals when addressing public issues (care giving), and professionals concerned for their trade and actively committed to self" regulation, while enjoying the protection of social institutions and law (care receiving). (Camponez, 2014, pp. 132-133)

For Virgina Held's view too, a comprehensive moral theory will have to include the insights of both the ethics of care and the ethics of justice

[4] For a useful overview of Care Ethics see Marilyn Friedman (2013).

(Held, 2006, p. 16). Care ethics starts from the compelling moral sense that we should attend to the needs of those for whom we take responsibility and "stresses the moral force of the responsibility to respond to the needs of the dependent" (Held, 2006, p. 10). In doing so, care values moral emotions such as "sympathy, empathy, sensitivity, and responsiveness," and even "anger may be a component of the moral indignation that should be felt when people are treated unjustly or inhumanely" (Held, 2006).

This commitment to responsibility that does not necessarily exclude emotions may be the key to journalism's dilemmas was we saw above. And it is in light of its many contributions that Linda Steiner (Steiner, 2009, 2014; Steiner & Okrusch, 2006) has insisted that there is much to be gained from looking into feminist care ethics when considering journalism.

Media traditional ethics are based on the disembodied Kantian deontological ideal of the wholly autonomous rational agents which specifically takes the form of an the idea of the journalist as a dispassionate and objective agent, acting only under rationally derived principles and as a distant and professional observe. Under its principles, the reporter uses his professional ideals of impartial and distant observation to maintain the separation of whatever and whoever he/she reports on. Thus, in journalism practice there is a clear tendency to cultivate the traditional, simplistic and acritical assumption that emotion compromises rationality and undermines impartiality. Yet, as research shows, binary oppositions between objectivity and subjectivity and emotionality and rationality are overly simplistic and obscure the complexities of journalistic storytelling (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2013).

In their review of care ethics as a potential view applied to journalism, Steiner and Okrusch (2006) conclude that

> caring must be specifically politicized to embrace strangers and communities of differential pull—in relationship not only to their known and 'seen' sources and subjects, but also their audiences, whom they do not know individually. It must address structural and institutional problems and abuses.

For them, care ethics offers journalists an alternative framework for moral decision-making: "Applying a revitalized care ethics may save public journalism from some of its empirical, conceptual, and rhetorical weaknesses" (Steiner & Okrusch, 2006, p. 117). Pech and Leibel (2006, p. 153) question the distinction between the work of journalism and the event being reported on and argue that from "a care perspective, reportable events are understood from the point of view of their promotion of or devaluation of our solidarity with others".

Vanacker and Breslin (2006) too applied care ethics to journalism considering that a care-based approach can enrich and diversify media ethics both from a theoretical and practical perspective. In practical terms, it can for example provide specific guidelines for the coverage of crime stories and crime victims. In our own research we looked into professional's views of their ethical principles to see how these views were compatible with the notion of care ethics, namely as advanced by Joan Tronto (Silveirinha, Simões & Camponez, 2014).

Looking back at our initial news-story, we can now read it beyond the view of emotions as elements of degrading news quality. They may be so, but only when they do not serve the purpose of informing us of our daily life in a way that cares both for the people and issues that it covers and for its audiences.

We recall our exemplary news piece as one that was framed as story about the "the son" and his father. In establishing this angle, a woman's murder becomes simply the background to the feelings and actions of the perpetrator and his son and the woman victim is erased from it. Surely, we can be moved by the angst and the chock of the groom, but in the narrative, the murdered woman does not count: she no longer acts or feels and, what's more, her past actions or feelings are presented in a way that may justify that she may have been the very cause of her own death. The news story, in other words, does not care for the victim. Also, since this victim has suffered from the persistent serious issue of violence against women of our contemporary societies, the problem is related to a second plan at best. This shows that we can be captivated by an interesting narrative but are done an enormous disservice when we are presented with *careless* reporting. As our simple example shows is that this disservice happens when what is left out is a crucial issue "such as an act of violence against women" that rationally affects our relationships and our very way of living.

6. Closing notes: emotions and the ethical construction of news

In evaluating the potentials and pitfalls of tabloid journalism, Elisabeth Bird (2009, p. 49) suggested that "It seems journalism may have two choices. It can accept that its claim to truth is no better or worse than anyone else's, cling onto traditional notions of objectivity, and continue a struggle to survive in a relativistic, cynical world in which whatever sells leads. Or it can try to develop new ways of doing business, that involve a renewed commitment to actually doing journalism, and perhaps a rethinking of objectivity".

As part of these news way, it's time to look into news ways of combining the long" standing beliefs in objective journalism with more nuanced understandings of how journalists deal with their news subjects and issues. Dewey has taught us that as individuals and as a society we need to 'educate our emotions' so as not be controlled by them; we need to learn to integrate our emotions and reasoning faculties to reach more satisfying levels of experience and more democratic forms of community. On this view, our emotions and values are essential components of good reasoning and inquiry. They are part of what makes us aware of social life and makes move to action. They are also part of good communal deliberation about issues. However, we cannot be informed by sloppy and merely sensational news. What we need from journalists is that they do their work with a strong commitment to verification of the facts and the necessary care towards the subjects of their reporting, particularly if they are vulnerable, suffering or have been victims of others or of different kinds of circumstances.

Together with the feminist notions of care (as a concern for others) and empathy (imagining the experiences of others) as well as the idea that our capacities to communicate, listen, understand, and learn are as much affective as they are cognitive, we may be able to devise ways of educating journalists to wisely use emotions to enhance democracy.

The argument about the need to engage audiences of news is a valid and important one and it concerns both women and men. But perhaps we can do so better if the story" telling with emotion" eliciting features in news is balanced with the insight that journalists, as Linda Steiner puts it, "address underserved and otherwise unprotected audiences, even if, especially if they are not desirable markets per se" (Steiner, 2008, p. 314). Including in the many transformations that journalism is currently undergoing the insights of the many forms of feminism in journalism ideals and practices can only be a way forward towards the kind of aspirations of a fuller and more inclusive collective life upon which journalism was historically founded.

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Framing gender and women politicians representation: print media coverage of spanish women ministers

Abstract

This article explores the media treatment of cabinet members in Spain. Women politicians have become increasingly visible in Spanish public life and in the media. In 2004 a gender-balanced cabinet was formed for the first time, and women have been appointed to cabinet positions in areas that had traditionally been restricted to men, such as Defense and Economy. Based on a sample of news articles (1,969) from the four main Spanish newspapers (*El País, La Vanguardia, El Mundo* and *ABC*) this article examines the media treatment of the first government of Conservative José Maria Aznar (1996), Socialist José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (2004), and the first cabinet of Mariano Rajoy (2011). The analysis compares the firsts days of the coverage of male and female members in quantitative and qualitative terms, focusing on 1) the visibility and prominence of each cabinet member; 2) mentions of their personal traits, appearance, and private life; and 3) the general tone of the report. The study analyzes the coverage of members of the different cabinets trying to understand the differences between Conservative and Socialist governments, the differences in the coverage by gender of the minister and by the type of portfolios women and men receive. The study reveals that media coverage of women ministers is still different to men's despite the fact that the presence of women increased in 2004 to achieve for the first time a gender-balanced government. But gender is not the only explanation to this different coverage. Different distribution of ministries between women and men seems also relevant.

Keywords

Gender; leadership; politics; print media; Spain

1. Introduction

In 2007, Spain enacted the so-called Law of Equality (*Organic Law 3/2007, March 22nd, for Effective Equality between Women and Men*). One provision of the bill says women must make up at least 40 percent of the lists of candidates that parties field in elections, with the aim of ensuring women's presence in the political sphere. Before the entry into force of the law, after the Spring 2004 election, Socialist Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero formed the first Spanish government to have the same number of female as male cabinet ministers (eight of each).

In fact, women political participation in Spain has increased substantially in the last 30 years. Only 6 percent of the members of the Parliament elected in the low chamber following the 1979 general elections were women; in 1982 and 1986, they accounted for 5 and 6 percent, respectively. Yet women representation gradually increased since the late 1980s. As of today, women hold 36 percent of the seats in Parliament and according to the Gender Gap Index Spain ranks 17th in percentage of women elected to parliament (World Economic Forum, 2013). A similar trend is visible at other levels, too. In relation to the executive office, in 1936, during the Second Spanish Republic, Federica Montseny became the first woman to hold a ministerial office in Spain and one of the first in Europe. After the Franco dictatorship and the restoration of Spanish democracy, the government of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo (*Unión de Centro Democrático*, UCD) appointed Soledad Becerril minister of Culture in 1981. It was not until 1988 that a woman would access to a ministerial position again. It was during the presidency of Felipe González (*Partido Socialista*, PSOE) when Matilde Fernández (Social Affairs) and Rosa Conde (Speaker of the Government) became ministers. The presence of women in subsequent González cabinets varied from 11 percent (1989 - 1993) to 16 percent (1993–1996). The figure rose to 26 percent in 1996 with the first cabinet formed by the Conservative José María Aznar (*Partido Popular*, PP), but dropped to 16 percent in the next term (2000–2004). The Socialist victory in the 2004 general election led to the first gender-balanced government in Spain's history, as exactly eight out of the sixteen members of the government were women. Presence of women in the government of Rodríguez Zapatero rose to 53 percent (2008) but subsequent cabinets dropped to 44%. After the November 2011 election, the first cabinet headed by Conservative Mariano Rajoy (PP) will have only four female ministers out of thirteen ministerial portfolios. On April 2014 Rajoy reshuffled his cabinet for the first time and women presence increased to 39%.

This increase in the access of women to political office should arguably result in a normalization of the representation of women politicians in the press coverage (Bystrom, Robertson, & Banwart 2001; Jalalzai, 2006). If women and men have *comparable* access to positions of power, if women access the highest offices, should not this mean the disappearance of existing stereotyping gender roles? As van Acker (2003) argues, when the number of women increases, particularly in the higher ranks, they would start to generate less curiosity for the media, which translates into a more gender-neutral/blind coverage. Unfortunately, different studies point out that while entrance of female politicians into the political sphere is increasing, gender biases disseminated by the media are still significant (Falk, 2008; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008). Because the media have become the public sphere in which the identity of the politician is constructed, those gender biases can have electoral consequences. Gender differences in media coverage may influence women's participation in public life, voters' evaluations of male and female candidates, candidates' choice of campaign strategies, and people's view regarding women's roles in the political arena (Falk, 2008; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008; Norris, 1997).

2. Media coverage of women politicians

How are women politicians represented in the media? A significant amount of research suggests that the press covers men and women politicians differently. There is a host of evidence suggesting that women politicians are framed in certain ways that differ from their male counterparts, and that those frames often put them at disadvantage. Women receive lower, less prominent and less substantive coverage than do men (Aday & Devitt, 2001; Braden, 1996; Heldman, Carroll & Olson, 2000; Kahn, 1992, 1994, 1996; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991).

A number of studies have found that men politicians usually receive more press attention than women (Kahn, 1992, 1994, 1996; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991; Serini, Powers & Johnson, 1998). However, more recent work shows that, as women have attained higher levels of representation over time, the amount of coverage has balanced (Atkeson & Krebs, 2007; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008) or even reversed to women's advantage (Trimble, 2007). Another measure of visibility is defined as the amount of statements made by a given politician that are reproduced in the news. According to Falk (2008), quotations are a vehicle by which the press can give voters direct information about politicians and politicians are eager to get direct access to citizens. There is some evidence that women politicians are less likely to be quoted in the media (Aday & Devitt, 2001; see also Comas d'Argemir, 2009). Research has also found that media tend to use more highly charged language to report the speech of female politicians (Gidengil & Everitt, 2003).

Quantity is important, for if women receive less coverage they may enjoy less name recognition (Jalalzai, 2006; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991), and may be less likely to get support in the polls (Kahn, 1996). But even if women do not receive less coverage than men, quality of coverage may differ. A number of studies have found that women politicians are more likely to be identified in spousal or parental roles than men (Banwart, Bystrom & Robertson, 2003; Falk, 2008; Jamieson, 1995). Press coverage is also more likely to focus on how politicians look and what they wear when they are women (Falk, 2008; Fernandez-Garcia, 2008). Age, too, is more often highlighted when the news deal with women (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Devitt, 2002). Falk (2008) also suggests that women are more likely to have their professional background dropped in news stories, so they are shown with less experience. And media refer to women more informally than men (Uscinski & Goren, 2011). Women are more likely to have their titles (such as Senator or Representative) dropped in news stories, and they are more often referred to by their first names or as 'Ms.' or 'Mrs.' than are men (Falk, 2008).

With regard to the politician's gender, different studies show that the gender of the women politicians is more likely mentioned than male politician's gender (Bystrom, Robertson & Banwart, 2001; Falk, 2008; Norris, 1997). As Falk points out, this mention to women politicians' gender may reinforce the idea that "women are acting in an unnatural sphere or that men are more appropriate in these positions (...) and emphasizes that sex is important and relevant to politics" (2008, p. 94).

On the other hand, studies analyzing the representation of women candidates have shown that women leadership is often coupled with their supportive role beside men, and are often defined by their relationship with a man (Harp, Loke & Bachmann, 2010). For example, Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile from 2006 to 2010, was referred to as the daughter of Alberto Bachelet, assassinated during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet; Ségolène Royal, the Socialist candidate in the 2007 French presidential election, was often referred to as the wife of a politician and daughter of a soldier; and the current German chancellor, Angela Merkel, was referred to as the 'spiritual daughter' of Helmut Kohl (Baider, 2008).

Earlier studies define traits as stereotypically masculine and stereotypically feminine traits (traits associated with leadership would be stereotypically masculine and traits associated with expressive personality traits would be stereotypically feminine) (see Carroll & Fox, 2006; Kahn, 1994, 1996; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008).[1] It is suggested that male traits dominate coverage of male candidates, whereas male traits are discussed less often for female politicians. As 'male' traits are associated with 'leadership' traits, linked to stereotypically 'female' traits, women politicians miss the opportunity to demonstrate their leadership, strength, and knowledge" (Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008, p. 386; see also Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991). Alternatively, later studies quantify and compare personal trait references with regard to their content, context and tone, classifying traits as "positive" or "negative" (see Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2009). Findings of studies using this methodology suggest that men are more likely to be associated to positive traits, while women are more likely to be associated to negative traits (Fernandez-Garcia, 2010; Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2009).

Finally, studies on gender stereotypes and female politicians have shown that, when women overstep traditional boundaries, the media tend to react by covering them more negatively (Fernandez-Garcia, 2010; Kahn 1994; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991; Scharrer, 2002), and women's viability as election contenders is often framed more negatively than men's (Falk, 2008; Fernandez-Garcia, 2010; Kahn, 1994, 1996; Lawrence & Ross, 2010).

3. Objective and hypotheses

The present research analyzes if the increase in women's presence in the government has an influence on the media's treatment of cabinet ministers. Specifically, did the press coverage become more gender neutral following the formation of the first gender-balanced government? In order to answer this question, this research content-analyzes the coverage of the ministerial appointments after 2004 general election (Socialist government), and compare it with coverage of the female and male appointments after the 1996 general election (Conservative government) and the coverage of the female and male appointments after the 2011 general election (Conservative government). But as the prestige of the portfolio is also relevant this paper analyzes and compares the coverage looking at the type of portfolio female and male ministers are holding. As Krook and O'Brien

[1] In this dichotomy, "male traits" include hardworking, strong leader, competitive, effective, though, intelligent, aggressive, independent, ambitious; and "female traits" include gentle, weak, attractive, passive, dependent, emotional, unintelligent, compassionate, noncompetitive (see Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008).

(2012) point out, women have traditionally been underrepresented among government ministers and when they have been appointed they have been relegated to low-prestige policy areas, the least powerful positions (2012, p. 840). Women and men cabinet members who are appointed to low-prestige policy areas receive less media attention than female and male cabinet members nominated to higher prestige policy areas. Therefore, this paper hypothesizes that female members of the cabinet who are positioned in higher prestige portfolios are more likely to be covered in the news media than their counterparts at lower prestige ministries. This research divides the portfolios in high-prestige, medium-prestige and low-prestige. High-prestige positions are "distinguished in terms of their visibility and significant control over policy". Medium-prestige positions control "significant financial resources but had lesser status and visibility", and low-prestige positions are "characterized by lack of resources for patronage" (see Krook and O'Brien, 2012, p. 845). In this study we place as high-prestige positions ministries as Defense, Finance/Economy, Foreign affairs, Home/Internal Affairs, and Vice Presidency. Agriculture, Energy, Construction and Public Works, Health, Industry, Justice, Employment, Planning and Development are coded as medium-prestige positions. Education, Culture, Science and Technology, Environment, Housing, Tourism, and Women's Affairs are referred as low-prestige positions[2].

		High-Prestige Ministries	Medium-Prestige Ministries	Low-Prestige Ministries	(N)
1996	Male ministers	5	5	-	14
	Female ministers	-	2	2	
2004	Male ministers	4	4	-	16
	Female ministers	1	3	4	

[2] Education, Environment and Housing Ministries are considered by Krook and O'Brien to be medium-prestige. In the Spanish context and for the purpose of this study those portfolios will be considered low-prestige positions because their lack of resources and/or because they have been linked to other portfolios (eg. Education, Science & Sports, Education and Culture, Education and Social Welfare, Agriculture, Food and Environment). Vice Presidency does not exist in Krook and O'Brien's study but in this research this position is coded as high-prestige because its high visibility and significant control over policy.

2011	**Male ministers**	5	3	1	13
	Female ministers	1	3	-	
		16	20	7	43

Table 1: Portfolio distribution by prestige
Note: Column with number of cabinet members

Table 1 shows the distribution of portfolios in the three cabinets analyzed. As we can see, men mainly occupy high-prestige positions. In contrast, women hold portfolios in areas more closely associated to low-prestige positions. By cabinet, Conservative government of José María Aznar (1996) is formed by fourteen portfolios: ten men and four women. No woman holds a high-prestige portfolio while two women receive a medium-prestige portfolio (Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and Justice) and two women are nominated to a low-prestige portfolio (Education and Culture, and Environment). Instead, there are five male ministers occupying a high-prestige portfolio and five men are appointed to a medium-prestige portfolio. First Socialist cabinet of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (2004) is the first gender-balanced government in the history of Spain with eight male and eight female ministers. However, only one woman is appointed to a high-prestige portfolio (Vice presidency), three women are nominated to a medium-prestige portfolio (Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Public Works, Health and Consumer Affairs), and four women receive a low-prestige position (Education and Science, Culture, Environment, Housing). Meanwhile, four of the male ministers hold high-prestige portfolios and four occupy medium-prestige policy areas. Finally, Rajoy's first cabinet (2011) is formed by thirteen ministers: nine men and four women. One woman holds a high-prestige portfolio (Vice Presidency), while the other three women hold medium-prestige portfolios (Health, Social Service and Equality, Employment and Social Security, Public Works). No woman holds a low-prestige portfolio. Five male ministers occupy high-prestige portfolios, three men hold a medium-prestige positions and one man occupy the unique low-prestige portfolio.

4. Research design

The results reported here come from data collected from four Spanish newspapers, *El País*, *La Vanguardia, El Mundo*, and *ABC*. The selection was informed by two criteria. First, these are the daily newspapers with the largest circulation in Spain. Second, there exist substantial ideological differences between the four publications. While *El País* is seen as a liberal newspaper, generally supportive of the Socialist party (PSOE), *El Mundo* and *ABC* has increasingly become close to the Conservative party (PP), and *La Vanguardia*, a Barcelona based newspaper, is seen with a center-right perspective (Reig, 1998). Thus, we can assume that the newspapers analyzed are those with the greatest potential to impact audiences and to set the agenda of the rest of news media (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991).

The time frame chosen for the sample is May 5th, 1996 through May 11th, 1996 (first government of Conservative Aznar), and April 18th through April 23rd, 2004 (first government of Socialist Rodríguez Zapatero), and December 21st through December 28th, 2011 (first government of Conservative Rajoy)[3]. This covers the period between the day before and the fifth day after the members of the government are appointed. As Norris observes, the coverage during this time frame "may be particularly important since it helps shape initial perceptions of a leader's character, experience, and background for readers with little prior background information" (1997, p.157).

The unit of analysis is the news article. Articles were searched for and retrieved from the *Lexis Nexis* and *Factiva* databases. The search terms used were the names of the government's members (14 members from the Aznar government, 16 members from the Rodríguez Zapatero government, and 13 members from the Rajoy cabinet). Search results were compared to eliminate any duplicated cases. The total number of articles included in the sample is 1,969, 684 about the 1996 government, 586 about 2004 government, and 699 articles about the 2011 government.

The coding followed previous research on differences in the media coverage of men and women politicians (see Aday & Devitt, 2001; Falk, 2008; Kahn, 1996; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008; Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2009; Scharrer, 2002; Trimble, 2007). This research identified every news story that mentioned at least one of the ministers. Straight news reports, news analysis, editorials, and op-ed columns were included in the sample. Letters to the editor were not included. Articles were coded for a series of variables, encompassing some of the more prevalent sources of gender bias noted in the literature – such as visibility, mentions to gender, link to a masculine figure, mentions to personal characteristics, valence of mentions to personal traits, and the overall tone of coverage. All stories were analyzed using a detailed coded system, a set of instructions on how to systematically observe and record content from a text.

[3] Analysis of the first Rajoy's cabinet coincides with Christmas season. On December 25 there are no newspapers circulation in Spain, therefore one day is added to the analysis.

Visibility is measured in two ways: the amount of articles that mention a cabinet member in the story and the amount of direct quotations of men and women politicians to test if women are less likely to be quoted by the press. All mentions to the gender of a politician are coded. This research also codes mentions to a male or female mentor to test if women are more likely referred to a masculine figure. As mentions to personal characteristics any mention to the marital status, age, family, and appearance of each individual minister are coded. Traits are divided between positive and negative traits in order to test if women are more likely related to negative traits[4]. Finally, stories are classified as positive, negative, mix, or neutral to the minister referred to[5].

An intercoder reliability test including two coders was conducted on 100 stories of the sample, using the Cohen's kappa test. Calculated using the SPSS program, the kappa ranged from .79 to 1.00. According to criteria laid down by Landis and Koch (1977) this data signify an excellent agreement.

5. Results

5.1. Visibility

Table 2 shows the total amount of coverage each government received from the four newspapers analyzed. Breaking data by minister's gender, women have less coverage than men[6]. In 1996 male ministers obtain 76.9 percent of the coverage, while women cabinet ministers have 23.1 percent, although 28.6 percent of the members of the cabinet are women. When the Socialist government of Rodríguez Zapatero, the first parity government in Spain, is analyzed, differences are higher: male politicians obtain 64.8 percent of the coverage and female politicians have 35.2 percent of the total amount of the coverage, despite being the 50 percent of the members of the

[4] Following to Miller, Peake & Boulton (2009), traits are coded 'positive' or 'negative' based on their context in each article. Therefore, the same trait may be coded as positive in the context of one article and negative in the context of another.

[5] In order to assess tone, this study has followed the methodology elaborated by Scharrer (2002, p. 405) that determines that "the article is coded as 'positive' if there are clear words used to connote praise, approval, or any angle that portrayed the subject in a good light throughout. The article is rated as 'neutral' if there is no indication of either a positive or negative tone. The article is rated as 'mix' if there are isolated examples of negativity and positively. The article is rated as 'negative' if the politician is portrayed in a bad light throughout".

[6] It should be noted that the story could include just a passing reference to the politicians or it could involve an extended treatment of their character.

cabinet. Not only is the presence of women substantially lower than that of men in absolute terms – which in the first case is understandable on the basis of their lower presence in government - it is also significantly below their actual representation in government. As a matter of fact, the difference between coverage and actual representation is larger in 2004 than it is in 1996. Women ministers appear to have received more attention when their presence in the cabinet was a relative exception. Normalization, through the achievement of a balanced government, might have accentuated the bias in coverage. Only in the Rajoy's government women ministers receive more coverage (34.5%) than their actual presence in the government (30.8%).

Considering each government separately, the first woman of the 1996 Conservative government is in 5th place on the coverage ranking (Esperanza Aguirre, minister of Education), followed by the minister of Environment (6th), and Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (12th), and Justice (13th). Figures for coverage of the Socialist cabinet show that the three ministers with higher coverage are all men. The first female on the list is the first woman Vice President in Spanish history, Maria Teresa Fernández de la Vega, ranked 4th with 7.8 percent of the total coverage of the cabinet members. This is an interesting finding because of earlier studies point out female politicians may gain visibility because their very presence on the male terrain of politics "accords them the news value of unusualness" (Trimble, 2007, p.990). Since Fernández de la Vega was the first female to be appointed Vice President, it was expected that the media emphasized the novelty of having a female Vice President by having a large amount of coverage but she only received 7.8 percent of the total coverage of the cabinet members. Meanwhile, the four cabinet members who have less coverage by the press are all women. Only in Rajoy's government a woman ranks first in visibility (15.3%): Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría appointed to the Vice Presidency position.

Presidency	Coverage	Cabinet composition	Difference	(N)
1996	23.1	28.6 (4)	-5.5***	(684)
2004	35.2	50.0 (8)	-14.8***	(586)
2011	34.5	30.8 (4)	3.7	(699)
Total 1996-2011				(1,969)

Table 2: Visibility of female cabinet Ministers by presidency (%)
Note: Column percentages with number of mentions in parenthesis.
Percentages may add to more than 100% due to rounding.
Significance levels indicate whether proportions differ from the actual gender composition of the cabinet. *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

To sum up, ministers who obtain higher coverage are those holding high-prestige policy areas (eg. Vice Presidency, Economy, Defense, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs). Presence of women is lower in this kind of portfolios (only 2 of the 16 women analyzed). As a matter of fact and as table 3 shows, women occupying high-prestige portfolios obtain even greater visibility than their actual presence in the cabinet, pattern that is not showed in medium and low-prestige policy areas. Therefore, prestige of the policy area occupied by female ministers may explain the different coverage levels between male and female ministers.

	Male Ministers	Female Ministers	Female Presence	Difference	(N)
High-Prestige	84.6	15.4	12.5 (2)	2.9	(994)
Medium-Prestige	64.2	35.8	40.0 (8)	-4.2	(754)
Low-Prestige	17.6	82.3	85.7 (6)	-3.4	(221)

Table 3: Visibility of female cabinet Ministers by prestige (%)
Note: Column percentages with number of mentions in parenthesis
Percentages may add to more than 100% due to rounding
Significance levels indicate whether proportions differ from the actual gender composition of the cabinet. *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Visibility may be also examined by looking at the number of statements reproduced in the news. Male ministers are more likely than female's to have their speeches represented in the news in the Aznar (1996) and Rodríguez Zapatero (2004) cabinets. There is a statistically significant difference between men and women members of the 1996 cabinet: men ministers are quoted in 25 percent of the articles where they appear, while women politicians are only quoted in 12.7 percent. Quotes frequency is slightly less biased in coverage of the gender-balanced government of Rodríguez Zapatero. Men politicians are quoted in 28.4 percent of their articles, whereas women politicians are quoted in nearly a fourth (23.8 percent) of the articles about them. Again, only in the coverage of the first Rajoy's cabinet female ministers are quoted in a slightly higher percentage of articles than male ministers (15.3 vs. 14.6%). This is the only government where female ministers receive high-prestige and medium-prestige portfolios. Women in Aznar and Rodríguez Zapatero government are also occupying low-prestige portfolios.

As table 4 shows, ministers appointed to high-prestige portfolios are more likely to have their speech represented in the news. But differences between male and female ministers nominated to high-prestige and medium-prestige portfolios are small and not significant. Meanwhile, differences between male and female ministers who receive low-prestige policy areas are statistically significant. Again, prestige of the ministry may explain the difference in the quotation amount.

	Male Ministers	Female Ministers	Difference	(N)
High-Prestige	24.3	22.2	2.1	(994)
Medium-Prestige	18.8	15.6	3.2	(754)
Low-Prestige	28.2	16.5	11.7*	(221)

Table 4: Quotations by male and female cabinet Ministers by prestige (%)
Note: Column percentages
Percentages may add to more than 100% due to rounding.
Significance levels indicate whether proportions differ from the actual gender composition of the cabinet. *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

5.2. Personal coverage

Newspapers are indeed more likely to mention the gender of women ministers (see table 5). Spanish female politicians are rather often distinguished as “women” in press accounts, while their male counterparts are hardly ever distinguished as being “men”. This is a relevant finding, as it shows how women’s gender is still highlighted by the media. Mentions to women’s gender in coverage of the 2004 cabinet are lower the amount registered in 1996 and in 2011. Apparently, women’s sex is less newsworthy as cabinets become more balanced.

Data also show that women are more often related to a wise mentor or father figure than men. Not only are mentions to a male mentor higher in stories about women, but also mentions to a male mentor figure are more prominent in the coverage of the Conservative governments than in the coverage of the Socialist government. However, it only exists a statistically significant difference between female and male ministers in the Socialist cabinet.

	Male ministers	Female ministers	Difference	(N)
1996	1.3	17.1	-15.8***	(684)
2004	0.8	12.6	-11.8***	(586)
2011	2.2	14.9	-12.7***	(699)

Total 1996-2011	1.5	14.7	-13.2***	(1,969)

Table 5: Mentions to gender by cabinet (%)
Note: Column percentages
Percentages may add to more than 100% due to rounding.
Significance levels indicate whether proportions differ from the actual gender composition of the cabinet. *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Female ministers nominated to high-prestige and medium-prestige portfolios are more associated to a masculine figure than their male colleagues, a difference that is statistically significant between men and women holding high-prestige portfolios (see table 6). It is interesting to highlight that women appointed to high-prestige and medium-prestige positions are more associated to a masculine figure than women nominated to low-prestige portfolios.

Women are more likely to have their marital status, age, family, and appearance highlighted in the news. However, in the three cabinets analyzed male and female ministers appointed to high-prestige portfolios obtain fewer mentions to their personal life than male and female cabinet members nominated to medium and low-prestige policy areas.

	Male Ministers	**Female Ministers**	**Difference**	**(N)**
High-Prestige	3.0	7.2	-4.2***	(994)
Medium-Prestige	5.0	7.0	-2.0	(754)
Low-Prestige	10.3	4.9	5.4	(221)

Table 6: Link to a male figure by prestige (%)
Note: Column percentages
Percentages may add to more than 100% due to rounding.
Significance levels indicate whether proportions differ from the actual gender composition of the cabinet. *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

On the other hand, data also reveal a higher percentage of mentions of the professional background, qualifications or experience of male members, although the situation is more balanced in 2004 and 1996 cabinet. In fact, there is a statistically significant difference between men and women cabinet members of the 2011 Conservative government: experience of male cabinet members is highlighted in four out of ten stories about them meanwhile experience of female cabinet members is only highlighted in two out of ten stories about them. Beyond the prestige of the portfolio female ministers receive lower mentions to their experience than male ministers.

And this difference is statistically significant in the three types of portfolio. Consequently, it does seem that experience is an important descriptor in the media coverage of men ministers but not in the coverage of women ministers. However, a relationship between the prestige of the portfolio and mentions to previous experience is observed. In all the cabinets analyzed ministers who receive low-prestige portfolios obtain more mentions to their previous experience. Data also reveals a smaller difference between female and male ministers holding a high-prestige portfolio in mentions to experience. That is, mentions of experience between men and women cabinet members are more balanced at higher prestige policy areas positions.

5.3. Evaluation

In the three cabinets analyzed all the ministers are mainly associated with positive traits. In fact, there are not significant differences in the association with positive traits between male and female cabinet members. The bigger difference is found in Rajoy's cabinet (women's positive trait references were slightly higher than men's: 14.2 vs. 16.2%) although difference is small and non-significant. Male ministers of the first cabinet of Conservative Aznar are associated with positive traits slightly higher than female ministers, but in the first cabinets of Rodríguez Zapatero and Rajoy this pattern is reversed and female ministers are more associated with positive traits than male members.

It does exist a difference in the association of male and female ministers with negative traits. As table 7 shows, female ministers are more associated with negative traits than male ministers in the three cabinets analyzed. And this difference is statistically significant in the media coverage of the Aznar and Rodriguez Zapatero cabinets. Results, though, show a slightly improvement in the coverage of the 2004 and 2011 cabinets.

	Male Ministers	Female Ministers	Difference	(N)
1996	1.3	5.7	-4.4***	(684)
2004	1.8	5.8	-4.0***	(586)
2011	1.5	2.5	-1.0	(699)
Total 1996-2011	1.5	4.5	-3.0***	(1969)

Table 7: Negative traits by cabinet (%)
Note: Column percentages
Percentages may add to more than 100% due to rounding.
Significance levels indicate whether proportions differ from the actual gender composition of the cabinet. *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

However, data also show some differences by the prestige of the portfolio. Female ministers who receive high-prestige portfolios are more associated with positive traits than their male colleagues (19.6 vs. 11.5%), a pattern that is not observed in lower prestige portfolios. That is, female ministers are more associated with positive traits when they occupy a substantial ministry. And it also exists a relationship between the prestige of the portfolio and the association with negative traits: high-prestige ministries are more associated with negative traits than low-prestige ministries. However, despite the prestige of the ministry, female ministers are always more associated with negative traits than their male colleagues.

In addition, the type of positive traits that male ministers are associated refers to job-related characteristics (e.g., experienced, qualified, competent), character traits (e.g., honest, strong, fighter), and charisma traits (e.g., agent of change, inspirational). Female cabinet members are only associated to job-related traits and character traits. It does not exist a female minister associated to charisma traits.

Finally, the tone of the coverage is analyzed. The tone of the coverage is mainly neutral for both male and female ministers, although differences are observed in positive and negative tone. Male ministers get more positive tone in Aznar (28.7 vs. 17.1%) and Rodriguez Zapatero (38.9 vs. 21.4%) cabinets, a difference that is statistically significant. Again, only in Rajoy's cabinet female ministers are more associated with a positive tone than male ministers, although difference is small and non-significant (15.8 vs. 14.8%).

On the other hand, Rodriguez Zapatero's cabinet is the only one where female ministers obtain a lower percentage of stories with a negative tone than their male counterparts. Women and men ministers of Rajoy's cabinet get virtually the same percentage of articles with a negative tone, and Aznar's cabinet female ministers get a more negative tone than their male colleagues: they exceed four percentage points in negative tone to male ministers. However, differences between female and male ministers in the three cabinets are small and do not attain conventional levels of statistical significance.

Despite the prestige of their portfolio, male ministers always get a more positive tone than female ministers. Therefore, tone is always more favorable for men than for women ministers. Instead, prestige seems relevant in the negative tone female ministers obtain: female ministers nominated to a high-prestige portfolio get a lower negative tone than female ministers who receive medium and low-prestige portfolios.

6. Conclusions

In analyzing and comparing newspaper coverage of members of the Spanish cabinets in 1996, 2004 and 2011, the main conclusion is that coverage of women ministers is still different to men's despite the fact that the presence of women increased in 2004 to achieve for the first time a gender-balanced government. But gender is not the only explanation to this different coverage. Different distribution of ministries between women and men seems also relevant.

This research suggests that cabinet members who gain more visibility are those nominated to high-prestige portfolios (e.g., Vice Presidency, Economy, Defense, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs), policy areas where the presence of women is small. Gender is also relevant in the type of coverage received. Although female and male ministers holding a high-prestige portfolio get fewer mentions to their personal life than female and male ministers occupying medium and low-prestige policy areas, women always have more mentions to their personal life. And men ministers obtain more mentions to their previous experience than women cabinet members, especially in the coverage of the first cabinet of Conservative Rajoy. Similarly, women ministers' gender is still more newsworthy than men's. Gender continues being a tag in the representation of women politicians, especially female ministers nominated to high-prestige and medium-prestige portfolios. This finding suggests the use of the "first woman" news frame, a common device that especially notes the gender of the female ministers who occupy a policy area for the first time (see Norris 1997, p. 164). In addition, references to masculine figures are also a remarkable feature in the news' presentation of female ministers, thus sending the subtle message that women are not in the office by their own, but by a wise mentor.

Both female and male cabinet ministers are associated with positive traits. Instead, it exists a difference in the association with negative traits: female ministers are more associated with negative traits than their male counterparts and this is observed in the three cabinets analyzed. Again, the prestige of the portfolio occupied seems relevant: female ministers nominated to a high-prestige portfolio are more associated with positive and negative traits. Similarly, findings reveal that male ministers are related to charisma traits. Those traits are not observed in the coverage of female cabinet members.

Neutral tone predominates in coverage of female and male ministers, although the tone of reporting news about ministers proves to be consistently more favorable to men: male ministers have a more positive tone of coverage than female ministers. Similarly, it does not exist a difference in the negative tone obtained by female and male ministers, although female ministers holding high-prestige portfolios obtain a lower negative tone than female ministers occupying medium-prestige and low-prestige portfolios.

The analysis of the three cabinets provides us information about the changes in the representation of Spanish female ministers over time. First, female cabinet members of the Rajoy cabinet get more coverage than their real presence in the cabinet, a pattern that does not repeat in Aznar and Rodríguez Zapatero cabinets. Second, women members of the Aznar and Rodríguez Zapatero cabinets are less likely to be quoted in the press. However, differences in quote frequency were slightly reduced in coverage of the gender-balanced government of Rodríguez Zapatero, and the last cabinet analyzed is also the only one where women members are more quoted than their male counterparts. Third, female ministers of the last cabinets obtain a lower percentage of stories with negative traits. But beyond these three variables, female ministers of the Rajoy's cabinet get more mentions to their gender, more mentions to their personal life, and they are more linked to a masculine figure, a pattern already observed in previous cabinets and that have not changed over time.

Current findings indicate that women continue to receive differential coverage. Media needs create a dialogue among professionals about current differences in media coverage and encourage editors and reporters to alter their news reporting routines. And communication scholars have a responsibility to introduce and promote gender mainstreaming in the curriculum of communication studies and make students aware of the gendered media representation of politicians and politics. It should be noted that gender still has a strong impact on media representation of female cabinet members but the fact that women are relegated to low-prestige policy areas have also a substantial impact. Therefore, increasing the number of women in cabinet posts does not result in a non-gendered media representation. The appointment of women to prominent roles as ministers of high-prestige policy areas reveals itself as an important tool to achieve a more balanced representation of female politicians in the media.

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Female politics in Parliament: addressing questions about political and journalistic representation

Abstract

This article draws upon the project "Feminine Politics" (PTDC/CCI-COM/102393/2008), which addresses political representation and media visibility strategies of Portuguese female deputies, across various periods of the Portuguese democracy, from 1975 to 2002. Three major parliamentary discussions regarding gender issues were taken as case studies, namely: the debate on equality and the universality of rights during the Constituent Assembly (1975); the debates on reproductive rights and abortion in 1984 and 1997; the "Parity Parliament", an initiative put together in 1994, which intended to raise awareness to gender inequalities in politics, considered to be the precursor of the parity law approved in 2006.

An integrated content analysis of the journalistic text and visual analysis of the photographs published in four Portuguese daily and weekly newspapers (Diário Popular, Diário de Notícias, Correio da Manhã and Expresso) was used to assess how the participation of female deputies during the three analysed debates was perceived and presented by the journalists. A total of 15 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with parliamentary reporters and female deputies, in order to explore media professionals and politicians perceptions regarding media visibility strategies and approaches towards gender issues. An historical evolution of the representativeness of female parliamentary deputies is briefly introduced to provide context and to strengthen the articulation we wish to demonstrate between political ideologies, progressive gender policies and press coverage framings.

Keywords

Journalism; Parliament; politics; feminine

1. Introduction and methodology

This article draws upon the research project "Feminine Politics"[1], intended to assess the representation of female members of the Parliament (MPs) and "gender issues" across four periods of the Portuguese democracy, spanning from 1975 to 2002: the revolutionary period (1974-1976); the Central Block (1983-1985), a governmental coalition of the two main Portuguese political parties; the "Cavaquismo" (1985-1995), during which Cavaco Silva headed a right wing government; and the "Guterrismo" (1995-2002), when the socialist António Guterres was prime minister. For each period we selected three case studies: the debate on the equality grammar and the universality of rights during the Constituent Assembly (1975); the parliamentary debates on reproductive rights; the "Parity Parliament", in 1994, intended to promote gender parity in politics.

An integrated analysis of the journalistic text and image, along with the reflexion based on contextual quantitative and qualitative data, allowed us to answer the following questions: How was the participation of female MPs at the Parliament translated into journalistic press discourses? How was the evolving role and representativeness of female MPs affecting their media coverage?

The research combines three methodologies, aimed to grasp multiple dimensions readings, namely in social, political and journalistic terms. We started with the identification and characterization of the universe of the female MPs that held seats, from the Constituent Assembly (1975-1976) until the XIX legislature (2009-2011), compiling the corresponding database and the production of a vast profile of women MPs and their political representativeness.

Two additional methodologies were used to analyze the press coverage, quantitatively and qualitatively, enabling the assessment of the representation of female MPs across the chosen newspapers for each political period. The journalistic articles were selected taking into account the identified case studies, including written and visual content.

We also conducted and recorded 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight parliamentary journalists and seven female MPs from various political parties, in order to track their impressions about mutual professional interactions and their vision about how gender equality issues are addressed through parliamentary initiatives and journalistic discourse. The questions addressed to female MP's were focused on their media visibility

[1] The research project was developed between 2010-2013, within Media and Journalism Research Centre, and was financed by Science and Technological Foundation (cfr. http://www.cimj.org/politicanofeminino/projecto.html).

strategies and professional interactions with journalists, as well as their perceptions about journalistic framings concerning their own political work and participation. Parliamentary reporters were mainly questioned about their professional routines regarding issue relevance and political sources, and also their perceptions about the journalistic coverage of gender issues and female participation at the Parliament.

2. Female representation in the portuguese parliament since 1974: a brief historical perspective

Prior to April 1974, the political rights of women were limited in Portugal: in addition to important limitations in the exercise of the vote, few have spoken in the organs of sovereignty. The Portuguese women's social condition was characterised by great stagnation. The participation of women in political life as a historical, formal and institutional reality truly begins in Portugal following the Democratic Revolution of 1974 and as a consequence of the transition process to democracy.

Law shall be determinant for the consecration of the equality grammar – immediately following the revolution, through infra-constitutional legislation, ensuring women the right to vote without constraints and the accession to careers prohibited to them in the past (in diplomacy, judicature and local political institutions). Noteworthy is the pioneering role of the Portuguese Constitution of 1976, which comes to attribute equal civil and political rights to men and women.

In the last legislature of the "New State" (1973) the percentage of women elected to the National Assembly amounted to 6.1% (9 female MPs among 148 members, the greatest female representation in that organ during the whole period of Estado Novo – 1933-1974). In the Constituent Assembly of 1975, whose primary mission was to draw up the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, 19 women were elected MPs and a total of 27 performed mandate. This presence has configured an effective female representation in the Constituent Assembly – assessed regarding to the time of exercise of the mandate[2] – of 9.1%. The composition of the electoral lists

[2] To deepen the study of representation of women in Parliament, we constituted a MPs database, with the aim of registering and characterize all women holders of parliamentary mandates between 1976 and 2011. In addition to the number of female parliamentary mandate holders, we measured the exact time each exercised the respective mandate, which allowed us to calculate the actual representation. The database of members is composed of a total of 583 entries, corresponding to each parliamentary mandate exercised by women, between the Constituent Assembly and the XI Legislature (2009-2011). Taking into account that several women performed more than one term as MPs, the 583 records correspond, in fact, to 331 different women.

for the Constituent Assembly of 1975 already denotes a purpose to integrate women, acknowledged the undemocratic character of the exclusion of women from the political institutions.

The influence of an international agenda pointing out the gender inequalities should also be highlighted, since 1975 was consecrated Woman International Year by the United Nations. Observing the period subsequent to the Constituent Assembly, between 1976 and 2011, 374 women were elected to parliamentary mandate in 12 legislative elections. Only in the legislative elections of 1987 the number of female MPs elected reached the number of female mandates achieved in1975, 12 years after the formation of the Constituent Assembly (19 mandates, 7.6% of the total elected).

In 1979, the appointment of Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo to lead a Government of presidential initiative (the V Constitutional Government) – the second female Prime Minister of Europe, after Margaret Thatcher – did not reflect itself, in the immediate years, as an inspiring factor for the increasing of female participation within formal political institutions (Martins, 2013). Moreover, only in 1985, a woman would integrate again in ten years a Government as a minister. However, the period previous to 1985 is a relevant one concerning the MPs activities, such as the discussion of the right to abortion and contraception.

Only in the legislative election of 1995, 20 years after the first free elections in Portugal, the percentage of female MPs elected surpassed the barrier of 10% (12.2%, corresponding to 28 mandates). In the following elections, this figure increased consistently, overcoming the level of 20% in the elections of 2005. Both 1995 and 2005 coincide with the beginning of socialist political cycles.

Within the scope of the project "Feminine Politics", we considered insufficient to restrict the analysis to electoral representation by sex, whereas it would be necessary to capture the dynamics of the functioning of the Parliament, with successive replacements of members throughout a parliamentary term.

The effective representation of women in Parliament is higher than the one achieved through elections. Actual representation shows that women overcame 10% of parliamentary representation already in the V legislature (1985-1987), the first term of a political cycle of 10 years of social-democratic majority. But, in convergence with the analyses carried out from the election results, it is from the VI parliamentary term (1987-1991) onward that the female presence in Parliament showed a consistent and consolidated uptrend, surpassing the 20% in 1999 and the 30% in 2005.

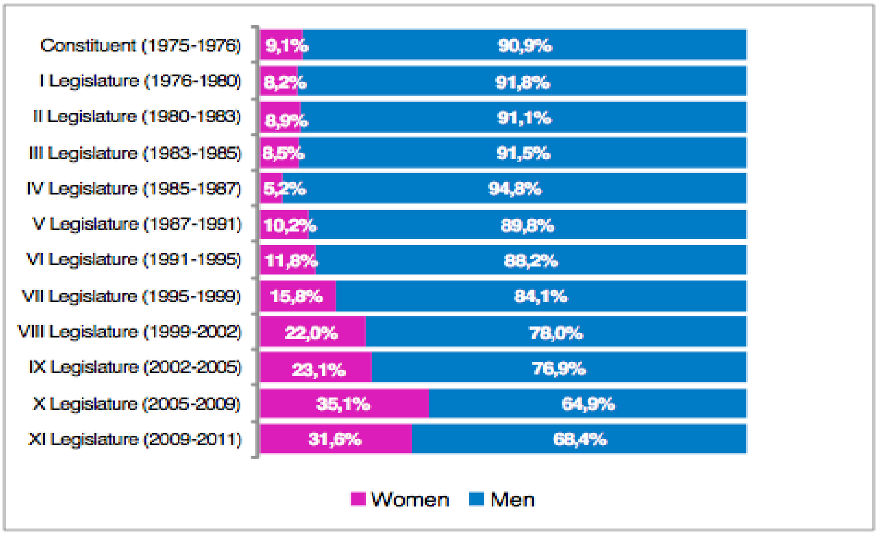

Figure 1: Effective representation of MP mandates holders, by sex, from the Constituent Assembly to the XI Legislature (1975 to 2011) N = 4549 (Total number of holders of MPs mandates from the Constituent Assembly to the XI legislature (1975-2011); Men=3966; Women=583)
Source: Project Feminine Politics

Public policies relating to gender equality and parity in this period were essentially driven by exogenous factors related to the country's integration in the then European Economic Community. Documents guiding European public policies naturally impacted on internal policies, such as the Community programs on equal opportunities for women. Other diplomas driven from internal policies focused in the grammar of gender egalitarianism.

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women had some impact on a national level, with the Portuguese Government endorsing the Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). We emphasise the centrality of gender equality, parity and women's rights especially during the Socialist power cycles after 1995, which consistently is reflected upon the greater number of female representatives in political institutions. Presumably, the visibility of such matters in the public agenda, influencing the patterns of recruitment of political parties to the Assembly of the Republic. From 1995's onward, the leverage of female political participation in Parliament tends to coincide with socialist political cycles.

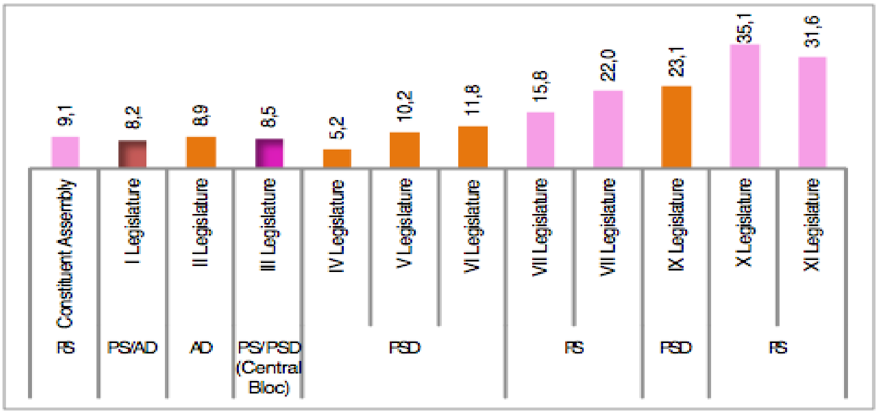

Figure 2: Effective representation of women MP mandate holders, by political cycles (1975 to 2011)
N = 583 (Total number of women holders of MPs mandates from the Constituent Assembly to the XI legislature (1975-2011)
Source: Project Feminine Politics

During the VII Legislature, in 1997, the fourth revision of the Constitution paved the way for the adoption of mechanisms for positive discrimination to encourage parity in politics. In 1999 it was submitted the first proposal for the introduction of a "quotas law". In 2006, the law of gender parity in politics was approved. It contributed to diminish the gender disproportion in the political arena, instituting a minimum of one third of candidates of both sexes in electoral lists in municipal, legislative and European parliamentary elections, with reflection on the results.

3. Gender equality and press coverage

In contemporary democratic societies, media are bound to fit the ideal of transparency and plurality. Normative media theories usually suggest roles or functions, including to monitor (power); to facilitate (argumentative dispute and legitimate political struggle); to radicalize (support change and reform) and to collaborate (with economic and political power).

According to Clifford G. Christians (2009, p. 32),

> the media do not operate in a societal vacuum but are continually engaged with other social actors as well as with their audience. The media can be differentiated in terms both of their relations with power in society (dependent or oppositional) and of their degree of participations as actors in political and social events.

The practice of journalism is never disconnected from the positioning of the practitioners in relation to a normative ideal, whose presence is felt more or less intense depending on individual motivations and sensitivities, editorial guidelines and newsroom cultures.

The in-depth interviews conducted along the research with eight parliamentary reporters working for various media (press, television, radio and national news agency), six female and 2 male journalists since the Portuguese parliamentary reporters community is highly feminized, revealed the importance attached to the translation of values in professional practice. Q.[3] works for the national news agency LUSA since 1998 and highlights:

> LUSA has greater obligations than other media outlets. The question of pluralism is essential. As a public service, we can not fail to cover events that others may leave out.

S., who joined the team of parliamentary reporters from public radio Antena 1 since 1996, emphasizes the respect for pluralism:

> We are concerned to give the point of view of all parties. There is a concern about the balance, without losing the newsworthiness criterion.

J., parliamentary journalist for 20 years, currently working for TSF, a private informative radio, points out the professional dilemma regarding the canon of objectivity:

> TSF has a blog called Politics Writing. When the idea came up, the direction wanted to do an opinion blog. I felt it would be difficult to maintain the distance. In what extent can I opine?

Herbert Gans (1980, p. 206) discriminates a set of interior "values" guiding journalists in their quest for the newsworthy "outer" reality and founded eight persistent and "enduring values": ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, pastoralism, individualism, moderation, social order and national leadership.

These values form a set of relatively crystallized ideas and create a structured journalistic framework. According to Gans (1980, p. 206), some derive from the reporters own sources of information: "The enduring values are part and parcel of news judgment; but even so, they are not, strictly

[3] We will refer to the journalists interviewed through their first name initial and the name of their media employer.

speaking, professional values. They do not reflect technical expertise; rather, they are ingredients in a vision of the good society and nation".

It is important to retain two distinctive features of journalism - on the one hand, its apparent ideological affiliation to a progressive rhetoric and, on the other, its permeability to the values of "powerful" sources - to try to understand why an empathic goal as gender equality regarding women's participation and representation in politics, is so persistently perceived as lacking the relevance to attract the attention of parliamentary journalists.

S., a former parliamentary reporter serving the newspaper Público, corroborates how gender equality is such a minor item among the journalistic agenda:

> For years and years I have a great battle here in the newspaper: to fight for gender inequalities to be covered. Because it's something that no one cares.

Powerful sources are defined by its ease access to the media and the ability to create appropriate news. The institutionalization of Portuguese democracy restored the centrality of Parliament within the country political life. The dynamics and struggles drawn by election results were intensified and even dramatized and parliamentary coverage become an essential routine for political journalists.

The parliamentary reporters interviewed share the belief that editorial directors and political leaders rarely subjected their work to explicit constraints. The freedom experienced in the choice of topics and frameworks is a positively valued variable in the testimonies and one of the reasons given to explain why most of these veteran journalists enjoy their long stay in the Parliament, despite the notice of significant changes across time regarding the formats, content and channels of parliamentary news.

D., former sports journalist who joined the team of parliamentary reporters of the weekly newspaper Expresso, reports:

> In Express I had a week to write and I wanted to provoke things, create sections, track political commissions. In sports newspapers, where I started my career, one had to chronicle the game and another would make the cabins. What were the cabins? Cabins were the declarations behind the scene. I think I went to the Assembly to do the cabins.

S., reporter at the daily Público underlines the importance of informal spaces for newsgathering, if one seeks to do more than just to report the parliamentary agenda:

> It's a more reflective work (...) In addition to the plenary, there is a work that I would call to do the pools, which is to walk there in the aisles to see with who we are going to stumble. Because that's how you make parliamentary journalism: you talk to people and the news eventually flows. Like any other type of journalism based in sources, you have to invest a lot in conversation, often without any aim, but you feed a relationship so that one day, when there is news, it will eventually fall on you lap. Parliament was that for we, years around those corridors, around the chamber, to sit on the couch, waiting for persons, chatting...

P. started to do parliamentary reporting for the daily Diário de Notícias in the early 1990's and recalls the difficulties experienced when the newspaper, after privatization in 1992, began to compete for exclusive anticipated information:

> I went to the Parliament when Público was doing a very aggressive dynamic coverage and private televisions had just been born - SIC and TVI. Diário de Notícias was still very attached to the traditional coverage of Parliament, which was to do only what was happening in the plenary room. I started trying to find sources of information outside of plenary, getting first-hand information, anticipating things ... for a year I went through so much to get assert myself as a journalist within that space.

The multiplication of events, the diversity of topics covered daily and the urgency imposed by time routines force journalists to make a very pragmatic management of their sources of information.

F., parliamentary journalist working for the weekly Expresso, defines how he values deputies:

> Nobody can be an expert in Parliament because Parliament deals with everything. The most important is to have an informed representative telling me that what is in stake, what is their position and the position of the other parties.

In a complex environment, constantly changing, subjected to the unstable game of politics, where specialized information circulates abundantly, journalists need to establish relationships of trust with their sources of information, whose anonymity is protected with frequency.

J., political editor at Diário de Notícias, discriminates the qualities of what is considered a "good" deputy:

> They have to tell the truth. The confidentiality of the source is an agreement and implies a relationship of trust: I will not reveal the source of this story, but you just tell me the truth and nothing but the truth.

Gender rights, and especially its episodic manifestations in the political parliamentary discussion, with debates emerging in specific and scattered initiatives, rather than in a continuum provided by a stable commission, hardly allows anyone to arise as an issue specialist, provided with a strong technical background that reporters can rely on.

Instead, gender equality initiatives tend to be associated with personal believes and rejected by journalists on the basis that it lacks a broader public interest.

The visibility of the parliamentary protagonists is rarely founded on the logic of an individual crusade. Rather, the construction of a parliamentary career and the conquest of media visibility associated with the exercise of this position requires technical competence and recognized peer policy, fluency with specific themes within the political agenda and public intervention opportunities. The occupation of leadership positions, from leading the bench to chairing political commissions, are the main factors that journalists take into account when choosing their interlocutors.

John Corner (2003, p. 74) refers how the evolution of modern politics tends to position the politicians as members of an administrative elite, from who certain performances are expected under the appropriate institutional context, relegating to the background the figuration of the politician as *persona*:

> Insofar as political practice has become an exercise in managerial competence within broadly consensual frameworks of action, the status of politicians as part of an administrative elite rather than as agents of debate about principle and value is a significant shift. It reinforces a tendency towards an internalist (specialist, self-referencing) rather than public-oriented culture, the latter relationship being seen an increasingly the realm of auxiliary specialists, public and press relations advisors.

Digital journalism, the 24 hours news channels and social networks require constant attention from journalists, accelerating the need for the renewal of informative content and changing profoundly the routines of parliamentary journalism.

M., editor at Antena 1, refers to the type of parliamentary coverage carried out by television, in particular the 24 hours informative channels, using live transmission and constantly asking deputies for reactions to all sort of themes and declarations.

> Televisions provide the shallowness of the reaction. And what is this reaction? Sometimes it is not the most important. In the television time it makes no sense to deepen an issue, it loses the rhythm (...) For cable TV, Parliament is a cheap stage. If television gave, I also have to give, the newspaper also have to give ... we all drag each other.

Media visibility of the MPs is affected and shaped by all these contemporary parliamentary trends coverage that we have been describing. It is becoming less attached to the assertiveness and effectiveness of their plenary interventions and increasingly determined by the attendance of television and radio programs, uttering short statements, recording sound bites and following leadership bench party leader's strategies.

P. refers to the increasing intensity and speed of reporting:

> Parliamentary groups have become much more professional and comment everything quickly (...) we all have less time to do in-depth research.

Corner (2003, p. 74) mentions two "spheres" whose good management is essential to achieve success in building a political career: the first plays with the skills to work within the institution and the political process qualities and is not directly mediated by the media; the second, which the author calls "public and popular", involves all dimensions through which a politician is seen as a "public figure", constituting the space of "demonstrable representativeness".

The same author (2003, p. 75) suggests that we may see the first sphere as "the workplace" and the second as "the store":

> Election periods will clearly produce phases of more intensive and more openly adversarial competition between *personas* and between policies as the significance of the broader sphere in relation to the narrower one increases (the "shop" temporarily becomes both primary and crucial).

Using this metaphor, we risk saying that female MPs, in general, do well in the workplace but rarely go to the store. Maria de Belém, socialist deputy since 1999, stated during the research-oriented interview:

> Politics is visibility and visibility has risks. The risk can easily turn into an accident. And an accident involving women has more journalistic visibility. Female errors are punished

> with a fierce scrutiny and even biased news (...) I have no visibility strategy for one reason: the normal strategy of visibility of men in politics is to cultivate a very strong relationship with journalists to whom they pass information. I just give my opinion when asked about political issues.

The lack of media visibility of women in politics, partially because they are systematically distant from leadership positions and greater public exposure, has not improved with the approval of the Parity Law in 2006. This perception is unanimous among parliamentarian journalists, as illustrated by the following statements:

> Despite there are more women within the parties, including a female President of the Assembly, we don't notice more political weight of women in this legislature. (J., TSF)

> You see more women in the stands, but we do not see the corresponding legislative process and there are even fewer female protagonists than before. (S., Antena 1)

> If we look at the names chairing the political commissions, they are all men. Which brings us to the same back question: quotas were implemented but women are not in the top spots nor in party leaderships, and the main debates and key tasks are not assigned to them. (A., SIC)

> I cannot explain why women remain in the shade. Men impose themselves when they are ahead of the parliamentary groups. They are always involved. Parliamentary leaders are very important, leaders designate who will participate in debates and designate who will stay ahead of all the important commissions. (A., Visão magazine).

The public visibility of figures associated with certain causes is not a negligible factor in the context of democratic political struggle. Simons (2003, p. 173) argues that the process of building legitimacy is played not only at the level of governments and elites, but also in the realm of popular culture. The media are important elements in this process, for its ability to attract cross public:

> Political publics such as those who constitute the "chattering Westminster classes" or the Washington insider circles must rely and engage in much broader media relays to secure popular consent (...) The principles of democratic

> government require competing political publics, however narrowly defined they are in social terms, to immerse themselves in "popular reality" which is a democratised media sphere.

The ability to play this game in mediated democracy requires access to the media, but also a cultural capital and a genuine desire to communicate with citizens. The apparent aridity of the feminist agenda as it is articulated within the political and the journalistic discourse promotes its disconnection from the "popular reality", that is, from everyday community life.

The impoverishment of the public debate resulting from a distorted representation of parliamentary activities and protagonists is rooted on a set of reasons. We enhance the internal logic of political parties regarding the distribution of positions within the parliamentary bench, with a historical exclusion of women; the news values operated by journalists, which mimic the practices and figures of power, as well as their "truth telling practices".

Female MPs is a falsely unifying expression referring to an extreme diverse human reality. Ideological differences, partisan cultures and power positions are much stronger builders of the professional identity of deputies and nurtures of their paths, initiatives and vote orientations, than gender affiliations.

The Portuguese political parties have chronically uneasy relationships with their female subcultures. Margarida Salema, jurist, former MP elected by the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and one of the mentors of the Parity Parliament, told during the research interview how this initiative to promote greater participation of women in politics was presented and negotiated in 1994:

> My contacts were always with the head of the parliamentary group. There were no discussions with women party militants because the PSD doesn't have any female structure. The PSD has a quarter of women activists, therefore, the representation of them in the political organs of the party is very scarce.

The argument of women lacking political experience is often used to justify its removal from leadership positions or their lower willingness to cooperate with the media. But the quantitative data collected by this research project demonstrates that a very significant percentage of women elected to the Republic Assembly over 36 years of democracy (between 1975 and 2011), has extensive political experience. During the VII and VIII legislatures (1995-2002), with several years of European integration already elapsed and, therefore, a greater familiarity with the vocabulary and the needs imposed by a gender equality policy, the variable of having previous political experience had already become greatly enhanced.

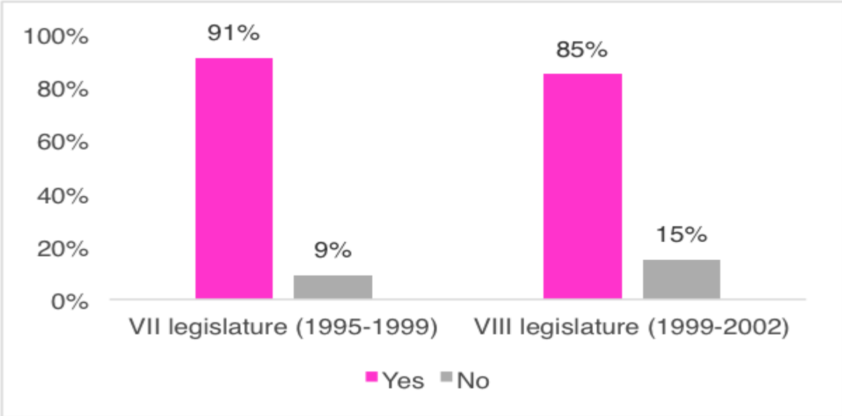

Figure 3: Previous political experience of female MPs during the VII legislature (1995-1999) and the VIII legislature (1999-2002)
Source: Project Feminine Politics

Data collected by the research project also shows that, in addition to the possession of political experience, professional experience and high academic qualifications, female deputies, in general, have a long parliamentary career, being successively re-elected. This trend cuts across all parties.

The poor visibility of their initiatives lies not in any intrinsic qualities of the group, but rather is due to most political parties' structural dynamics regarding the ways roles and power are distributed within the parliamentary bench.

The productive routines operated by parliamentary journalists to face their daily professional agenda are also part of the problem, and not part of the solution. Journalists tend to follow the "versions of the history" vaunted by the interlocutors appointed by party leaders and to engage into narrative frameworks emphasizing the typical values of partisan political dispute, namely, power struggle.

4. Images in focus: the photojournalistic coverage of parliamentarians

We envisage discourse as a social practice that not only shapes our understanding of the world but also positions each and everyone of us in a social hierarchy of class, gender and power (Hall, 1984; Wodak & Meyers, 2001). Images are included in the concept of discourse and journalism is an important social institution that participates in the construction of social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1999; Tuchman, 2002), precisely through the power of mediation, using texts, sounds and images across a large social set.

Images play an important role in contemporary press and their presence have rapidly increased since digital processes were set in use in every Portuguese newsroom, changing newspapers designs in many ways (Mendes Flores, 2014). Contemporary cultures are bound to visuality and images became an indispensable communicative resource in a multiplicity of displays. There is a lasting tradition privileging vision in western cultures that was enhanced by digital technologies, favouring an effective crave for the visual, obliging researchers to take images into consideration (Mirzoeff, 2002; Mitchell, 2002; Jay, 1994).

With an historical overview, across the different political periods under study, this research intended to assess the ways men and women parliamentarians have been depicted in press photographs, considering photography's impact in the reproduction of social values and stereotypes, namely gender ones. For 'gender values' we assumed the different symbolic meanings assigned to each gender as their hegemonic identities under patriarchy, which were summarized by many authors (Goffman, 1979; Schouten, 2011). Visual representations of these values include the analysis of poses, looks and gestures, actions and scenarios represented in press photos as well as the textual context in which they are included, using a semiotic approach coined in the work of Roland Barthes (1984; 2008) and Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuween (2006). We developed a mixed methodology, both quantitative and qualitative, applied to all photographies published in the newspapers considered in our study, found in news pieces concerning the debates on women's rights, namely, as was already mentioned, the ones concerning Abortion Laws and Parity Laws[4].

[4] For quantitative analysis we set up a group of five major variables with multiple indexes concerning an amount of contextual and formal visual features, such as the presence of male and/or female MPs in the photos, the type of events represented and where they took place, the kind of actions and gestures represented and the type of relations to subtitles and titles, just to give the examples discussed as followsThe five major groups of variables were: 1. General Indicators: name of newspaper; date of publication; number of images published in the article; title of the article; gender event (Abortion or Parity discussions); 2. Image General Characterization: image type (cartoon, photography, illustration, infographics); page location; prominence of photo in the page; image authorship; image source; 3. Image Rhetorics: photojournalistic genre; image temporality; image/text relations; 4. Image Formal Analysis: type of framing; point of view; composition; focus and relation with spectator; 5. Image Content: characters portrayed (MPs, ministers, party members, others); number of characters represented;

We gathered 271 journalistic news pieces with 342 photographic images, from which 300 photos were published during the press coverage of the three legislative debates on abortion laws, whereas 42 concern parity legislation. These figures immediately indicate how media agendas valued the abortion issue and disregarded the parity question.

From the total amount of photos, 197 portrayed MPs, equivalent to 58% of the corpus. Considering our corpus is centred in parliamentary actors, an important number of photos portrayed other characters, mostly members of government and of the Catholic Church (in the case of the Abortion Law discussions). This indicates the prominent role of the government members in the press when compared to parliamentarians.

From the total of 197 photos with MPs, there are 5% less photos with women MPs: 68 photos (20% of the total) included women members of the parliament (represented alone, with other women MPs or with government characters or other characters); 87 photos (25,4%) included men members of the parliament (represented alone, with other men MPs, government characters or other characters) and 42 photos (12%) represented male and female MPs together.

Bearing in mind that there are less female than male MPs during the period of our study (1975-2002)[5], we may not state that women are under represented in the press photos under study. However, "being present" is not enough to understand the modes of representation. We must have in consideration *how* they appear represented.

About 27% of the photos portraying MPs only show faces, 35 male faces and 19 female faces, but when depicting actions (about 35% of MPs' photos) most of the pictures represent women and men MPs in the Parliamentary Chamber. However, in the case of men they also are depicted outside of the Parliament and involved in other actions besides addressing the Chamber, a rare case for women. Women MPs are often present in press photos because of their participation in the works during debate sessions and have little or no representation in "other" events[6].

gender of characters represented; gender of MPs represented; male or female protagonism; women visibility in the photo (main character; secondary character or shill); type of event; place of the event; public or private sphere of the event; name of character; political party of the character; type of gestures represented (indexes of facial and body postures were considered). Two independent researchers did codification and divergences were debated. No other reliability coefficients were considered.

[5] In average, during this period, there are 12% women MPs and 88% men in the Portuguese parliament (source: Feminine Politics Project).

[6] 21 photos show men addressing the chamber, while in 27 they are in "other" events. Women are depicted addressing the Chamber in 22 photos, however only 11 photos in "other events". This

We conclude that to hold a parliamentary mandate is more crucial for women's media visibility when compared to men, whom tend to be heard in other situations of their parties' life and are expected to be more influential than women in the same positions (Cabrera, Mendes Flores, Martins & Mata, 2012, p. 179).

The data shows the importance of the Parliament when it comes to the representation of women in leading roles. There is a difficulty of both men and women MPs to gain visibility when competing with members of government or Party leaders. Holding a powerful leading political position is one of the most common news values granting media visibility to a person. If leading positions are mostly occupied by men this will result in a major presence of male characters in political news. However, the expectation about the ability to influence other leaders also plays a role in photographic exposure. This expectation is influenced by gender and overcomes the simple holding of a powerful position (Cabrera et al., 2012, pp. 180-181).

One of the variables used to quantify differences in visual representation was the depiction of "protagonism" that tries to determine who is the subject or main character portrayed in a photo in terms of gender. The main conclusion is that male MPs lead in 25% of the photos (85 photos) and female MPs appear as main characters in about 18% of the cases (61 photos). These numbers change drastically if we consider all politicians and professions appearing in the photos and not only members of Parliament. In this case, 56% of all photos portray a male leading subject and only 27% a female one. Only about 7% of these photos portray equivalent leading roles of both men and women represented together. But when it comes to MPs photos this number of equivalent leadership declines for 4,3% (and 11 photos). Even rarer are the photos where women are leaders *in the presence of men* (2,3%, only 8 photos).

While figure 4 is an example of equality visually represented, figures 5 and 6 show male and female leaderships, respectively. These examples illustrate the cases where both men and women parliamentarians are depicted together in the same photo and give qualitative evidence to these later numbers about visual representation of leading actions. These exemples highlight the difficulties concerning equality portrayals.

In Figure 4, a woman MP is represented in the active role of speaking to a male counterpart. There is a balanced representation of leadership.

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summarizes the results about the categories "Local of the event" (Chamber of the Parliament/ Outside the Parliament); "Event" portrayed in the photos (Addressing chamber/ meetings/ press conferences/other);

Although he is listening to her (usually taken as a more passive behaviour), composition and framing didn't detach her in anyway. There is a balanced representation of both figures. His posture, lining a bit towards her, also account for a connotative sense: the idea that he is "flirting" while she is speaking so enthusiastically. Transforming the political encounter into a romantic one devaluates her active posture by not taking her seriously. These connotative meanings are produced by the freezing of the action and induced by gestures and attitudes but also by the presence of the balcony behind them, that remind representations of courtesan love. The use of recognizable cultural *topos* makes images more meaningful and constitute the general framework of stereotyping processes (Huthamo, 2011).

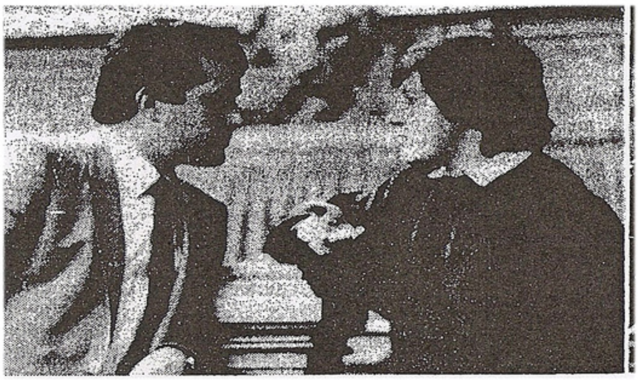

Figure 4: Diário de Notícias, 27th January,1984 Photograph by António Aguiar

Figure 5: Diário de Notícias, 14th February1997 Photograph by Bruno Peres

Figure 6: Diário de Notícias, 5th March, 1999
Photograph by Leonardo Negrão

In Figure 5, we considered the MP on the far right as the leader of the portrayed actions. Even if the caption gives leadership to the group, as the all group is the subject of the written sentence, composition and framing detach him. He was, in fact, at that time, the leader of the parliamentary socialist group. The line, constituted by the balcony, redirects our look towards him. On the left side of the image, the man turning his back towards the spectator produces an effect of re-framing that helps detaching the main character on the right. All men are looking at or interacting with him while the woman is pensive!

Both men and woman participate in the negotiations going on, but the leader is catching most of our attention also as a result of the vectors in the image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) designed by the other participants' look (remark those in the background, that help conveying importance to the event in the foreground). In contrast, the female MP is with her eyes down: a gesture found quite often when considering female MP portraits, indicating a traditional image of modesty in patriarchal societies.

Another important aspect of this image is the way the leader is surrounded by the others: this was a major difference found in the visual representation of men and women MPs. Leadership is marked through "entourage". Women tend to be framed alone or cut out from action and represented interaction. Framing tends to isolate women, turning their images into conceptual descriptive images instead of narrative images depicting actions and active subjects (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Numbers show 52 cases of "open framing" for men MPs, corresponding to 30 for women, while "closed framing" appear in 38 cases for female parliamentarians and 35 for men.

In figure 6, we have an example of a photo portraying a woman's protagonist among her counterparts, both men and women. This framing is very typical of leadership, representing the leader in the centre of the composition surrounded by the followers. However, in this case, the female MP is not being "followed" by those surrounding her, as they were depicted in a moment of distraction, thus underestimating her leading role. This turns out to be as if she is alone, the most common situation when it comes to framing women in the Parliament.

Typical frames of female MPs often detach them from context and isolates them from the group, thus transforming potentially "narrative images" into "conceptual" ones and turning women from potential leaders into objects of the gaze. In addition, the MP of figure 6 is portrayed with strange gestures and postures, thus making her *mis*placed within an (otherwise) common depiction of leadership.

5. Final remarks

To paraphrase the title of a Brazilian researcher article[7], the relationship of women MPs with the media has been "bitter". In all European democracies, constitutions and legal frameworks ensure the possibility of full participation of women in all spheres of public life. But, in practice, women remain on the margins of political institutions. According to Paxton and Hughes (2007, p.101), "the lack of visible women in the political life of nation after nation suggests that veiled discrimination against women remains".

The journalistic representation of female politicians plays an important role in the creation, within the voters, of perceptions and attitudes promoting a more egalitarian political praxis in terms of gender. Our study on visual representations of men and women MPs in press photos shows that there are less 5% of women MPs in the photos than men. We may not state, statistically, that women MPs are underrepresented when considering the events studied. But questions are raised concerning the ways women MPs

[7] Maria Cecília Garcia (2002), "A Amarga Relação da Mulher com os Meios de Comunicação de Massa". In Schaun, Ângela (organizadora), *Género, Mídia e Sociedade,* Expressão e Arte Editora, pp. 11-21.

are represented when compared to male parliamentarians. Women parliamentarians are represented fewer times as the main characters of the actions portrayed in the photos; they are often framed isolated from context while men are shown with an "entourage" of followers; events such as addressing the chamber play a decisive role in the photographic visibility of a woman MP while men with equivalent status are less dependent on their parliamentary work, being able to attract the media on a larger sort of occasions and places.

The holding of important political positions within party structures, more often attributed to men, is a crucial news value as well as the agonistic and controversial relevance of political issues, usually assigned to men by their party's leaders. This contributes to a differentiated horizon of expectations among journalists that do not contribute to enhance women visibility and equality in the press.

The sophistication of parliamentarian political communication, able to produce and circulate news of potentially gruelling speed events, and the subordination of journalism at that pace, has generated, instead, a concentration of the protagonists only in the most well known faces, and the dominance of journalistic frameworks centred on internal conflicts and disputes, rather than on the social dynamic process.

These frameworks favour a growing partisanship and masculinisation of political debate as already noted by other authors (Abranches & Ferreira, 1986, p. 483). Several studies seeking to understand how journalism is changing points to a threefold dynamic: "tabloidization, technology and truthiness" (Zelizer, 2009). This trio of concepts reflects concerns about the increasing trivialization of content; changes in professional practices and values imposed by digital newsrooms; and the question of truth telling modalities enabled by contemporary political culture and reproduced by journalism.

Within a broader context of major journalistic diversions, parliamentary political journalism remains a sort of "oasis": speech is serious, factual, analytical, narrated with sobriety and accuracy. But there is nothing like a gender equality concern in parliamentarian journalism.

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IV. Gender and Media Reception

Dey, A. (2016). A brief exploration of the effects of ICTs and social media on the gender activism in India post December 16th 2012. In C. Cerqueira; R. Cabecinhas & S. I. Magalhães (Eds.), *Gender in focus: (new) trends in media* (pp. 187-204). Braga: CECS.

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A brief exploration of the effects of ICTs and social media on the gender activism in India post december 16th 2012

Abstract

Over the last few decades, while information and communication technologies (ICTs) and social media have been increasingly popular and a widely used tool for activism around the world, it is only in the recent past that people have started using these technologies as an alternative platform for activism in India. One of the most extensive use of digital technologies was witnessed in the nationwide protests in India post the Delhi Nirbhaya rape case on December 16th 2012 making it one of the biggest gender movements that the country has witnessed. The focus of this research is to investigate the use ICTs and social media by civil society actors, activists and organisations specifically for gender activism in India. The cyberconflict framework forms the foundation of this paper. The cyberconflict framework developed by Karatzogianni (2006) uses elements of the social movement theory (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996), including the mobilizing structures, political opportunity and framing process, and combines it with media theory and conflict theory in order to understand the use of ICTs and social media in conflicts occurring in the cyberspace. In order to develop a critical analysis, a case study approach was adopted for this paper. The data was collected by conducting qualitative interviews along with analysing news reports published online, videos, articles on blogs and posts on social media sources such as Facebook and Twitter. Further thematic analysis was used to understand the nature and impact of use of ICTs and social media for gender activism in India.

Keywords

Digital activism; gender activism in India; cyberconflict theory; social media

1. Introduction

In India today it is estimated that there are about 243 million Internet users which represents a penetration of about 19.19% of the current population (Internetlivestats, 2014). According to a report published by the Internet and Mobile Association of India, there are 875 million mobile users in India and according to an Avendus Capital report, out of the total Internet users, 86 million accessed the internet on their mobile devices in 2013. (Singh, 12th january 2014). Cheaper smartphone and the growing telecommunications industry have together pushed India towards a digital revolution. Zafar Adeel, Director of the United Nations University's Institute of Water, Environment and Health and chair of UN-Water said, 'It is a tragic irony to think that in India, a country now wealthy enough that roughly half of the people own phones, about half cannot afford the basic necessity and dignity of a toilet' (United Nations, 2010). The diffusion and easy availability of mobile phone and social media has helped create a new platform for activism in India. Online activism escalated in India with the emergence of blogs around 2004 (Gurumurthy, 2004) and over the last decade it has encouraged the formation of new connections and collaboration between grassroots advocacy and service organizations, educational institutions, coalitions, unions, conferences, legacy media, policy makers, politicians, entrepreneurs, etc. Thus, as Morozov puts it, 'in the past we needed a fortune or, at least, a good name to cause much damage. Today all one needs is an Internet connection' (Morozov, 2009).

Violence against women is not an uncommon phenomenon in India and in many cases it often goes unnoticed. However, the rape case on 16th December 2012 in New Delhi was very different in this regard. This case generated 'both publicness and personalisation of rape' (Simon-Kumar, 2014) in a way that has not been seen before. India witnessed one of its biggest gender movement and social media and mobile phone played a huge role in it. This paper focuses on the gender activism in India after the December 16th, 2012 Delhi rape case and explores the effect of social media and ICTs in the process of mobilization and collective action. The Internet and mobile phones have given gender activism a new voice and new means of social movement and activism. This paper also explores the role played by ICTs and social media in keeping the gender movement in India alive for the last two years. Therefore, the main research question for the paper is to focus on the socio-political activism with the help of ICTs and social media in India after the rape case on December 16th 2012 and also exploring the advantages of ICTs and social media as a tool for gender activism in India.

2. Nirbhaya, december 16, 2012

On December 16th, 2012 a female psychotherapy student was gang raped by 6 drunken men in a moving bus in a popular area of New Delhi, the capital of India. She was with a male companion at the time who when tried to protest was beaten up and then their unconscious half naked bodies were thrown on the streets. When she was finally taken to the hospital, the doctors confirmed that she had undergone severe intestinal damage after being repeatedly hit by a blunt object on her abdomen. The blunt iron rod was also inserted into her private parts and a large part of her intestine was pulled out. After 13 days of struggle she died in the hospital. On complying with Indian laws the actual name of the victim was never released to the media and pseudonyms like 'Damini' (lighting), 'Jagruti' (awareness) and most commonly 'Nirbhaya' (the fearless one) were used to honour the victim's courage and struggle. This case is important to mention because it was perhaps the first time in post-independence India so many people from across the country united to fight for gender rights. India has not witnessed women's movements as big as this ever before and ICTs played a huge role in this.

Following the circulation of Indian media reports regarding the incident, huge protests broke out all over the country. Thousands swarmed the streets of Delhi following the death of the innocent victim, protesting for improvements to be made to matters concerning women's safety, women's rights and anti-rape laws. The internet was swarmed with news of the event and protests from people all over the world. It was something that India had never witnessed before. In this respect Barn commented, 'It is evident that India as a country is witnessing a significant technological revolution' (Barn, 9th January 2013). A social media boom happened in India in 2012. 'Research firm Socialbakers estimated in November 2012 that the number of Indian Facebook users swelled by 14 million in the past six months' (Anwer & Shrinivasan, 31st December 2012). In this respect Professor Barn from the University of London commented,

> So to what extent were the India protests organized by Twitter, Facebook and other forms of social media? And were these mass protests the Indian spring? Well - going by the headlines in Indian newspapers, social media has played a significant role - 'social media feeds protests fire', 'social media turns pivot for Delhi protests' and 'The year social media came of age in India'. (Barn, 9th January 2013)

3. The theoretical framework: ICT and social movement theory

Digital activism can be defined as political participation, activities and protests organized in digital networks beyond representational politics (Karatzogianni, 2006). McAdam et al. (1996) explains the emergence of social movements, their development and outcomes by addressing three interrelated factors namely mobilizing structures, opportunity structures and framing processes. The cyberconflict framework was developed by Karatzogianni (2006) which uses elements of the social movement theory (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996) including the mobilizing structures, political opportunity and framing process in order to understand the use of ICTs and social media in conflicts occurring in the cyberspace. The resource mobilization theory emphasizes the "significance of outside contributions and the cooptation of institutional resources by contemporary social movements' (Jenkins, 1983, p. 533). Resources like time, money, organisational skills and certain social and political opportunities are of outmost importance for the success of any social movement (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011).

4. Mobilizing structures

For any social movement to be successful, one of the main tasks of the mobilization process is to generate solidarity and commitment in the name of the movement. ICTs may be able to foster collective identity across a dispersed population, which organizers can then mobilize in support of collective action (Zald & McCarthy, 1979). Thus groups that are motivated by ideological commitment, sharing strong interpersonal networks and a distinct identity are more effective and can readily be mobilized. According to Tilly there are two reasons for why social integration or social solidarity facilitates mobilization. Firstly social solidarity provides people with a communal goal, a set of common values around which they can mobilize, a communication network and a structure of authority (Tilly, 1980). Secondly, solidarity makes bloc mobilization possible. Social movements can expand in two ways, either by recruiting individuals or by recruiting an entire bloc of previously mobilized people. 'Mobilization is made much easier when ongoing movements are able to draw previously established groups into their organization' (Useem, 1980, p. 357). Thus, bloc mobilization is impossible without the existence of a certain degree of solidarity within the community.

According to McCarthy (1996), the least organised end of the map of the mobilization network is families and networks of friends and a wide range of the local dissent is built upon the structures of everyday life. Kinship and friendship networks have been central to the understanding of movement recruitment as well as understanding the formation of emergent local movement groups (McCarthy 1996, p. 142). In this case the role of the informal structures of everyday life have been widely linked to movement mobilization where informal and less formal ties between people served as solidarity and a communication facilitating structure. Fireman & Gamson also have talked about how the existence of previous bonds makes solidarity behaviour a reasonable expectation. 'A person whose life is intertwined with the group [through friendship, kinship, organizational membership, informal support networks, or shared rela- tions with outsiders] ... has a big stake in the group's fate' (Zald & McCarthy, 1979). The idea of linking technology and participation helps in the promotion of collective identity and creating a perception among individuals that they are members of a larger community by virtue of the grievances they share (Garrett, 2006).

5. Opportunity structures

According to Garrett (2006), opportunity structures can be defined as attributes of a social system that facilitate or constrain movement activity. They shape the environment in which activists operate that must be taken into consideration when crafting their actions. McAdam (1996) suggests four dimension of the political opportunity structure that must be considered and they are relative accessibility of the political system, the stable or fragmented alignments among the elites, the presence of elite allies, and the states tendency and capacity to repress the movement (McAdam, 1996). Cultural factors and organisations factors are often included in the conceptual schemes of political opportunity so that collective actors can create as well as frame new opportunities for mobilization purposes (Ayres, 1999). In talking about the relationship between ICTs and opportunity structures Ayres (1999) states that ICTs in combination with the global economic processes results in contentious activities becoming increasingly transnational which in turn affects national level opportunity structures. On the other hand, it also results in the emergence of new avenues of transnational opportunity structures for collective action. He says, 'the Internet contributes to this internationalization of contentious activity... In effect, the Internet has become an international opportunity in its own right, as it provides disparate groups around the world with a means for collectively contesting new and emerging global arrangements' (Ayres, 1999, p. 136).

6. Framing process

The concept of framing can be derived from the works of Goffman (1974) where he states that frames denoted "schemata of interpretation" that enable individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" occurrences within their life space and the world at large (Goffman, 1974). Tarrow goes on to talk about the management of the frames as a crucial of collective action and the process of mobilization. He states that, 'building a movement around strong ties of collective identity, whether inherited or constructed, does much of the work that would normally fall to organization; but it can do the work of mobilization, which depends on framing identities so that they will lead to action, alliance, interaction' (Tarrow, 1998). Garrett (2006) states that the framing process as dependant on the flow of carefully crafted movement information, in the form of frames, across networks of influence. ICTs have helped create new networks over which these frames can be propagated and they have transformed the role of communication media in politics, making media skills, persuasion and socialization fundamental to contemporary contention (Castells, 1997). According to Garrett (2006) one of the most important changes associated with ICTs is its ability to bypass mass media outlets and using the Internet to promulgate a coherent frame.

7. Method

For the analysis of the activism after the Nirbhaya case, the data was collected in two stages. Firstly social media sources like Facebook and Twitter as well as news reports published online by Indian news agencies were looked at. This stage of data collection started right after the news was reported in order to get as much information as possible about the protest activities. The second part of data collection consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews, both in- person in India and over Skype. In this case snowball sampling was used to find individuals and organisations who participated in the protests. The people interviewed consisted of organisations, feminists, political activists, celebrities and also individuals who did not have any political or organisational ties but still participated in the protest activities. From these two sets of data, this paper examines the effects of social media and ICTs on the protests and how these can become a platform for gender activism in India.

8. The role of ICTs and social media in the Nirbhaya protests

When the news of rape on December 16th 2012 reached the masses it created an internet revolution that India had never witnessed before. It spread like wildfire and thousands of people gathered in streets of the country to protest. Nilanjana Roy was present at the protest march in the Raisina Hills in New Delhi and she wrote about her experience on her blog. Her account noted that it was predominantly a young crowd mainly consisting of students, young men and woman in their twenties. There were small groups of people who represented political organisations but it was mostly people who were drawn together only by their anger. Roy wrote, 'Almost all of them heard about the protest on Facebook and Twitter, or from friends - not through the mainstream media' (Roy, 22nd December 2012). A large group of young people especially students had come out onto the streets because they felt strongly for a cause. They lacked coherence and were often confused but their energy to participate for the cause and promote change was unparalleled (Roy, 22nd December 2012). To describe the mobilizing structure of the protest Barn has commented that, 'What has been striking about the Indian protests is that while they were led by both young men and women, who were educated, urban and middle class, they reached out and connected with others from a diverse range of backgrounds throughout Indian society' (Barn, 9th January 2013).

Active participants in a movement are usually networks of groups and organisations who mobilize and protest to promote or resist social change which is the ultimate goal of a social movement. However, in this case apart from groups and organisations there were also individuals who participated in protest activities and contributed resources without actually being attached to movement groups or organisations. There was sense of solidarity that the movement successfully created and this is evident from the following quote

> The position of women in society played a huge role in this movement. Women who are usually deprived in different ways and are taught to be quite, found a new voice within this movement. We were not alone anymore and we walked with people who shared and understood our everyday experiences. (Participant 1)

A large number of individuals came to know about the movement from friends or through social media and mobile phones.

> My friend messaged me about the protests in Delhi and asked me to come. But I know of a lot of people who got

> the information through Facebook, or through the people they followed on Twitter. (Participant 2)

The open, decentralized, non-hierarchical structures of this movement made it ideal for internet communication (Karatzogianni, 2006, p. 59). On a social media platform free speech is unhindered. 2012 saw social media creating a new phenomenon. 'It saw the rise of the virtually connected Indian youth which is likely to redraw the terms of engagement between the state and its urban population' (Anwer & Shrinivasan, 31st December 2012). In December 2012, a Pew Research study established that nearly 45% of Indian web users, most of them from urban areas, connect on social media to discuss politics (Bakshi & Mishra, 2014).

The diffusion of internet, mobile communication, digital media, social media, has led to the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication, that include the multimodal exchange of interactive messages from many to many both synchronous and asynchronous, that connect global and local at a chosen time leading to the formation of a networked society. This enables movement activists to gain international attention to their cause at unprecedented speed even without the support of mainstream media (Karatzogianni, 2006). The use of ICTs and social media also enabled individuals in the movement to control the media without any political influence and mass media became secondary to alternate forms of media that were used to grow the movement. Due the huge popularity of the movement it automatically received considerable support from the mainstream media. Also due to the large scale use of social media the government failed to anticipate the strength and intensity of the movement. The protestors wanted answers from the government and they had none. They were taken by surprise by both the rapidity and the popularity of the movement. 'For the government and keepers of law, it was a PR disaster. They had lost a battle they were accustomed to winning hands down. Now, there was a pesky entity the public seeking to change the rules of the game. A teenager armed with a smartphone had used the magic platform called social media to devastating effect, catching the agents of the state flatfooted' (Anwer & Shrinivasan, 31st December 2012)

Sharing of information has become extremely simple through text messages, blogs, vlogs, social media, RSS feeds, podcasts, mobile applications like Whatsapp and other similar technologies and this has given people the counter power to challenge power relations institutionalised in society. This serves as an extraordinary medium for people and groups to build movements and gain interest and participation both locally and globally. Nineteen year old Shambhavi Saxena was at the protests march in New Delhi on the 25th of December, 2012 that was broken up by the police and Saxena along with other agitators were taken into police custody (Anwer & Shrinivasan, 31st December 2012). On her way to the Police station and all the time while she was detained there she shared what was happening with the world through her tweets, 'Illegally being held here at Parliament St Police Station Delhi w/ 15 other women. Terrified, pls RT'(Barn, 9th January 2013). There was no denying that her voice was heard and more than one thousand and seven hundred people retweeted her SOS message. According to Favstar, a social media analytics site, her tweets reached over two hundred thousand people all over the world (Barn, 9th January 2013). This resulted in the galvanising of the civil society where activists and lawyers arrived at the police station where she was detained to provide her and the others arrested with help and advice. Celebrities and the common people from all over the world also joined in to condemn the police on different social media sites. The internet offered new and innovative opportunities for mobilizing and organizing individuals. Thus 'the space of the new social movements of the digital age is not a virtual space, it is a composite of the space of flows and of the space of places' (Castells, 2007, p. 13). Movements that emerge locally can lead to physical mobilization not only at the point of origination but can generate global interest and impact. It leads to the elimination of boundaries between the global and the local creating a new space for new social movements to act and flourish. In this context Castells states,

> Mass self-communication is self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many that communicate with many. We are indeed in a new communication realm, and ultimately in a new medium, whose backbone is made of computer networks, whose language is digital, and whose senders are globally distributed and globally interactive. (Castells, 2007, p.11)

The most important aspect of the Nirbhaya case was that it created a community which was held together by solidarity and understanding and that was primarily because they could relate to the incident. She was perhaps the ideal victim that could trigger a protest like this. She was educated, belonged to the urban middle class, she was accompanied by a male companion who would be expected to protect her, it was not late in the night, it happened in a very popular and populated area in one of the busiest cities in India. Everything about the circumstances was extraordinarily ordinary. Almost every urban middle class woman could relate to her background and circumstances and if it could happen to her it could happen to anyone. The protestors wanted answers from the government that had failed them and most certainly they wanted change and in order to achieve their goals they stood united. In taking about their reason for participating in the protest marches, one of the interviewees answered

> We were on the streets because we could no longer be in the house. We could not be caged. I wanted to see that we can walk together, believe together, say no together, say enough is enough together. People just opened their front doors and walked out. I don't know who I walked along side and I did not care....... The spirit was there, the will was there, the urge to get out was intense but we did not know where and when. Social media made it possible. Social media helped create Tahrir Squares all over India and it is social media that would generate the fuel required to propel gender movements in India. (Participant 4)

Social movements are dependent on and draw upon a larger societal context. Societal and cultural norms dictate and define injustice and violation. The current political and economic environment further fuelled the rise of the middle class. Over the months of April and May 2014 India witnessed one of the most controversial elections of recent times. Over the past two years several cases of corruption against the current government came to light leading to tremendous agitation especially amongst the middle class. Due to the gross corruption of those in public office and deeply unimpressive economic performance, India's annual growth rate sunk from 9.3% in 2010-2011 to under 5% in 2014 leading to huge amounts of public borrowing, substantial growth of the national deficit, inflation and the plummeting of the India rupee by more than 20% (Dalrymple, 12th May 2014). This incident came as a final blow to the government when it proved to the people of the country its failure to protect its citizens. Social media fuelled the anger that was already there. The people of the nation wanted change and this provided organisation and activists the perfect opportunity structure. Whilst talking about the Nirbhaya rape one of the interviewees commented,

> Nirbhaya represented the middle class sensitivity. She could have been anyone's daughter or sister. It is sad that it often takes something like this happening to someone

> belonging to the educated middle class to bring these issues into visibility. (Participant 3)

Meera Vijayan, a charity consultant said, ‘I have been hooted at, I’ve been called names and told to dress modestly, and let me remind you this is from people my own age and not older conservative people. This girl could have been me, it could have been any of my friends and no-one would have taken us seriously’ (Brown, 4th January 2013). The anger had been fuelling and the Nirbhaya case acted as a trigger and in blew into something big. For the last 2 years gender has been the epicentre of public discourse in India.

9. ICT and social media as tool for gender activism in India

The protests after the Nirbhaya case finally led to a change in the Indian Penal Code in order to provide more severe punishments for those convicted of sexual assault. It also proved to be a great example of the power of ICTs leading to a series of projects that were undertaken by the government, NGOs, media agencies or even individuals that used ICTs for gender activism in India. Identities formed within the movement were not limited to the movement itself and extend beyond it. This case also brought other gender related issues in the limelight including homosexuality and transgender related laws.

> The Nirbhaya case also proved to be a huge catalyst to bring many such gender related issues in the limelight and created a culture of protest for women’s rights. (Participant 3)

It also led to increased reporting of cases related to sexual assault and rape (Nelson, 16th December 2013). Various NGOs and feminist groups in India have found a new platform to voice their opinion and fight for the rights of women. The explosion of feminist blogs, online magazines, online petitions and social media campaigns in India are changing the way young entrepreneurs, leaders and grass-root activists perceive feminism and discuss the most pressing issues. In many cases, online feminist blogs have been called ‘the 21st century version of consciousness rising’ which constitutes as a ‘communications arm for the contemporary feminist movement and an inexhaustible force continually radicalizing and challenging its institutionalization’ (Martin & Valenti, 2012). Online feminism has the power to mobilise the young, the old and everyone in between and take political actions at an unprecedented scale at an unprecedented speed. So far, this power has often been used in an ad-hoc and unsustainable ways as opposed to being used more proactively. However, it has produced remarkable effects and changed the way advocacy and action functions and conducted within the feminist community.

Advancements in ICTs especially hand held computers, mobile phone and their links with the internet, has changed the way citizen groups mobilize, build coalitions, inform, lobby, communicate and campaign (Hajnal, 2002). In taking about advocacy an interviewee comments

> The Internet is a blessing for NGOs working with women. The small NGO community in India is always looking for ways that are low cost to spread awareness. The internet and mobile phones have enabled NGOs to mobilise people and build up movement at a remarkable speed and garner international attention. (Participant 5)

De Wilde *et al.* talk about the how organisations and the internet can mutually benefit from each other for further development. They say, 'The internet provokes innovation, but this innovation has to be organized and disseminated. NGOs are specially innovative in this field: not only has the internet helped these organizations, NGOs were also very important for the further development of the internet (De Wilde et al., 2003 in Van De Donk, Loader, Nixon & Rucht, 2004, p. 5). Large political organisations that are rich in resources use ICTs mainly to enhance internal or external communication and reduce cost but relatively new, small and resource-poor organisations tend to reject traditional politics and in many ways are defined by their online presence.

Several feminist blogs operating at the moment aim to spread awareness and educate people using new ICT tools. Erin Matson, the former Action Vice President of the National Organisation of Women commented that 'We can't move too quickly over the important cultural (and deeply political) feminist work that younger women are leading, largely online. All this work is rapidly building into a platform that has the power to force big policy changes, and that's exciting' (Martin & Valenti, 2012). On talking about the Nirbhaya case one of the activists interviewed said,

> The most important thing that emerged after the Nirbhaya case was the increased importance given to women's safety in public places. So women's safety has become the next sexy thing in development'. (Participant 6)

Organisations put more emphasis on how new technologies can be used to improve women's safety. Apps like 'VithYou', that is meant to be a panic button, gained a lot of attention. A lot of effort was also made by data collecting organisations and non-profits to try and create an unsafe map of different citifies in India. The primary aims of these mapping projects were to inform commuters which areas to avoid and then coordinate with the police to reorder and increase security in such areas. This information was mainly crowd sourced but they also devised algorithm to crawl the internet in order to acquire information about assaults in areas from verifiable sources like the newspapers. Online campaigning platforms also gained huge popularity. These online platforms used the very basic internet technologies to take the fight from the desk to the ground. Women have found their voice. More and more women are coming out of their traditional patriarchal upbringing and breaking the mould.

> The online petition platforms have actually been quite key. Two hundred thousand or three hundred thousand signatures on a petition do drive some amount of change. But in this case every small change is important. (Participant 6)

10. Conclusion

The Delhi rape incident led to 'intense public introspection into the nature of Indian society and the current structures of governance that have failed to keep women safe' (Simon-Kumar, 2014). The growing discontent against the government and the need for change provided the perfect political opportunity for the civil society organisations and gender activists. The global discourse and campaigns on gender also helped create a national level opportunity structure in India (Ayres, 1999). The anger brewing in people, especially the urban educated middle class was channelized into a movement that had far reaching effects. When the news of the protests reached the people they gathered in large numbers on the streets to show their solidarity and protest against the incident. The participants were both from organisations and also individuals who participated because they felt strongly for the cause. Social media and mobile phone played a big role in the process, helping in the circulation of news related to the time and venue.

> I came to know about the protest though a friend but even on the days when I was not present at the protest I would follow what is happening there through Facebook or Twitter. This helped me remain connected to the movement even though I was not physically present there. (Participant 7)

ICTs tend to have consequences for the ways in which social movement interact their environment. ICTs improved the movement's capacity to act in a coordinated and coherent way in order to react more quickly to external challenges. It also helped organisations and individuals to be less dependent on the established mass media in conveying their messages to a broader audience base. The action and reaction followed each other in very short cycles, and the speed of diffusion of new ideas, tactics and arguments considerably increased. ICTs also helped to facilitate mobilization across large territories to reach a wider audience and create an global impact (Van De Donk et al., 2004, p. 9). In this context and interviewee comments,

> Online conversations are generating the fuel required to propel gender movements in India. (Participant 4)

Online activism in India is a relatively new area of work and people are still struggling develop an infrastructure and means of funding. In order to overcome this, the online community will have to strategize and partner with a range of feminist allies. Meaningful and profitable collaborations will have to be set up among advocacy and non-profit organizations, philanthropists and entrepreneurs, corporate leadership with a feminist sensibility, educators, political leaders, community organizers, artists, youth and many others (Martin & Valenti, 2012). However, the most important things that social media and mobile phones have done are that it has opened up channels for communication and collaboration. It has become one of the primary tools to raise consciousness and has given people a platform for technological innovations in the field of gender. The internet has resulted in information becoming widely and easily available to a large section of the population. 'Where information is power, sometimes someone's personal power, it is more likely to have to be shared' (Pollock & Sutton, 1999). Organisations in India are also widely using the Internet to collect data for mapping and policy recommendations.

> We have developed programmes that can crawl the internet in order to find data and about gender violence and inequality. This data then helps organisations and governments to take the right decisions. (Participant 8)

The internet and social media has also been used to generate useful debates and meaningful conversations related to gender. It has given people a chance to express themselves

> Through the Internet many women have found their voice. They can now express themselves much more freely,

> especially in India. More and more women are coming out of their traditional patriarchal upbringing and breaking the mould. (Participant 9)

However, irrespective of the huge possibilities of online activism one of the interviews talk about the need of physical activism.

> We should not forget the emphasis on physical activism on the streets parallel to online activism in order to attain results so that voices online are not lost in the virtual world without creating any real impact. (Participant 3)

> Online activism should go hand-in hand with physical activism. (Participant 7)

It is difficult to organise and strategize such a decentralised movement and steps need to be taken in order to establish vital connections and collaborations in order to keep the new age feminism alive in India. In this ever changing and ever developing society the future is difficult to predict. However, campaigning through a medium that people are most comfortable with is creating a wave of awareness in society. As one of the interviewees comment,

> The Nirbhaya case has resulted in change. Real change. This movement in particular, has reminded people about the power that they hold. It has empowered them. It may not succeed. But the people who have raised their voices, are now much more fearless than they used to be. The real change happens inside minds, not on the outside. (Participant 9)

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Women and digital reading: the gendering of digital reading practices

Abstract

Technofeminism theory proposes a relation in which technology is, at the same time, cause and consequence of gender relations. Technofeminism allows us to take into account women's agency and offer a more complex account of the gendering process, one that incorporates contradiction. The chapter proposes to use the lenses of Technofeminism to look at digital reading.
Based on the findings of the research project "Digital Reading and the Transformation of Reading Stimulus and of Book Institutions", we aim at analyzing the role women play in the uptake of digital reading. The chapter provides a quantitative analysis of women's digital reading practices collected through the online survey of 16 countries in 2013. The chapter wants to offer new insights to answer how women are defining new developments in the transition from print to digital.

Keywords

Digital reading; technofeminism; women

1. Introduction

Technofeminism theory proposes a relation in which technology is, at the same time, cause and consequence of gender relations (Wajcman, 2004). Technofeminism allows us to take into consideration women's agency and offer a more complex account of the gendering process, one that incorporates contradiction. The chapter proposes to use the lenses of Technofeminism to look at digital reading. If society is co-produced with technology, the gender effect cannot be ignored in the design, development, innovation and communication of products such as eReaders and eBooks. The traditional representation of women's use of technology is that they are neither interested nor capable in the field of technology and history keeps repeating as new technologies come to the world. After being initially targeted to young adult male, women are embracing eReaders, tablets, smartphones and eBooks. According to global surveys women are leading on eReaders ownership, closing the gap on tablets, and smartphones are evenly divided between men and women in many regions of the globe.

Based on the research project "Digital Reading and the Transformation of Reading Stimulus and of Book Institutions", we aim at analyzing the role women play in the uptake of digital reading. The paper provides a quantitative analysis of women's digital reading practices collected through the online survey of 16 countries "Digital Reading: Usage, Attitudes and Practices" (2013). The paper wants to offer new insights to answer how women are defining new developments in the transition from print to digital.

The research is not only centered on differences between men and women. Much of the previous research on the gendering of technology has been conducted in comparative terms, women versus men with no provocative insights. This research pretends to take further the analysis by complementing the comparison between men and women with the identification of women's specific experiences, leaving space for the contradictory effects and meanings for different groups of women. So it is not only about differences between men and women, but about the different meaning of digital reading and its trajectory in women's lives.

The chapter is organized in five sections. The first, 'New Practices from a Feminist Lenses', presents the theoretical contextualization of the relationship that is being established between gender and technology, having Technofeminism theory has background. The second, 'Digital Reading', aims at framing the research regarding digital reading practices, setting the major challenges and the framework concerning the study of emergent practices. The third section is devoted to the empirical research methodology and is followed by the presentation of the survey results regarding tendencies by gender in a section entitled 'Gendering Digital Reading'. The fifth, and last, section is focused on the female sample of the study, having the goal of characterizing the main trends concerning digital reading among women. This section is entitled 'Giving Voice to Women'.

2. New practices from a feminist lenses

If society is co-produced with technology, the gender[1] effect cannot be ignored in the design, development, innovation and communication of technological products: "Technology, then, can tell us something we need to know about gender identity. Gender identity can tell us something we need to know about technology" (Cockburn, 1992, p. 42). The emergent Technofeminism theory proposes a relation in which technology is, at the same time, cause and consequence of gender relations (Wajcman, 2004, p. 107). Technofeminism allows us to take into consideration women's agency and offer a more complex account of the gendering process, one that incorporates contradiction. Judy Wajcman (2007) defined the challenge in the following terms:

> The literature on gender and technology has grown to become a broad and diverse field. It foregrounds the need to investigate the ways in which women's identities, needs and priorities are being reconfigured together with digital technologies. This opens up fresh possibilities for studies that are more attuned to how different groups of women users creatively respond to and assimilate numerous ICTs in diverse real-world locations. (Wajcman, 2007, p. 295)

[1] The distinction between sex (biological characteristics) and gender (socially acquired characteristics) began with second wave feminism. Frequently researchers "use the term gender as a variable in empirical research, although this is simply dichotomized into male or female and thus is really used as a proxy for sex" (Coulthard & Castleman, 2006, p. 31). Nevertheless the interest in finding biological differences still persists both in academic production and in popular culture as evident by the proliferation of books and movies on the subject of what biologically separates women from men. With third wave feminism, scholarship took a critical approach to gender and has acknowledged that gender cannot be reduced to biological sex and that it encapsulates more complexity than the dichotomy of man and women and that there are a wide set of differences that account for gender differentiation, "The theoretical challenge has been to develop a new approach to gender that recognizes these differences but does not reduce them to biology or simple social conditioning" (Coulthard & Castleman, 2006, p. 33). One of the examples of the contemporary approaches to gender is West and Zimmerman's (1987) distinction between sex, sex category and gender and the proposal of gender as a "doing". For them sex is "a determination made through the application of socially agreed biological criteria for classifying persons as males or females" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127). This determination is the outcome of a social process that allows us to find criteria to classify what constitutes a male or a female. Thus, at birth, we are placed into one sex category and from there on we relate to others based on their displays for the according sex category such as hair or clothing. So sex category is a proxy for sex. Gender is the process that enables us to display our sex category. Gender is not something we are but something we do. In the same sense, Butler posits gender as a performance (1990, 2004a, 2004b). It is in this scope that we will use the term gender throughout the chapter, as a concept that has moved from being an assumed natural category to one in which gender is a process, an ongoing unfolding act that is continually shaped and refined: "Gender behavior is not informed by an inner core, biological or otherwise. It is informed by the mundane, everyday need to make sense to oneself and to others" (Coulthard & Castleman, 2006, p. 34).

This research took up Wajcman's challenge to provide an account of women's digital reading practices.

Women's use of technology has historically been presented as dystopic[2]. Women are culturally considered the guardians of nature (Hopkins, 1998). They are the ones that become pregnant; they are the ones that raise children and their use of technology is viewed as a corruption of nature. For the eco-feminists it is even considered a metaphorical rape:

> In the philosophical and literary discourse, noted Adorno and Horkheimer, it is common to identify women with nature. These shows up as the repressed subject of the bourgeois male that gives female body two functions: represent a site of exploitation and a potential utopia. The bourgeois subject is always male and women a male projection. The utopia is conceived as a reunification of the body and the bourgeois subject, which would mean reconciliation with "nature". (Silveirinha, 2008, p. 109)

Mary Ann Doane (1999) describes this dystopia as a process of transference by which the anxieties regarding technology are transferred to the feminine. The author provides several examples from the cinema. The first is that of the robot Maria in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) and the corruption of motherhood. At the end "the machine is returned to its rightful place in the production, the woman hers in reproduction" (Doane, 1999, p. 25). The notion of technology tainted motherhood is presented in recent films such as *Alien* (1979), *Aliens* (1986) and *Blade Runner* (1982).

The concept of what is considered technology also relegates women´s role to a secondary place. The Western imaginary of technology is related to technologies generally used by men from which women are excluded because "contemporary western femininity has involved the constitution of identities organized around [women's] technological incompetence" (Cockburn, 1992, p. 41). Technologies generally used by women are not even considered proper technologies, such as kitchen appliances: "in virtually all cultures whatever is defined as manly, is more highly valued than whatever is thought of as womanly" (Harding, 1986, p. 18). Women's spheres of technological appropriation were simply not part of the picture: "The statistics reveal no technological activities which are strictly feminine. One can, of

[2] We could trace the association of science to masculinity and nature to femininity during the Enlightment, where the legacy of Aristotelian philosophy defined women as passive and intellectually inferior to men. The Scientific Revolution that started a process of nature domination implied also a domination of women. The set of values associated with femininity were inferior and less valuable to those associated with masculinity.

course, name activities that are strictly feminine, e.g., nursing and infant care, but they fall outside the range of technological pursuits" (Murdock & Provost, 1973, p. 210 cit. in Stanley, 1998, p. 17).

Men and manly technologies are the norm to which women have to comply – "The discussions about the concept of technology are important because technical artefacts used by mainly women tend to be excluded, reinforcing the connection between men, masculinity and technology" (Berg & Lie, 1995, p. 340). When a technology used by women is acknowledged it is not valued in the same way. As technologies enter everyday life they seem to lose their research interest and women, being the vast majority of the users of mass technology, do not get a place in the picture.

The feminist debate itself has ranged from the view of technologies as part of a patriarchal frame, shaped and mostly used in destructive and oppressive ways, to the view of technology as a liberating tool for women. For Don Ihde (2002), the root for the polarization between utopian and dystopian visions of technology is a contradictory wish: we simultaneously want the power of transformation that technologies bring, and a natural experience, one of total transparency. An impossible synthesis because technologies are not neutral:

> The actual or material technology always carries with it only a partial or quasi-transparency, which is the price for the extension of magnification that technologies give. In extending bodily capacities, the technology also transforms them. In that sense, all technologies in use are non-neutral. (Ihde, 2002, p. 504)

Technological artefacts mediate our sensorial relation to reality and by doing it they are transforming our perception. This capacity for transformation is designated by Ihde (2002) as "intentionality", meaning that technologies have an active part in the relation between us as the world. But these *intentionalities* are not fixed properties of the artefacts; they are shaped in the relation that humans establish with them. In the context of different relations, technologies can have distinctive identities. Ihde calls them "multistabilities": the same technology can have different stabilities, according to its usage context.

Technology has thus been a controversial issue in feminist thinking. Third-wave feminism operates a rupture with former feminist thought: "Postmodern feminists reject any mode of feminist thought that aims to provide a single explanation for why women are oppressed or *the* ten or so steps *all* women must take to achieve liberation" (Tong, 2009, p. 270). There is room for more diversity, change and transformation.

Recent feminist studies began to theorize gender not as a prior reality that gets inscribed into technology, but as relational construct, a performance, a doing (Butler, 1990, 1993, 2004a, 2004b; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

The new feminist approaches, coinciding with the emergence of new digital technologies and digital media such as the Internet and mobile phones, also give rise to cyberfeminism and a more optimistic, sometimes fetishist view of technologies. Authors such as Sadie Plant, Sherry Turkle and Donna Haraway contend that digital technologies, and their disembodiment characteristics, transform them into a liberating tool for women.

Digital technologies and new media heralded new possibilities - a new era of empowerment and liberation. Some even contended that these were feminine media and women were particularly equipped for a networked world (Haraway, 1991; Plant, 1997, 2000; Turkle, 1984, 1995). The work of cyberfeminists, especially Donna Haraway, was pioneer in the highlighting of women's agency and thus became very influential among feminist technoscience scholars.

In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991), Donna Haraway articulates the concept of "cyborg" with feminism. The cyborg is a creature of a post-gender world that ends all dualisms, namely the polarity man and woman, a hybrid of human being and machine through which our sense of connection to our tools is heightened. She proposes that women must embrace technology as feminist politics and defends the need to go beyond the critic of representation and to incorporate the female subject in its multiplicity and subjectivity.

Haraway sees in science and technology the potential to create new meanings and new entities. Provocatively, Haraway proposes the cybernetic organism as an alternative to a pure and deified vision of women, ending all dualisms:

> There is nothing about being female that naturally binds women together into a unified category. There is not even such a state as 'being' female, itself a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices (Haraway, 1991, p. 231).

Although Haraway identifies science as a capitalist product, of a military, colonialist and racist society, dominated by men, she sees in cybertechnology the possibility for feminine emancipation, refuting the anti-technological stance within most feminist critiques of science and technology as patriarchal tools for oppressing women.

The metaphor is especially powerful in its hybridism. An image of "transgressed boundaries, potent fusions and dangerous possibilities which progressive people might explore as part of much needed political work" (Hararay, 1991, p.154). Thus, many feminist authors in their revisitation of the gender-technology relation have used the cyborg. As an example, Anne Balsamo's work builds on the cyborg theory to articulate bodies, technology and identity:

> Cyborgs are hybrid entities that are neither wholly technological nor completely organic, which means that the cyborg has the potential not only to disrupt persistent dualisms that set the natural body in opposition to the technologically recrafted body, but also to refashion our thinking about the theoretical construction of the body as both a material entity and a discursive process [...] the cyborg provides a framework for studying gender identity as it is technologically crafted simultaneously from the matter of material bodies and cultural fictions. (Balsamo, 1996, p. 11)

Critics charge cyberfeminism of being a different kind of technological determinism, an optimistic one. Empiric work on the level of women's participation in new media reveals that the situation has not dramatically improved and that old stereotypes are still in place in environments such as virtual worlds. Attributing to new technologies the power to emancipate women also brings back a certain form of essentialism. If we argue that women are better prepared for a network society then we are implying that there is something in their nature that makes them better prepared. And it also opens up the debate of what is "new". Wajcman advices against the "danger of confusing new developments in theory with new developments in the things that theories are about" (Wajcman, 2004, p. 55). If technology and gender are co-produced, and that has always been the case, there should be nothing exceptional about digital technologies.

The work of Judy Wajcman stands as a bridge between earlier polarized positions of the feminist debate. In *Feminism Confronts Technology* (1991) and *TechnoFeminism* (2004) the author defends a relation in which technology is, at the same time, cause and consequence of gender relations. This chapter will draw substantial contributions from her work. Technofeminism builds on the insights of cyberfeminism and the theories of social shaping of technology and constructivism. It also avoids both technological determinism and gender essentialism (Wajcman, 2009). It is a more integrated approach that stresses that gendering occurs through the entire life trajectory of an artefact, from design to consumption, while former theories were too focused on a single step of the process.

Technofeminism builds on STS scholarship to allow for agency and fluidity to be taken into account in the analysis of the gendering of technology. Concepts as "interpretative flexibility" (Pinch & Bijker, 1987) and "domestication"[3] (Silverstone & Hirsch, 1992) reinforce the idea that technology is not pre-determined and that its trajectory is unpredictable.

> Interpretative flexibility refers to the way in which different groups of people, involved with a technology can have very different understandings of that technology, including different understandings of its technical characteristics. Thus users can radically alter the meanings and deployment of technologies. (Wajcman, 2000, p. 450)

Technologies can be subverted, reinterpreted, given unanticipated and unintended uses. The final result is a product of a social and material dialogue. François Bar's work[4] on technological appropriation of the mobile phone (Bar, Pisani & Weber, 2007) is particularly relevant in this matter.

The problem with the social construction of technology theory from the perspective of feminism is that technologies acquire a stable meaning when relevant groups accept them, and women are not usually part of those groups, so gender analysis is generally overlooked.

Another useful approach is "actor-network theory" (ANT) developed by Michel Callon, Bruno Latour and John Law (Callon & Rip, 1986; Latour, 1987; Law & Hassard, 1999). ANT enables the researcher to take the material reality into account, and consider the artefact part of the network with its own agency. The artefact also acts according to a script. But this script, once more, is not fixed; different actors can translate it in different ways.

It is ironic that so much of post-modernity is articulated around the feminine when women still have so little voice. A reality sometimes hidden

[3] The "domestication" framework is particularly useful to highlight the complexity of processes for incorporating technology into everyday life. Such as the social shaping of technology (STS) it recognizes the agency of users in the adoption of artifacts in their lives. Use is also related to context and to the collectivity, rather that the individual: "The emergence of the domestication Kept represented a shift away from models which assumed the adoption of new innovations to be rational, linear, monocausal and technologically determined. Rather, it presented a theoretical framework research approach, which considered the complexity of everyday life and technology's place within its dynamics, rituals, rules, routines and patterns" (Berker, Hartmann, Punie & Ward, 2006, p. 1).

[4] Website for the abaparu project http://abaporu.net/.

under the illusion of equal access and sex equality. Adopting a technofeminist perspective will allow the analysis of digital reading to go "beyond the discourse of the digital divide to connections between gender inequality and other forms of inequality, which come into view if we examine the broader political and economic basis of the networks that shape and deploy technical systems" (Wajcman, 2004, p. 121).

With this research we propose to better understand the role women play in the uptake of digital reading and what are women's digital reading practices.

3. Digital Reading

Reading practices are changing with the rise of convergent technologies. The traditional book format established by Gutenberg and his printing method with movable types transformed books into a mobile tool for information and/or entertainment purposes. For a long time this format seemed the ideal one; nevertheless with the increasing relevance of digital contexts, it is being questioned and experiments are being conducted to narrow the existent gap between print books and digital media practices.

This is one of the main challenges of the research. How to map practices that are invisible? How to make questions? What to ask people. We propose that digital reading presents itself as an invisible activity. Reading is still very much associated with the printed book and all other reading activities, namely the ones performed on screens, are seldom considered reading, which pinpoints to a need to develop new survey practices.

Commonly digital reading is regarded as a replacement activity, when in fact it is a cumulative activity. Those that read in paper are also those that read digitally. Digital reading performs as an extension activity of the printed formats. Survey results, point to the fact that those that already have intensive reading habits in paper will also be the ones that will read more digitally and vice-versa. Digital reading functions as an extension of paper:

> [...] the more more printed books you have at home, the more the chance you will read in digital, but this is not an absolute truth, from those that stated to have more than 200 books at home, around a third declared that they have not read an eBook in the last year. But if you have not read a printed book then you probably would not have read a digital book either. (Cardoso & Cameira, 2015, p. 268)

In the scope of gender this cumulative effect would be very important to test as women are identified as more avid readers than men, would this still be the case for digital reading or would women be stirred away by the digital device?

Digital reading is also viewed as a generation marker when in fact it should be viewed as a lifestyle activity, bounded by life cycles and social roles. The results will show that education plays a more important role than age when comes to reading eBooks.

> Finally, digital reading practices rely on a new form of mobility, new mobile reading devices offer an extended mobility: a mobility that is connected, networked, collaborative, shared, and consequently community and identity are key concepts in digital reading practices. In this regard, Naomi Baron 2013) proposes that: Considerations regarding reading on mobile devices have both commonalities and differences compared with reading on stationary computer screens. All the issues of durability and intrusion from multi-tasking remain. [...] However, careful research needs to determine whether prior reading practices will eventually be shifted to mobile devices or whether the affordances of these devices will end up redefining what we mean by reading. (Baron, 2013, p. 139)

We witness the appropriation of new technological devices for reading practices. eReaders, tablet PCs, mobile phones, and laptops, for instance, have three main characteristics that may be associated with digital reading practices. They foster social collaboration, participation and mobility more than any precedent reading device, even if we compare them with the traditional book. For the first time we can share our opinion of a book that we have just read, not only with the members of our 'traditional' social networks, but expand this sharing through our online networks. Collaborative writing is an emergent phenomenon. And these renewed practices may be close related to concepts like community and identity: communities of readers, authors, fans, or re)mixed ones; and the valorization of reading practices as an identity element.

Digital reading is also related with an augmented dimension of mobility. For the first time we may not only read in any location, but we can read in any location without giving up being connected to our networks. Reading may become a network and collaborative activity through its association with mobile technological reading devices. We now speak of locative media where, besides content, context also plays a major role.

But this new enhanced mobility also means having access to a mobile device, does this hinder women's access?

The research allows us to reach a proposal for a definition of what means to read digitally – it means to accomplish some or all) of these tasks on a regular basis: to read digital books but also to read daily in social media or to use search engine like Google; to read e-mails but also newspapers online (Cardoso, 2015).

Reading in 2014 means to read on paper and digitally, for those who use the Internet, and read only on paper for those who do not use the Internet). It also means to read not only full-length formats, but also shorter ones. Digital reading resorts to all sorts of devices from the computer to dedicated eReaders, but also smartphones. Besides reading on multiple devices, it also means to read on several locations, with different purposes; and to take advantage of reading as an individual, but also social activity (Cardoso, 2015).

These new affordances pose several challenges to women all over the world, challenges that range from access, to skills and time. In order to contribute to a better understanding of what reading and readership now means to women, we will now focus our attention in the empirical study, beginning with a further contextualization of the methodology and of the methods used.

4. Methodology

The research is based on a quantitative methodology. In the following sections it will be presented and discussed the results of an extensive international quantitative survey of 16 countries, focusing on digital reading practices. The countries surveyed were Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

The survey was one of the data collection methods applied in the context of a two year research project funded by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation - 'Digital Reading and the Transformation of Reading Stimulus and of Book Institutions'. Due to the extension, diversity, and complexity of the research object, it was considered more appropriate to have multidisciplinary methodological tools. Among which: 1) comparative analysis, benchmarking, and documentary research; and 2) field research – empirical data collection. The field research was based on different data collection methods like interviews, panel discussion with representatives of the Portuguese publishing chain librarians, publishing houses, authors, and content and soft/hardware providers), focus groups, and the cross country online survey on digital readership practices.

The survey was conducted in January and February 2013 through an online questionnaire with a sample of 5,582 Internet users aged 15 and older. The sample was defined taking into account the Census for each country, as well as the Internet demographics.

The questionnaire had 83 questions organized in thirteen analysis dimensions. Each of these dimensions constituted a part of the questionnaire. The dimensions were: Brief Characterization country, age); Digital Devices and Internet Access; Internet and Social Networking Practices; News and Information Access; Storage of Digital Content; Piracy Culture / Internet Control; Innovation, Creativity, Production, Action; Reading Practices on Paper; Reading Practices on Screen and Library Usage; Newspapers and Magazines Consumption; Paid / Free of Charge Content; Perceptions and Experiences about Reading; Cultural / Leisure Practices; and Sociographic Characterization gender, inhabitation local, household income, education, employment, marital status, household characterization).

In the following section we will present the results of the survey which allow to map the digital reading landscape of the 16 countries focusing on gendered practices.

5. Gendering digital reading

Reading affects everything you do.
Those who cultivate the skill shall be given and have abundance;
Those who do not face a much harder path
(Keith Stanovich describing the Mathew Effect)

Reading is a gendered practice. According to the 2009 PISA report "when comparing girls and boys who were similarly proficient in print reading, boys scored an average of six points higher in digital reading. Among these students, boys outperformed girls in digital reading by between 5 and 22 score points" (OCDE, 2014, p. 57). One explanation for this difference was that "boys and girls do not share the same degree of ease in selecting and organising – or navigating – pieces of information found in hypertexts (OCDE, 2014). Could digital reading playing a negative effect on women's reading practices?

One of the main conclusions of our research survey was that reading matters. When purchasing a device with Internet access the majority of the respondents, 61%, considers important the ability to read texts – books, magazines or newspapers (Figure 1).

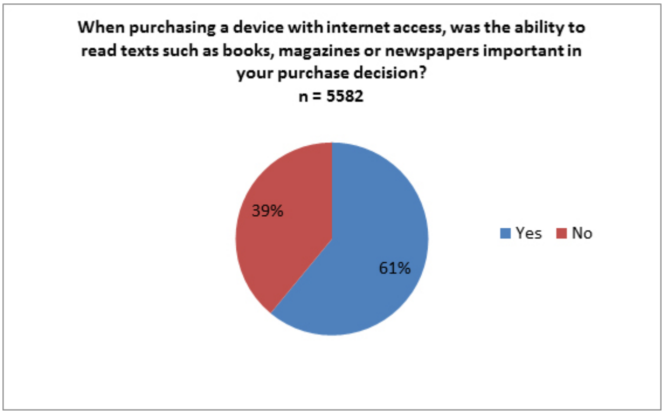

Figure 1: Role played by reading in the purchasing decision of a device

That role (Figure 2) is slightly more important in men's decision (53.4%) that in women's decisions (46.6%). We could argue that women are more avid readers and are thus more entrenched in the print format and thus consider that the new devices are not required to perform a function that they already see satisfied by the print format.

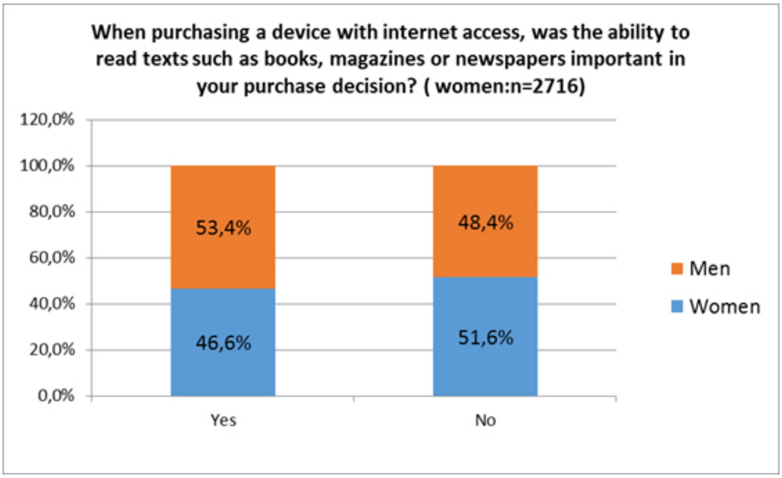

Figure 2: Role played by reading in the purchasing decision of a device broke down by gender

Digital reading is becoming a widespread practice with 58% of the global sample stating that they have had read a book in digital format (Figure 3).

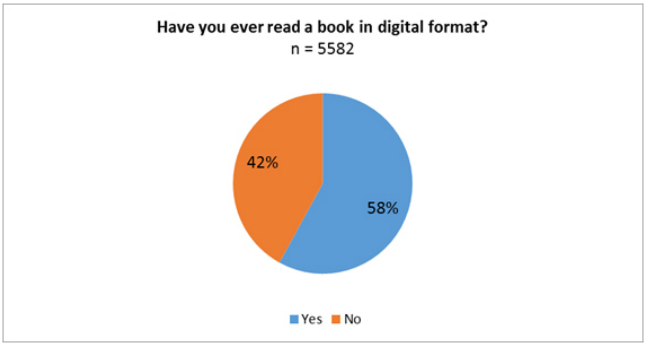

Figure 3: eBook reading

Once again men are slightly more prone than women to have read a book in digital format (Figure 4). Only 47.6% of women versus 52.4% of men state that they have read a book in digital format.

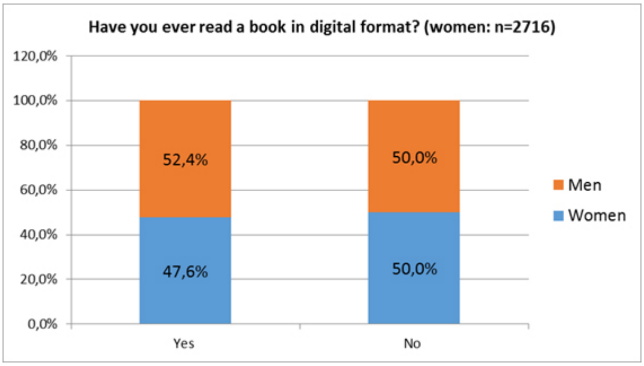

Figure 4: eBook reading by gender

Not only does digital reading play an important role in today's practices, but also it is on the rise. When asked "now that books, magazines, newspapers and other material are available in electronic and digital forms, how long do you spend reading" 29% already says more (Figure 5), while 50% states to spend the same amount of time than before.

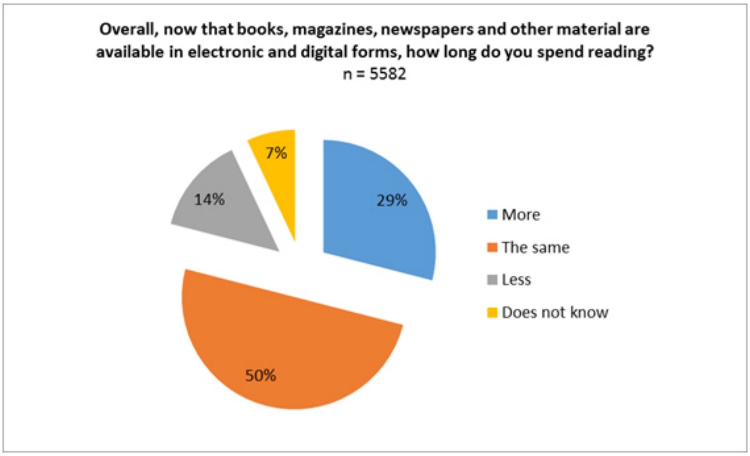

Figure 5: Time spent reading

In regards time spent reading, men also spend slightly more time reading now that reading materials are available in digital format (Figure 6) hinting that digital reading could function as a reading incentive for men.

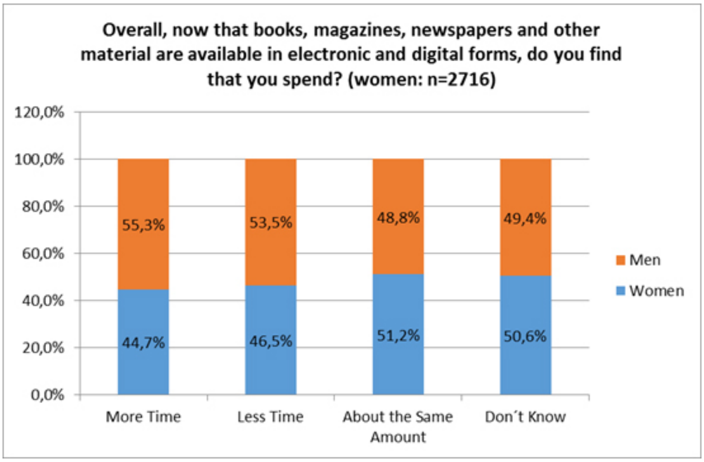

Figure 6: Time spend reading broken down by gender

Regarding future expectations (Figure 7) people expect to read more on a digital medium, with 44% stating that they think they will find themselves reading more on a digital medium.

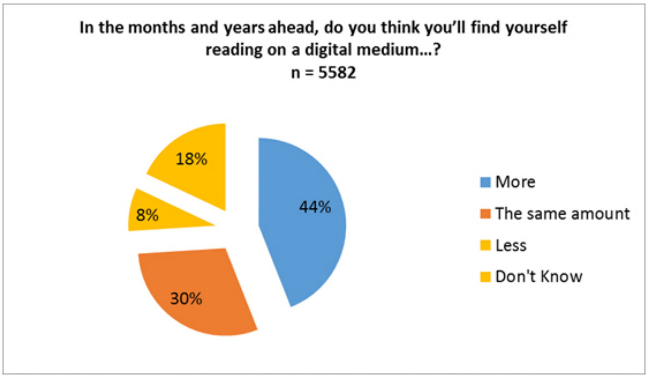

Figure 7: Future expectations regarding digital reading

Once again men have a slight higher expectation of reading more on a digital medium in the months ahead (Figure 8) with 55.2% of men versus 44.8% of women stating that they think they will read more.

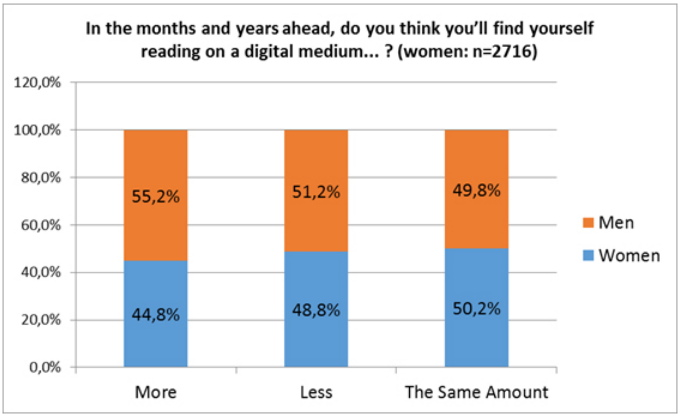

Figure 8: Future expectations regarding digital reading by gender.

Mobility matters, as the survey makes it clear that users value mobility (Figure 9) with laptop computers surpassing the desktop and mobile phones getting very close, 76% for basic mobile devices and 72% for smartphones versus 77% for the desktop computer.

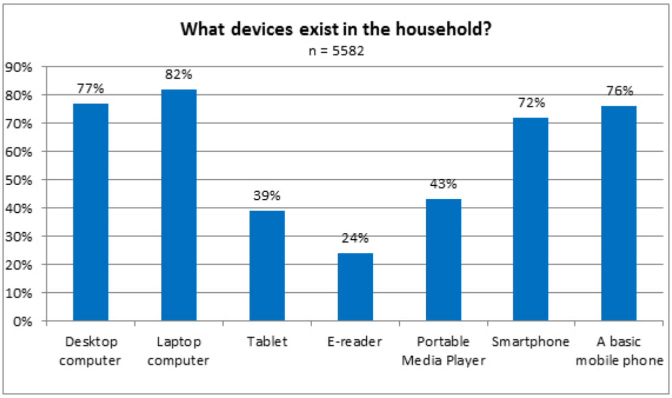

Figure 9: Device ownership in the household

In regards to gender men surpass women in the access to technology in all devices (Figure 10). The gap is particularly wider for tablets but quite narrow for eReaders. Nevertheless the preference for mobile technologies is also notable for women.

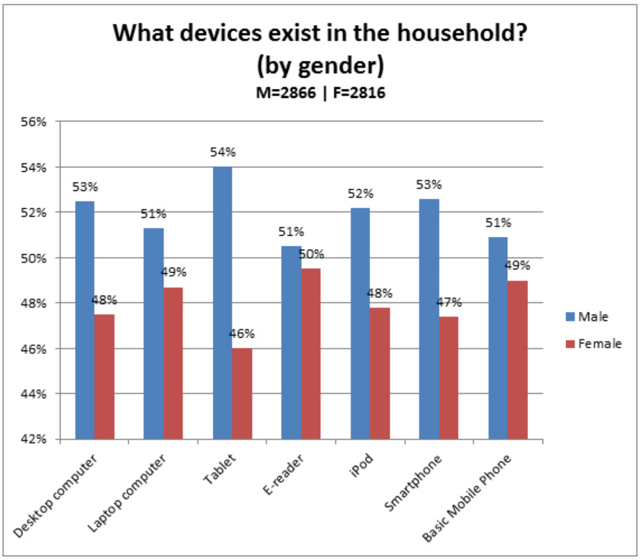

Figure 10: Device ownership in the household by gender

The type of device also matters (Figure 11), eReaders are the preferred device for reading, followed by tablets.

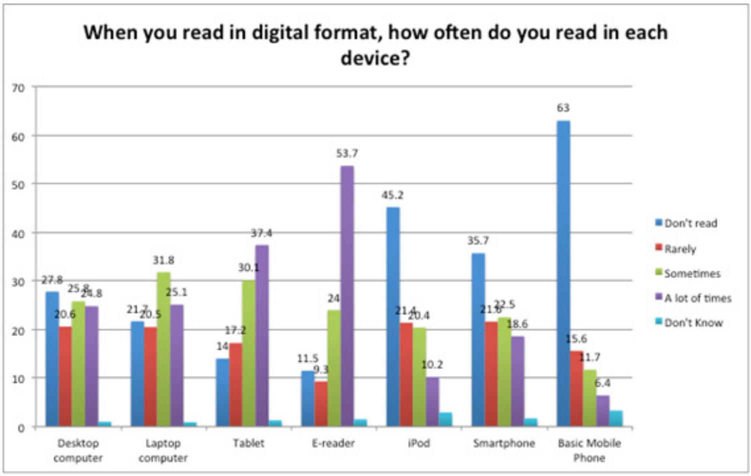

Figure 11: Digital reading by type of device

In the breakdown by gender (Figure 12) mobility seems to matter most for women with men still reading a lot in the desktop computer (59,4% for men versus 40,6% for women).

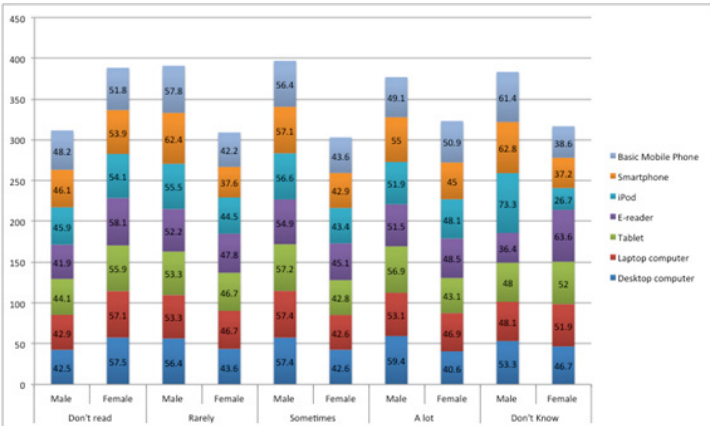

Figure 12: Digital reading by type of device and gender

When faced between printed books or digital books speed and selection are key for digital while convenience is key for the printed book (Figure 13). A special note for the activity of reading with a child where the choice for the printed book is overwhelming which might be attributed to the widespread fear of exposing children to technology.

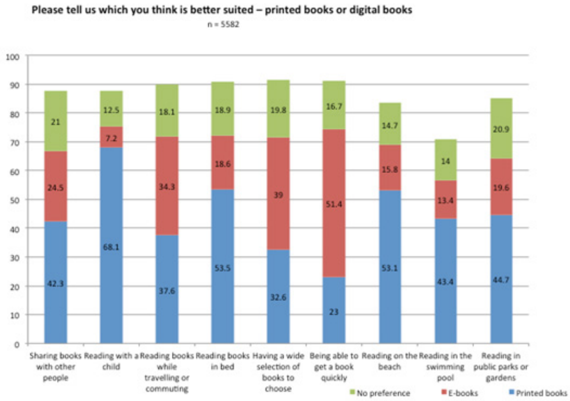

Figure 13: Preference for printed or digital books according to activity

When we look at gender preferences (Figure 14), curiously the gap is particularly wide for reading with a child for which 65.6% of men versus 34.4% of women prefer an eBook. When comparing men and women eBooks are always preferred by men for all activities; the contrary happens for women in the printed book.

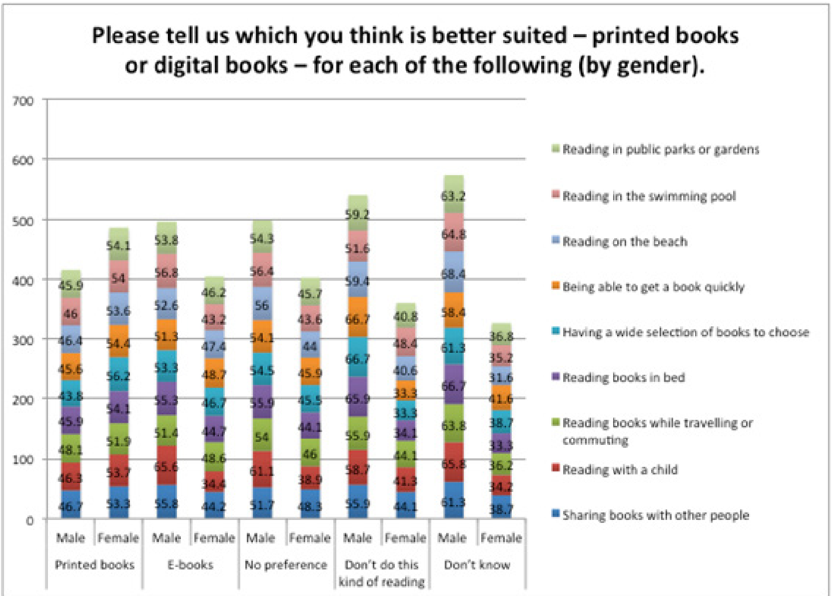

Figure 14: Preference for printed or digital books according to activity by gender

Connection was also one of the main affordances of digital reading. Digital reading is connected reading. According to the survey, the attributes most valued when reading online (Figure 15) where the opportunity to instantly know more about the text's author of the theme, followed by the chance to access other texts and in third place the possibility to save the most relevant parts. Thus we can propose that this connection is more about connecting to information that connecting to people.

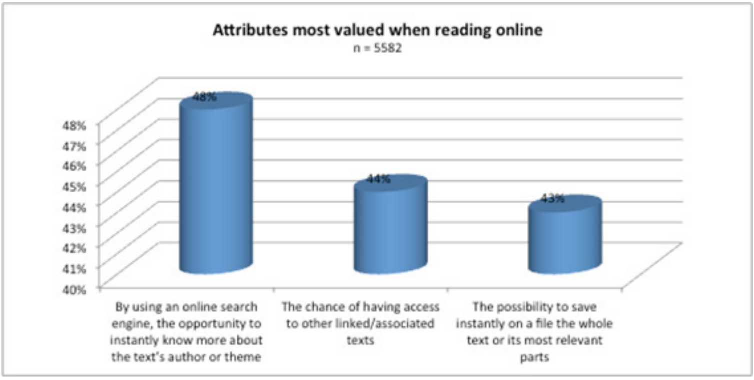

Figure 15: Most valued attributes

When comparing men and women regarding the most valued attributes both genders perform quite closely (Figure 16).

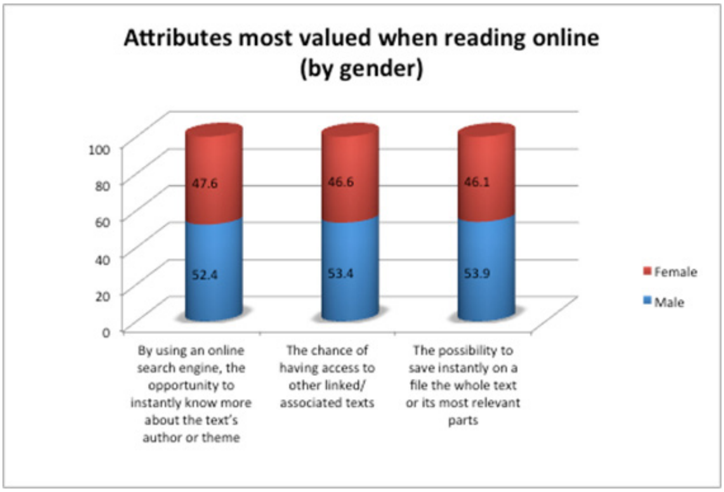

Figure 16: Most valued attributes by gender

As for the less valued attributes (Figure 17) those include comments, sharing and knowing more about other people's activities which reinforces the notion that what is truly important in digital reading is connecting to information and not interacting with others.

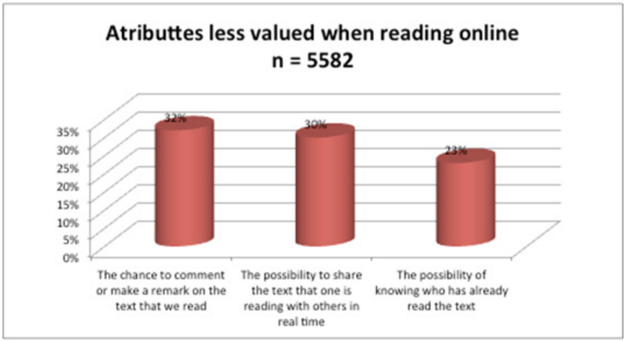

Figure 17: Less valued attributes of online reading

When comparing men and women (Figure 18) connecting to others is less important for men than for women.

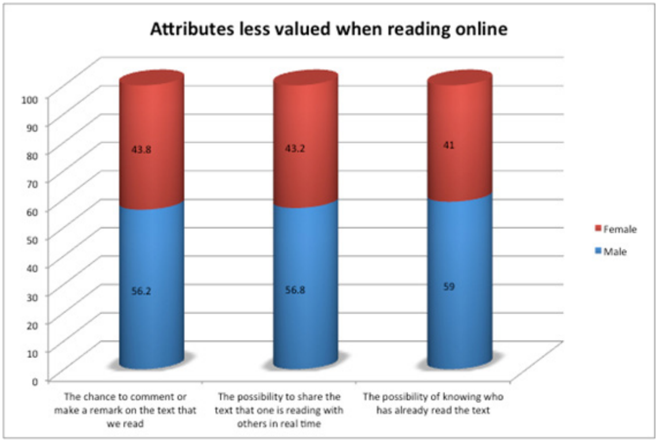

Figure 18: Less valued attributes of online reading by gender

6. Giving voice to women

We now focus solely in the female sample and on women's practices and expectations regarding digital reading. When we focus exclusively on women, we can conclude that the ability to read text weighs in their purchasing decision when purchasing a device with Internet access (Figure 19): 58.2% of women respond affirmatively.

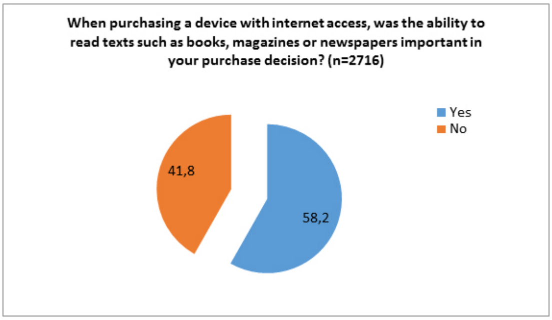

Figure 19: Influence of digital reading in women's purchasing decisions of devices with Internet access

Already a majority of women have read a book in digital format (Figure 20).

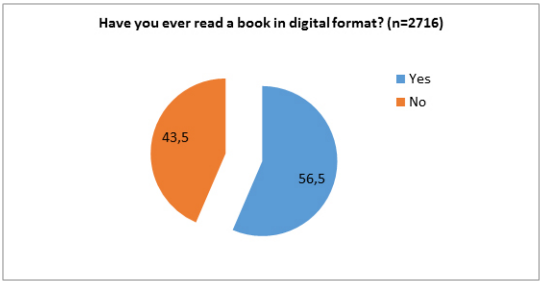

Figure 20: Women's digital book reading

Schooling matters more than age in regards to reading a book in digital format (Figures 21 and 22). As showed by the data, the gap between eBook reading at age 15-24 and those women above 55 is not as wide as the gap between women with primary and secondary education and women attending college or with a college degree.

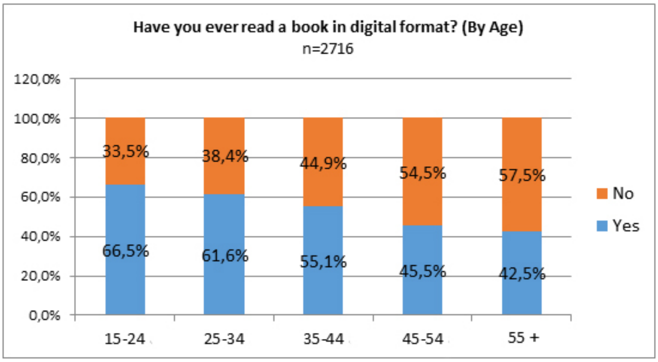

Figure 21: Women's eBook reading by age

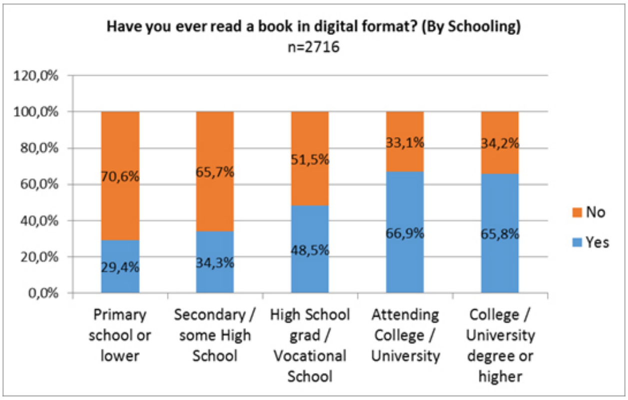

Figure 22: Women's eBook reading by schooling

An analysis by country/ region (Figure 23) shows that in BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) women are strongly engaged in eBook reading. France and Germany, on the other hand, are the countries where a lower percentage of women have already read a book in digital format.

In countries where access to printed book is more difficult, especially for women, there is a strong interest and uptake of eBooks.

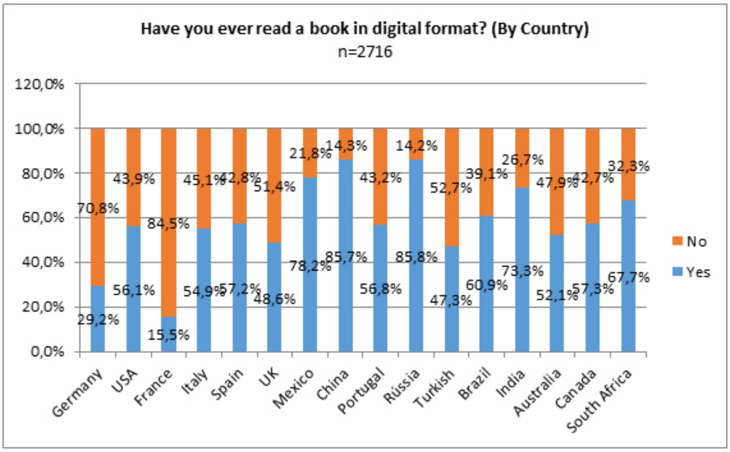

Figure 23. Women's eBook reading by country

7. Concluding remarks

We are facing new ways of reading and new readers, because new devices bring with it new affordances. Digital content allows to renegotiate reading practices, and it seems that these new modes of reading are transforming readership, but also the way we engage with our digital devices. The ability of a device with Internet access to read texts is considered an important characteristic and it tends to influence purchase decisions, which evidences the growing importance of digital reading, particularly in contexts of mobility. Future expectations in regard reading are also paradigmatic of the change that is occurring, digital reading practices tend to gain importance and to be more and more complementary to paper ones.

But, what does digital reading mean for women? When comparing men and women we can see that women fall slightly behind in the uptake of digital reading, especially because they have less access to digital devices. It is an opportunity to engage men with reading but it can hinder women's participation. Previous studies[5] had already shown that boys perform better than girls in digital reading and our results show that men are more interested. Nevertheless the gap can easily be corrected through adequate public policies and publishing strategies that take into consideration women's interests and lifestyles.

[5] Like the triennial international survey Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which aims to test the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students and evaluate the educational system.

In this chapter we tried to bring forward some of specificities of women digital reading practices by looking at differences between women. When comes to these differences, age matters but schooling matters the most. Also the pace of change is different in each region because the access to digital devices determines the adoption of digital reading practices, and women still have less access. Nevertheless in countries where access to printed books is also harder we witness a strong digital reading uptake from women. We consider that this focus on women's practices needs further development. We can argue that the research highlights that digital reading brings up new affordances and a specific gender-technology relation that needs further research. We need to conduct qualitative studies that could provide a wider perspective of women's lives, how digital reading intertwines with their changing needs across life stages and life roles and how different socio-technical contexts impact their choices and their practices.

It is important to understand what kind of relationship are women building with digital reading and if this relationship is being shaped by the traditional gender-role stereotypes that frame women-technology relations. Focusing on women, addressing women and empowering them means, from this viewpoint, offering them tools, designs, contents, that go further than a re-enactment of the hegemonic discourse.

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Biographies

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Ana is also author of several scientific papers and books, the most significant being "Jornais, Jornalistas e Jornalismo", "Censura Nunca Mais", "Marcelo Caetano: Poder e Imprensa", "Feminine Politics and Media Visibility of Female Portuguese Parliamentary".

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Her areas of research and teaching are new media, particularly digital games, social media and mobile devices, multimedia communication, and digital reading practices.

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Núria Fernandez-Garcia is currently Researcher at the Department of Journalism and Communication Studies of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain). She holds a degree in Political Science and received her PhD in Communication and Journalism Studies from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She also received a certificate of proficiency in Women's Studies from the Berkeley City College (California). Her principal research interests are related to the relationship between gender, politics and media, and the general and specific aspects of media literacy and political communication. She has authored several journal articles and book chapters on the media representation of women politicians and has participated in scientific conferences in Spain, Portugal, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Mexico. She has also participated as a research member in European, Spanish and Catalan funded projects.

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She has been published several papers from which the ones on gender discourses in advertising images stand out.

Teresa Mendes Flores, PhD in Communication Sciences by the New University of Lisbon, Portugal. Her dissertation was a contribution in the field of photography and visual culture, investigating the history of images with top views, from the rock map to the virtual globe (*Photography in the Production of Space and other images. Research on the imaginary of top views in western culture,* Lisboa: FCSH, 2009). She is Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication Sciences of Lusophone University, Lisbon. She is also a member of CIC.Digital Nova (Research Center in Comunication and Digital Culture) where she is a post doctorate fellow in the history of photography. Teresa Mendes Flores integrates the direction board of the Journal of Communication and Languages (Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens) and of the book collection Media and Journalism. She published *Cinema and Modern Experience* (MinervaCoimbra, 2007), several book chapters and papers in various academic journals.

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Zara Pinto Coelho (PhD, University of Minho) is Associate Professor of the Department of Communication Sciences at the University of Minho, Braga, Portugal and a member of the Communication and Society Research Center (CECS) from the same university. Her research interests focus on discourse theory and its critical applications to media and cultural studies. She teaches discourse and visual analysis and sociology of communication on the Department's undergraduate degree programme, Pragmatics of Communication on its Communication Sciences MA programme and Social Semiotics on its PhD programme. She has been published on topics such as discourses of gender and of heterosexuality, power and ideology in health news discourse in several journals and edited books.

The Gender in focus: (new) trends in media Book was born with the aim to make a recent contribution that may enrich the bigger picture. It sought to bring new insights to this research area, especially those that explore the interrelations and negotiations between (media) communication and gender through the use of interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches.

Over the past decades there have been marked changes in gender relations, in feminist activism, in the (media) communication industry, and in society in general. Now, in a globalized and media saturated world, the gendered picture is, consequently, different. The contemporary grammar is marked by diverse and complex tensions. After all, we've come a long way, but this area of research and activism is still loading...So, where do we stand today?

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