

# Doru Pop

## Patriarchal Discourses and Anti-Feminine Attitudes in Romanian Political and Media Cultures

### ABSTRACT

This paper has three main research objectives. The first is to analyze the main types of representations and roles attributed to women in the Romanian political sphere. The second is to describe the social roles ascribed to women in various fields of visual culture. By overviewing several discourses used in fields like media, advertising and cinema, this analysis searches for clues in the inner mechanisms of contemporary Romanian social dynamics. The final and overall objective is to provide a map of the representations of women in both public and private space in Romania today. The research focus is to sum-up the main elements of what could be called the “Romanian imaginary” with respect to the representations of femininity, womanhood and, generally, the relationship between males and females. Finally, this relationship between men to women is used as an indicator and as an explanatory tool for understanding the more profound mechanisms that are operating in the deep rooted biases of Romanian society. By using a series of case studies from the political sphere and the media, the author searches for arguments that would explain the formation and the continuation of a patriarchal culture, dominated by a “macho men” mythology.

### KEY WORDS

Patriarchy; Feminism; Gender and Culture; Political Discrimination; Violence Against Women; Media Representation of Women; Objectification.

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The official statistics made public by the national institutions and the European research barometers confirm a fact otherwise clear for those living in our society: Romania today is still a predominantly *patriarchal society*, where multiple gender gaps are creating huge inequalities between men and women. This male dominant society is also *macho-ist*, in the sense that it cultivates a type of masculinity which is arrogant and aggressive, displaying violent and rude behavior as a sign of dominance.

One of the most important gender disparities is at the level of decision making, manifested in the radically different political roles attributed to males and females at various levels of administration, both national and regional. According to some data provided by the Ministry of Labour, this gap is unequivocal at the highest levels of government, with the political representation in the Bucharest Parliament displaying an explicit discriminatory attitude towards women. Even if more than 51% of the electorate is composed of women, currently only 9,4% of the members of the Senate and 11,2% of the House of Representatives are women. Out of the 22 ministers of the cabinet, only 3 were women with the situation getting even worse at the local and regional public administration level, where only 7% of the



county managers (prefects) and 4% of the mayors are women at this moment. The statistical data makes clear that the Romanian politics is dominated by men<sup>1</sup>. Even the United Arab Emirates have a higher rate of political participation of women in the overall process of decision making. This is why the first research question of this paper will deal with the political representations of women.

Other major discrepancies are observable in multiple other social contexts, yet, as shown by the main indicators of Eurostat, in the Romanian society there is an extremely high gender gap in education, labour and wages, health and overall access to resources<sup>2</sup>. For example, although 60% of the graduates of higher education are women, the teaching staff remains predominantly male at the tertiary level. The inequalities continue in the general workforce, since the rate of employment is 20% lower for women than for men and the medium wages of women are 8% lower than those of their male counterparts. These gender gaps in social relevance are even more profound when it comes to the public imaginary and the cultural roles women are distributed in the Romanian society. Thus the second research question will analyze the representation mechanisms of women.

Last but not least, the purpose of this paper is to provide a general map of the media discourses related to women and their identity formation. Looking into recent Romanian cultural, media and political representations, the focus will be to describe how women are portrayed in various fields in visual communication. In contemporary Romanian society the discourses that are used in politics and society become practices in the private space, so the transfer from advertising and media images will allow us to describe in qualitative terms the Romanian imaginary today, the elements and structures

of representing of femininity and womanhood.

The main concept used here will be “imaginary” which, although a theoretical barbarism, covers and describes the common mechanisms of the collective psyche. Using the term of imaginary (and not imagination) allows explaining the dominant types of relationships between men and women in Romanian society, media, politics and private space.

### **A Brief Historical Survey the Masculine Over-Empowering in Politics**

When I am describing Romanian society as *patriarchal* I am using the classical definition of the concept, as it was explained and detailed by Kate Millett<sup>3</sup>. The most important part of this definition, useful here, is seeing patriarchy as a trans-political form of politics, beyond specific governments and ideologies, since it is a manifestation of exclusive male power. There is a long history of *patriarchy* and of *patriarchal politics*, as convincingly this classical feminist author claims, which cannot be determined by historical specificity or particular cultural contexts. It is rather a manifestation of a process designed to “control and subordinate” women throughout known history.

This gender based segregation was seen by the classical Marxist theorists, as it was developed mostly by Engels in his famous work “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State”<sup>4</sup>, with links to patriarchal exploitation and capitalist production. In fact, as later suggested by Juliet Mitchell<sup>5</sup>, patriarchy is in and of itself a form of ideology, a cultural manifestation of sexual domination, which is not strictly linked to capitalism or labor exploitation.

In the following I will be using this cultural approach definition, or even more specific, a description of *patriarchy as a*

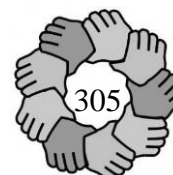
*psycho-cultural manifestation*. It is this aspect of the patriarchal relations that my analysis would be focusing on, a patriarchy defined as a type of relationship which has most primitive roots in our civilization, ones that can be traced as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium before our era<sup>6</sup>. Particularly the implications and the recent manifestations of this mythological and cultural function of patriarchal values, which was transmitted in human societies as a bi-product of historical relevance, is the object of this interpretation.

In order to have a more nuanced discussion about the gender roles in contemporary Romanian society, I think it would be proper to add to *patriarchy* another important notion, a necessary distinction which is provided by the term *machismo*. Even if initially the concept of “macho” was used for describing Latin American gender cultures, *machismo* represents a type of masculinity which is often manifested in countries like Romania. By *macho* I understand a form of masculine social behavior by which virility is presented as socially desirable, as privileged and valuable, without being necessary dominant in terms of the political order. A macho culture invests manhood with “special” qualities and persuades even women that being a man is better and that women need to accept this “natural” trait of males. As Guttman described “macho” in its Mexican context, this is a term circumscribing various types of male behaviors, from public displays of virility in gangs to clear male chauvinism in the work space. Thus we must understand the role played in society by the psychology of *machismo* – which is including a certain phallic self-identity and ostentatiously exhibition of typical aggressive attitudes. The macho is always “in charge,” takes over discussions and is constantly controlling others by asserting its manhood, even cultivating a certain disrespect towards authority or social restrictions<sup>7</sup>.

Returning to the specific Romanian historical background, I must begin by stating that patriarchal mentalities continued to dominate our society even during communism. Although the main Marxist ideological values were centering on the liberation of women from the captivity of the bourgeois exploitation, this promise was never fulfilled, since even during the communist regime in Romania women continued to be distributed in subservient and domestic roles.

### **Submitting Ourselves to the All-Powerful Father**

The fact that Nicolae Ceaușescu developed his own cult of personality, based on the patriarchal mythologies and the Father-figure imaginary and was inspired by Stalin or Mao, lead to the accentuation of the traits of an already paternalistic society. Using the overall submissiveness existing in Romania and by replicating pre-existing paternalistic discourses, Ceaușescu projected himself as the “Father of the nation”. In this new “socialist patriarchy,” which fed on traditional nationalistic predispositions, the Supreme Leader claimed that he descended from the great kings of the past (like Burebista, the so-called creator of the Dacian state). As I detailed in another research<sup>8</sup>, this patriarchal leadership constructed a new “Macho Romania,” where the public imagination was flooded with images built upon the symbolics of masculinity. As seen in this illustration showing Ceaușescu taking the “scepter of power” as President of Socialist Romania, the typical kingly pose was borrowed in a society apparently designed to bring forward equality (photo 1). Albeit ideologically the regime was supposed to create gender equality, during the Ceaușescu regime the guidelines put forward by the





“founding fathers” of Marxism – that is the need of dismantling the patriarchal bourgeois social relations – was transformed in the praxis of socialism into an even more discriminatory society. The paroxysm of this trend was reached when Ceaușescu forcibly banned abortions and began to control the bodies and reproductive systems of his fellow socialist women.

This blending of communism and patriarchalism became visible not only in the public interactions and discourses, but it also dominated the private life in Romanian society. Just by looking at two instances, taken from the socialist magazines, we observe that the stereotypes of gender roles continued to be in place. The patriarchal bias is illustrated by two ads which are representing women in specific roles. As the two visual instances selected from the socialist advertising indicate, the representation of women follow the “old,” patriarchal order. In the first category of promotional messages I selected ads which were for commonly used home appliances (vacuum cleaners, washing machines) (Photo 2).

Relevantly enough, the women are always represented as diligent housewives, wearing head scarfs and aprons, always happy to do the cleaning of the house, never having their male counterparts involved in these activities. Not only were women described as inferior to men but, more relevantly, they continued to be distributed in social roles related to domesticity and the inherent presence of a powerful male (a husband, a possible partner). Clearly the women were “naturally” taking care of the household. In the second type of social roles, where a dozen of images were selected where women were described in situations not related to domestic activities (outdoors, free time), we see a distribution of roles where the woman is always sexually available, a submissive beauty dependent on

the gaze of the dominant males surrounding or accompanying her. If they are out of the household, the women are often with a companion and they perform passive roles in situations dominated by their male counterparts (Photo 3).

Another relevant instance is the distribution of characteristics within the happy couple of the socialist President. As seen in the visual example, taken from a socialist promotional image, a propaganda piece included in many magazines of that time, the representation of the Ceaușescu family was following the typical communist scheme of the Mother and Father surrounded by children. Just like in the Soviet visual structures, where the Father was standing in the middle as the benevolent “Big Daddy” (Tătucul), this imaginary structure was important in the socialist political mentality. Depicting Nicolae Ceaușescu as the father of all the children of nation and his wife Elena as their mother – she was called in public displays of propaganda as “Most beloved mother” – actually helped reinforcing the typical mythology the bourgeois family, as made explicit by this painting made by Sabin Bălașa, one of the most important plastic artists of that time (Photo 4).

More importantly, in the informal circles, by word of mouth, by dissemination of jokes and political gossip, this image of the “benign” father of the country, the wise leader of the nation was kept intact by using a negative depiction of his wife. During the worse years of the Ceaușescu regime (mostly the last part of the 80s), the public disdain was not directed towards the “good President,” it was his wife, Elena, who was to be blamed. She received many of the criticisms of their countrymen, who were using the stereotype of the “evil mother.” As reproduced by the most prominent defector from Romania, the Securitate general Ion Mihai Pacepa, many believed that she was the one who decided to turn her family into a dynasty,



with their youngest son as the heir of the “communist throne”<sup>9</sup>. The “poor” leader was simply a victim of his wife’s ambitions and the blame fell on this “evil witch”. Clearly the political decisions were taken by Ceaușescu himself and this game of guilt indicates the presence in the public psyche of the negative projection of the woman as the source of all evil.

This myth of the *good patriarchal leader* continues to be a reality in Romania today, and even if the society is changing under the pressure of the new models of behavior, mostly coming from Western Europe and which are less driven by male authority, as it is shown by a 2014 INSCOP opinion poll<sup>10</sup>, almost a quarter of the respondents (24.7%) consider that Nicolae Ceaușescu was the best Romanian president and there is an apparent “patriarchal” explanation for this popularity. As confirmed by the results of a 2006 poll, made by the Foundation for an Open Society, which indicated the clear preference of the Romanians for “strong” political leaders, our society continues to highly appreciate a type of politician who shares common traits with the macho-patriarchs, such as being authoritarian, being able to impose discipline and being charismatic<sup>11</sup>.

The social representations and the social practices continue to cultivate manly figures, while having women in domesticated contexts. This pre-defined masculinity is attached to power, dominance and the right to control others, to aggressively interact with both men and women, continues to be the major driving force of our public space.

### **The Return of the Macho President**

Even though the characteristics of the *macho presidency* of Nicolae Ceaușescu were purposefully avoided by the first two post-communist leaders who took the President office after the Revolution of 1989 (Ion Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu), the social need for a “strong politician” never vanished. Iliescu and Constantinescu, who were displaying a certain refrain from authoritarian and aggressive masculine attitudes, were often described as “weak” and Constantinescu ended his mandate as a “defeated” President. It was only in 2004, when Traian Băsescu entered the presidential campaign that the public had the opportunity to vote for this type of political behavior. With Băsescu the *macho attitude* returned to the highest level of political decision making in Romania.

Thus the two mandates Băsescu held as President are extremely relevant and provide a fitting case study for the contemporary political imaginary structures in Romanian society today in terms of aggressive masculinity. As I pointed out in an in-depth study of the visual representations in political campaigns in Romania<sup>12</sup>, the public figure of Traian Băsescu was constantly developed around the values of a patriarchal gestures and postures. His political and public image, his nonverbal behavior and his speech constantly used phallic symbols, words of aggression and dominant stances – starting with the red chili pepper he used in the campaign for mayor in Bucharest to his pointing fingers in the presidential campaigns, or even his poignant recourse to bad mouthing his adversaries in the public debates. Băsescu projected himself as an assertive, macho politician, using a type of autochthonous machismo, very brutal and extremely



forceful. The “tools” of his political imaginary included the symbolic impaling of his enemies – during the impeachment referendum his campaign managers even created public steaks where he threatened to bring the corrupt members of Parliament – and culminated with his presence in a comedy show where he was asked to present publicly his drinking habits, and, while in office, the President performed a demonstration with four ice cubes and a bottle of whiskey. His stated the difference between “a man who knows how to drink whiskey and one who drinks stupidly”<sup>13</sup>.

Băsescu displayed wherever he could these patriarchal traits, and his public behavior was beyond his own “natural” male-centered superiority – since he always boasted that he was a captain of an oil tanker and that he was able to “lead men”. Of course, his overt macho gasconade had him elected in two consecutive terms and even after leaving office his fellow citizens continue to describe Băsescu as the best president since 1989, as revealed by another 2014 INSCOP poll<sup>14</sup>. Relevantly enough, although Emil Constantinescu was perceived as the most “democratic” leader, his presidency was appreciated by the lowest number of respondents. Comparing the two types of leaders we see that democratic behavior is perceived as weak, while autocratic and discretionary politicians are seen as strong figures in the Romanian imaginary.

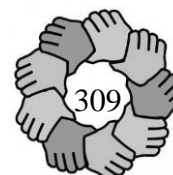
Yet far from being a positive paternalistic figure, Băsescu was an exaggerated aggressive character, who was often portrayed as bullying his collaborators and his discretionary attitude was frequently criticized. In this sense Băsescu provides a relevant illustration for the specificity of patriarchal and machoistic political behavior in Romania today. And even if, in a recent televised interview<sup>15</sup> for the National Television (TVR), Băsescu claimed to have promoted many

women in the national politics – with many examples, from Anca Boagiu (a former Minister of Transportations), to Roberta Anastase (former Head of the House of Representative) and others like Sulfina Barbu, Raluca Turcan or Monica Iacob Ritzi – I consider that the relationship he developed with his female collaborators indicates the contrary. In the following I will use a couple of examples which will illustrate not only the manner in which the former president, who is still a major political model today, behaved with women, but also the general attitude of men towards their female counterparts in politics.

#### All the President’s Women

In the recent televised interview already mentioned, when asked by the TVR reporter who were the most powerful women in Romania today, the former President identified two persons. Both of them, he claimed on various occasions, had been promoted by him to top positions: Laura Codruta *Kövesi* and Elena Udrea. This would appear to be a positive trait, a male politician who consciously promotes women shows a necessarily propitious attitude. Once again, in the very answer, Băsescu discloses a widespread stereotype. By stating that women, “no matter how much men supported them, they in turn do not support each other,” he is manifesting his disdain for the ability of women to collaborate. In the following subchapter I will detail the traits of these two political female figures, but before that we must survey the other “President’s women”, public figures, female politicians who publicly acknowledged that they had been promoted by Băsescu.

As one of these women, member of Parliament Andreea Vass, states in her political program, as long as Băsescu was the leader of the Liberal Democrat Party he



“grew” and “promoted” a new generation of political women<sup>16</sup>. The problem with this declaration is that it indicates the instrumental role of men in the career development of women, it actually points to the hierarchical domination existing in Romanian public sphere. Băsescu continued to perpetuate the model of the Father-figure who tells women what to do and who, by his benevolence, “allows” them to have social meaning. In 2013, at a reunion organized by a business magazine targeting women, the President in office at that time told his female audience: “girls, make at least a baby, it is a patriotic duty,” and then he went on telling them how he persuaded his own daughters to become mothers. Notwithstanding the sheer brutality of this advice, coming from a man who also publicly acknowledged that he was absent from the education and nurturing of his daughters<sup>17</sup>, it represents the inherent right of men to intervene in the intimate life of women. Yet the discriminatory conclusions that he openly stated at that time were shocking – Băsescu asked these women managers how many children they had and criticized them by pointing to a racist fact: “Why in God’s name the Rromani woman can carry five-six children and the Romanian woman cannot?”<sup>18</sup>. Fortunately many non-governmental associations reacted to this blatant discriminatory, misogynistic and prejudiced declaration<sup>19</sup>. Yet it was in the patriarchal logic of this macho President, since a couple of years before the same politician was penalized by the National Council against Discrimination because he called a local journalist with the insulting name-calling “filthy Gypsy”.

This gross insensitivity of the President in office expressed at the same times a profound disrespect for women generally, manifested at the highest level of political and social authority. The President, who went mall shopping in a public relations flack, when he was approached by this

woman journalist from Antena 3 (a TV station belonging to his political adversaries) he yanked her telephone and called her “birdie” (in Romanian “păsărică” is a vulgar reference to women genitalia)<sup>20</sup>. This was not a singular instance, since a more blatant case of insensitivity was when he publicly offended a cancer inflicted woman journalist, Corina Drăgotescu, who was also one of his most astute critics, and to whom Băsescu mockingly addressed a fake greeting, telling her that “God should give her as much health as the truth she told”. The offensive and abusive language seems to be an integral part of the macho speech of this rude politician. Another woman that the President boasted about having promoted, Lavinia Șandru, at that time also a member of Parliament representing the “presidential” Democratic Party, was publicly admonished by her “promoter”. In 2005, upset that Șandru’s political statements went against his will, Băsescu insulted her directly in the media by saying: “in politics it is easy to be left on the political sidewalk” (in Romanian “centura politiciii”). Albeit seemingly innocuous, in this declaration the President was actually using a vulgar expression from street slang, which calls women prostitutes as “sidewalkers” (“de centură”). More so, by describing her as a “talkative young miss” (“vorbăreței domnișoare”) and pointing out to her pretended promiscuous behavior, the President was actually disempowering and humiliating an otherwise remarkable and independent young political figure. But the worst was yet to come, since several years later Șandru claimed to have made peace with the president and even accepted that it was a “lesson in politics from a very dear person”<sup>21</sup>. Abusive behavior is not only performed, but it is also accepted and excused by the women who suffer from it.

And, if we follow the chronology of the former President’s attitude towards



women, which was expressed publicly and was never hidden, we can identify here a couple of more patriarchal traits, extremely relevant for this current discussion. On one hand there is Bănescu's patriarchal attitude of bestowing on women his masculine ability to impart benefits. Yet this is done in a very nepotistic way. This is explicit in the fact that he pushed his own daughter, Elena, for a seat in the European Parliament, although her qualifications were far from justifying such a nomination and she was subjected to many criticisms, some even suggesting that her father bought the votes for her through intermediaries<sup>22</sup>.

Nevertheless, a major machist attitude which is displayed by Bănescu remains the clear hostility towards actually powerful women. This is best illustrated by his handling of Mona Muscă, who was a potential nominee for the leadership of the National Liberal party and his most fearsome counter-candidate for Presidency. By 2006 Mona Muscă reached a level of public confidence of 46%, and, as Adriana Săftoiu points out in her memoirs, she dared to confront the President. After an encounter with Muscă, Bănescu is quoted to have said: "This is the day when women tell what to do in politics"<sup>23</sup>. Later, when Muscă was reaching high levels of popularity she made a fatal statement which consequently<sup>24</sup>. Next her political career abruptly ended when parts of her Securitate files went public – needless to say that some journalists claimed that the President was involved in this exposure. Mona Muscă collapsed from being one of the most powerful and promising women in Romanian politics to total anonymity.

Mona Muscă was quickly and harshly condemned by the public opinion and was demonized by the media. Although her actions during the communist regime, when he signed informative reports to the Securitate, were blamable, her attitude was not

even close to that of Traian Bănescu. While Muscă's vilification and humiliation lead to her removal from politics, her male counterparts who were also connected with the communist secret police were dealt with more tolerance by the media.

The third element of machist Romania is showcased by the derisive and abusive manner in which Bănescu dealt with the women who opposed or "disobeyed" him. One of the best examples is provided by Adriana Săftoiu, who collaborated with the President for more than a decade and who was his presidential counsellor and speaker of the Presidency. As Săftoiu details her experiences with Bănescu in her memoirs from the presidential palace, she did not build her career exclusively as one of the closest collaborators of the President, but was a well-known journalist and a reputed public intellectual before working "in close quarters" with Bănescu. Yet when the President believed that he was "betrayed" by Claudiu Săftoiu (Adriana's husband), he came out in public and virulently disclosed that he had appointed him as the head of the Secret Service just because he was her husband<sup>25</sup>. In a public appearance at one of the tabloid televisions in Romania, OTV, the President in office scolded his former collaborator and disclosed a shocking fact, by saying that he "made" her husband chief of the Secret Service just because her "little soul so desired" (*ți-a dorit sufletelul*). This diminishing of her qualities (by using the diminutive of "soul") is yet another clear indication of this mentality of the political patriarch who is not only imparts gifts upon the women he appreciates, but also of his authoritarian decision-making, of appointing public officials out of personal whims.

Last but not least, a more recent example, after Bănescu left the Presidential office, shows how this misogynous behavior remains a pattern. In a dispute with a woman senator, Gabriela Firea, Bănescu once





more resorted to threats and violent language. He told Firea, who used to be a critical journalist towards his Presidency, that she should “keep her husband in check, because if she won't take care of him, her husband won't come home”. Gabriela Firea followed with a lawsuit, yet this distribution of roles, in which the woman should be careful with her household is more than a menace, it is a cultural expression of the “homemaking” attributes a woman should assume (with the refusal of her possibility to get involved in the “politics of men”).

#### **Elena Udrea, the Most Beloved Collaborator of the President**

Assuming this patriarchal role of the “protector of women”, the former president was in fact perpetuating a stereotypical function of women in a world dominated by men, and this would become even more obvious by using one of his women collaborators as a case study. In fact the only woman that the former president continued to protect after leaving office was Elena Udrea. She was promoted from his personal secretary at the Presidency, to one of the most important women in the public sphere. Udrea is described in the media by her political allies and foes as the personal favorite of the President – once again Săftoiu's memoirs are indicating clearly that, as the head of the Presidential Chancellery, Udrea became one of the biggest “weaknesses” and a “vulnerability for the President”<sup>26</sup>. Udrea climbed the social and political hierarchy from the obscurity of a Miss Teenager 1991 candidate<sup>27</sup> to the position of Minister of Development and her candidacy on behalf of the Presidential Party (MMP) for the Presidential elections of 2014. What are the traits that made her so successful in “Macho Romania”?

On the one hand it appears that she represents a type of strong personality and a

powerful woman – as Udrea is self-describing her career in her own political program.

She perceives herself as a model for all women in her country, even as a “success of feminism”. Her campaign, called “Beautiful Romania” was using slogans like “it is time for a woman president”. Yet the same campaign is the best illustration for the exact opposite. While she encourages “beautiful women who want a career” to enter politics – this being in her opinion the ultimate achievement – once we study the typology of Elena Udrea we observe how she was constantly distributing herself in an objectified manner.

First this is visible in a scandalous pictorial published by a notorious women magazine, *One*<sup>28</sup>. In a series of photographs, made in May 2006, Udrea portrayed a feminine identity where nudity and the display of overt sexuality were not only acceptable, but also encouraged (photo 5). What seems unacceptable is the fact that during that time she was not a private person, she was the executive secretary of the Democrat Party, also known as the “presidential party”. More so, while performing sexual roles of submissiveness and casting herself in attitudes rewarding men's gaze for the marketing purposes of a glamour magazine is debatable, in many of her political appearances Udrea was dressed in a sexualized manner. She even got global notoriety during the 2014 presidential campaign, when a British newspaper identified her as the “Yummy mummy politician,” for inappropriately showing her cleavage in a public meeting with her potential electorate<sup>29</sup>. This was overtly done also in her ads for the presidential campaign, where, in a series of public billboards, the candidate was fighting for the highest office in the country by carrying the apparently innocent messages: “Good for Romania, good for health”, “Good for Romania, good for education”.



Yet, purposefully or not, in the Romanian language attributing the term “good” (bună) to a woman becomes actually a depreciative epithet and is an indirect sexual innuendo. More so, the way Udrea chose to dress in these banners, which were exhibited all over the country, was belittling her political identity. Projecting herself in the Romanian public sphere as a young school girl, with a pink backpack and a provocative pose, although was obviously exploiting her tantalizing image and using “sexiness” as an inciting manner of reaching her audience, was a form of gender stereotyping.

Udrea publicly affirmed that she saw nothing wrong in the fact that powerful men always need to take a dominant role, both in politics and in society. In an extremely relevant public statement, Udrea acknowledged that behind “every powerful political man there is a powerful woman”<sup>30</sup>. As many media commentators pointed out, Udrea has extracted her power from her close relationship with Traian Băsescu and has sent the message that women can be powerful only if they associate themselves with powerful men and only if they remain loyal and obedient.

### **Powerful Women and the Invisible Feminist Romania**

This leads us to the next important question – is the success of women in Romanian society defined only by personalities like Elena Udrea? Are there any other types of powerful women in such a patriarchal social group? Once again, the list of powerful women includes many of those promoted by Traian Băsescu in various official functions. And, as the former president himself stated, maybe the most powerful woman today is Laura Codruța Kövesi, currently the head prosecutor of the National Direction

Against Corruption, a branch of the General Prosecutor Office specially created to combat the misconducts of public officials. Kövesi was appointed in 2006 by Traian Băsescu because, as he stated in an interview, he wanted “a young woman” in this office<sup>31</sup>. Kövesi is the actual opposite of Udrea – her appearance is rather masculine, she often wears business cut suits, in monotone colors and with a personal style that is neutral, from her haircut to her manners. She is extremely popular, with a confidence rate in general polls above 50%. Nonetheless, although not a political figure, very often Kövesi is criticized by the media opinion leaders and by some of the politicians for being simply “an instrument” of occult political purposes. One of the most important editorialists in Romania today, Ion Cristoiu, constantly minimizes Kövesi’s achievements, and is even name-calling her “Lulutza”, thus suggesting on his blog (cristoiublog.ro) that she is nothing but a mindless expression of the “political police of the Presidency”<sup>32</sup>. Others have attacked her for plagiarizing her Ph.D. thesis and some, like the president of the Senate, even questioned her patriotism and claimed that she was “guided by the foreign embassies”<sup>33</sup>. A powerful woman, no matter how many results and proofs she has for her professionalism remains a simple “tool” of somebody else.

Another powerful woman in the national politics who does not follow within the logic of sexual objectification is Monica Macovei. Although Macovei was also close to Băsescu, since she was appointed Minister of Justice with the President’s support<sup>34</sup>, she soon became an independent politician and started her own political movement called M10. Macovei was the second woman who made her bid for presidency in 2014, and even got more votes than Elena Udrea. Yet she was constantly chastised by the media and by former president Băsescu



as “a communist prosecutor”, her past being turned against her extremely convincing career in the present. The disparaging attitude towards her included awful defamations and calumniations – she was smeared as alcoholic, described as a woman incapable of having a family, libeled as an imperfect creature of many defects, especially since he had no husband and was without children. All of these negative epithets and her character assassination were linked to her domestic inabilities. Once more, a woman without a husband and who was following her career path is considered to be “inferior” to men who, many of them, were doing the same thing.

Another way of discrediting powerful women is by disparagingly identifying them as “feminists”, since in the Romanian public sphere feminism is often used as a negative label. In this context a negative example shows how this derogatory attitude towards powerful women goes even outside the political sphere and is a widespread social practice. As shown by a public conflict between two journalists, Miruna Munteanu, an important female editorialist and Dan Ciachir, a conservative publicist, women are often attacked by their male colleagues on gender basis and are picked at by being labelled as “feminists”. As Ciachir maliciously describes those women who are fighting for political rights as “frigid”, their frigidity presented as good for all explanation as any manifestation of atheism<sup>35</sup>. Such symbolic connection indicates once more that the image of the successful women in Romanian society is conventionally linked with obedience within matrimonial bonds. Those women (like Macovei or Kövesi) who are not fulfilling their traditional roles must be repudiated and presented as negative examples for their “sin” of not being “feminine” enough.

Unfortunately this minimizing attitude towards women and the misunderstanding of the key values of feminist politics is due

also to the fact that in contemporary Romania *there isn't an authentic and politically relevant* feminist movement. After 1989 several women intellectuals in Romania opened up the door toward the research and wider debate about femininity and the role of women in society. Maybe the best example remains Mihaela Miroiu, one of the most important feminist researchers in Romanian academia today. In one of her seminal studies, Miroiu identified three types of feminist approaches in contemporary society<sup>36</sup>. The first is a type of feminism which, according to Miroiu, is imported from the European Union and it is imposing legal standards and principles not yet integrated in the imaginary of Romanian society. This “room-service” feminism is basically just a superficial layer of political representation, expressed by discursive practices perceived as artificial even by women. The second type of feminism, which can be described as a form of radicalism, is mainly specific to a group of women writers affiliated to Critic-Atac, and other online journals and platforms dedicated to the criticism of capitalist society.

Last, but not least, there is the type of feminism that Miroiu herself practices, which she describes as “neoliberal feminism” – a feminism that has political relevance, but it is not a political movement, it is rather a cultural and academic stance, motivated by the necessary debate on some of the most important feminist concepts. Miroiu is followed by more recent women writers, like Diana Elena Neaga (with *Gen și Cetățenie în România*), Bianca Burța-Cernat (*Fotografie de grup cu scriitoare uitate*) or Oana Băluță (*Feminism reflexiv modern*) who are valuable thinkers bringing to the public fore essential viewpoints in some of the major intellectual debates.



### Sexualized and Superficial Roles of Women in Society

Regrettably these efforts are not powerful enough to change a more profoundly negative representation of women in the collective psyche and the subsequent distribution of women in inferior social roles. As indicated by a recent “Report on gender barriers”<sup>37</sup>, the general perception is that men are supposed to be aggressive and assertive, that they are naturally dominant and creative as opposed to women, who must be affectionate, gentle, charming and emotional. Another national research, published in 2011 by ALTFEM (a national project designed to change the role of women in society) monitored 91 TV shows, newspapers and magazines and has shown that men are predominantly represented as “professionals”, while women are described as “domestic and private”. Most often the media in Romania depicts women as “mothers and housewives”, as “dependent on men”, while men are occupying the “important” social positions<sup>38</sup>. How is it possible to have such a widespread cultural acceptance for such discriminatory representations?

Many of the answers are well pointed by the ALTFEM research, yet we need to underline that an important source is the generalized *superficialization* of women role models in the media. A research made public in 2010 by Media IQ, a specialized service of media monitoring, has shown that there is a category of women which are most often “mediatized”, promoted and cultivated by the main information and entertainment outlets. This list is extremely illustrative, since the “top 10” women who appear in the media are as follows: Bianca Drăgușanu, Monica Columbeanu, Paula Seling, Mihaela Rădulescu, Daniela Crudu,

Doru Pop

Simona Sensual, Oana Zăvoranu, Andreea Bănica, Laura Cosoi and Andreea Raicu.

Without going too deep into a media analysis, just by looking at the first three women in this “top” it becomes obvious that the most popular women in Romania, the most important women in the society, are sexualized objects, objectified representations of womanhood. Relevantly enough, the most popularized feminine figure in this country and the most appreciated woman by the media is Bianca Drăgușanu. Drăgușanu, who actually is not even a TV presenter, because she is simply a backdrop anchor in a TV show where she poses half naked, is most often presented publicly as a sexual object (in very scarcely dressed situations). More so, she is cast as a supporting figure for the men who are really presenting that show, thus promoting a certain feminine ideal of the woman as “little nude helper” of men, without personality or intellectual value.

The following women in order of their “popularity” also display worrisome traits, as is the case with the second most popular woman Romania, Monica Columbeanu. Columbeanu was a fashion model who came to the public with a media scandal, in which she was showcased as an illustration for the “Cinderella syndrome”, since she married a man over 40 years older than her, a millionaire who was her “protector” when she was just 18 – later she divorced him and left their young girl with her former husband. Clearly Columbeanu is a negative model, since she gives the wrong impression to young women that they can reach an important social status not because of their qualities and professional qualifications, but by marrying rich men.

The third most known woman, Mihaela Rădulescu, is another controversial figure, developed within the Romanian media. Although Rădulescu boasts with her bestselling books, one of them published under the title: *Why Do We Love Men* – her success as



a “writer” is based on copycatting the most popular writer in Romania today, Mircea Cărtărescu, who previously wrote a book called *Why Do We Love Women*. Rădulescu’s “recipe” for media attention, just like for many other “popular” women, is to provokingly use her sexuality. In a recent media scandal (as seen in the photo) Rădulescu published on her Facebook page an image with her boyfriend, showing herself as a tabletop on which the man is eating his lunch. Consciously or unconsciously she was using mockingly one of the most famous representations from feminist art, the Allen Jones works featuring women as chairs and tables. Here Rădulescu is boasting her self-submission, claiming indirectly that she is not a “feminist”, but rather a “normal” woman (photo 6).

#### **Our Women are Beautiful, a Negative Myth**

Such pre-established social roles, which are very much similar to what we see in other patriarchal societies, are even more deprecative in the Romanian public sphere because of *the beauty standards* and the cultural pressures of representations. Women in Romania are compelled to comply with an illusory myth of beauty, since there is a widespread bias that “our women” are better than all the other women of the planet. This is visible in media narratives and, as indicated by a recent story, which is quoting proudly from a travel guide, the Romanian press often releases news which supports the idea that we have the most beautiful women in the world. Of course the author of this particular “marrying travel guide”, a so-called doctor Prem Jayasi, describes the women in Romania with a plethora of prejudices. Romanian women are: “caring, empathic, feminine, developing positive attitudes and promoting traditional values”

and, more relevantly “the Romanian women have all that a man is searching when choosing a wife”<sup>39</sup>. “Dr. Prem”, the self-appointed specialist in global beauty, is not actually evaluating women according to their intrinsic qualities, but by referring to their “marriageability”.

This stereotypes about Romania, that “we have the most beautiful women in the world”, besides the fact that is a common bias of many nations (from the French to the Ukrainians), is a formula often used by the media and in the advertising industry. This stereotype appears even in the most innocuous circumstances, and its most visible cultural manifestation can be found in media representations today.

From television shows to advertising we are witnessing a widespread *public objectification* of women, one extremely overt and callous, manifested in all aspects of Romanian visual culture. Just by taking a close look at the billboards of the advertising campaigns, which are the most visible forms of contemporary public addressing, we observe the signs of this inclination to bluntly present women as sexually available.

Some of these messages might be – at a certain level – understandable, since they are directly targeting women and promote specific products like underwear – although this is also deeply problematic. This is the case with a huge public panel in which a company like Carrefour is using the image of Gina Pistol, wearing the “recommended” undergarments. Of course, Pistol, who reached her “celebrity” status after presenting one of the most sexist TV show in Romania, “We are not blondes”, and was declared “the most beautiful blonde” in the Romanian “showbiz”, had several nude pictorials in men’s magazines. When she is appearing almost naked on a huge billboard in the public space her public presence is not “innocent” and the connotations are obviously



eroticized. Another celebrity which was used in the campaigns of this global retailer was – Jojo, an actress and a TV star who famously appeared naked in some recent movies. Once again, here almost naked is used by Carrefour to promote their bathing suit, yet no wonder that a group of conservatives in the county of Suceava protested against the exhibition of these ads, calling them “street pornography” and vandalized her images<sup>40</sup>. These representations of women are not simply targeting a demographic group, they are visual displays that exploit gratuitous sexualization (Photo 7).

More questionable are those situations in which public displays of sexuality are used to promote commodities and businesses that have nothing to do with women’s products. One of the most relevant is the public campaign of a national hardware stores, Dedeman, which gratuitously exploits the objectification of women. In a series of ads various women are depicted in explicit sexual postures, while several handymen (a plumber, a gardener, a bricklayer and so on) are doing various home improving activities. All this with the sexist slogan which goes like this: “Your wife also has phantasies with a plumber (a gardener, a bricklayer and so on). Come to Dedeman and you can fulfill them all”. (Photo 8) Once again, women are presented in promiscuous postures and attitudes, while men are described as hard working and victims of their predatorily behavior (Photo 9).

If the connection between a retailer and the sexual satisfaction of women escapes logic, another ad displayed in the public space shows a woman’s cleavage, completely disembodied and refusing her identity, only to display on her chest the slogan: “They got you three marriage proposals, they deserve at least a test”. Before thinking that this is a promotional message for test drives, we realize that even public announcements financed on behalf of “Renășterea”

Foundation, a nongovernmental organization that promotes women’s health. How is it possible to promote social awareness by using media stereotyping fails to be clear, since the health of women is also important in terms of their psycho-cultural representations, not only their physical integrity. (Photo 10) Commendably, The National Agency for the Equality of Chances between Men and Women demanded McCann Erickson, the creator of the message, to cease and desist any more displays of such sexist materials by October 2015<sup>41</sup>.

If women appearing naked in huge billboards can be seen an indicator of the noxious effect of the public sexualization, another harmful mechanism is the naturalization of sexual dominance from early ages. I chose two manifestations of this process that are illustrative for the gratuitous objectification. In an extremely controversial video advertisement, an ad created to promote a classical biscuit – one of my own childhood favorites – called “Eugenia”, the advertisers decided to present the product as highly desirable. Thus they decided to use in this spot, which was broadcast on national television at almost every hour during the day, a young girl and a young boy (not even 12 years old) who have a flirtatious interaction. Made by Candiso Advertising Agency this material is not only depicting a very young girl as sexually active (which is in and of itself bad), it also shows her in an inappropriate relationship with the boys of her age, who wait for her to “reward” each and every one of them, if they can offer her the chocolate cookie. Once more, the National Council for Audiovisual (the national authority in television broadcasting) prohibited in 2011 the showing of the ad, yet this unacceptable behavior, in which very young women are presented as promiscuous and taught by example that accepting the dominant roles of males and their subservient roles is desirable produced its effect. Such early sexualization



leads to late acceptance of domination and the imagination mechanism used throughout this process is the same – positioning men as being “in charge”, representing masculinity in a domination stance, which helps convincing women that they are naturally inferior and they need to cater to the desires of the opposite sex (Photo 11).

The last visual example for this normalization of subjugation and exploitation is provided by the book cover of a pseudo-autobiographical fiction wrote by Dan Chișu, a well-known movie director and screenwriter. His work entitled: *Alone under the Shower*<sup>42</sup>, besides the sexually explicit content, in which a movie director is describing his erotic exploits, the cover shows a male lower body part, with three different hands of women covering the genitalia from left, right and bottom. Without discussing the tasteless depiction of a man’s genitals, more important is the inherent media stereotyping. Even when presented naked, men are in control and women are ready to serve this dominant “master” of their desires (photo 12).

### **A Culture Tolerating Violence against Women**

This process of public and private objectification is not simply an imagination game, an exercise in creativity. It reaches extremely dangerous levels when it comes to real women, who are not only just representations of potential victims of male abuse. It becomes a tragic social reality when there are personal and physical consequences of such an imaginary predisposition. Things are no longer explainable “creatively” when the worse of this cultural predisposition is manifested as a widespread abuse of women. Two thirds of all the women in Romania confirm that, at least once in their lifetime, were subjected to a form of aggression, verbal, sexual or physical. As

indicated by the frightening statistics in Romania today, which shockingly enough show that over 700.000 women declare that they were sexually and verbally abused and humiliated, there are approximately 2,500 rapes registered yearly. And of the 60,000 cases of abuse reported between 2004-2009, 778 resulted in the death of the victims.

The displays of sexual domination and the eroticization of the women’s bodies unfortunately have extremely severe consequences, as the “innocent” nature of abusive discourses can no longer be justified when the European surveys confirm a worrisome reality: Romania leads in a negative competition for the most abusive country on the continent. The unofficial data provided by some Police officials and other public figures are even more frightening, confirming the fact that in Romania a rape is registered every 10 hours (even if in the public data many go unknown)! There are counties in Romania where the registered the number of rapes is even higher than the average, with Vaslui and Iași counties “leading” this hierarchy of domestic and gender-based abuse.

Even internal statistics of the national Police show that 45% of the women in Romania were verbally abused during their lifetime and 30% of women in Romania were physically abused during their lifetime, 7% of women in Romania were sexually abused during their lifetime and although sexual harassment against women seems to be very low, when it comes to abuse since childhood an European wide qualitative research indicated that most of the abuses are not reported in our since they are not considered to be “serious”. More so, 74% of women have never heard of the existence of public awareness campaigns, designed for protecting them against violence and have no knowledge of the state institutions created to protect them<sup>43</sup>. The circle of violence and



abuse is sealed by the lack of information and protection. The cases of domestic abuse are also widespread, with 2/3 of women declaring that they were coerced to sexual intercourse by their partners and 15% of them were raped by their former friends or acquaintances. We need to add here the widespread sexual trafficking, with only in the first semester of 2010 more than 100 minor girls (14-17) were reported as trafficked for sex.

Unofficial data, like those provided by Judge Cristi Danileț, one of the members of the Supreme Council of Magistrates, who acted like a whistleblower and published on his personal webpage some frightening information, which were not available to the public, show that of the 723 sexual crimes committed in Romania between 2011 and 2015, 87 were in Iași, 35 were in Bucharest and 20 in Vaslui counties<sup>44</sup>. Reported to the total population of these regions the proportions are horrendous, with Vaslui having 3.41 cases for 10.000 inhabitants.

Regrettably, when dealing with these unquestionable data, which are showing that there is a culture of physical violence pitted against women in Romania, in turn generated by a sub-culture of aggressive behavior and natural domination of men, there is no qualitative consistence to the phenomenon. We do not have at this point coherent and scientifically sound qualitative research to show the complexity of the phenomenon.

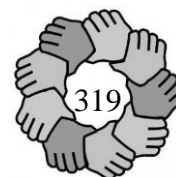
Once again media example could provide a deeper insight into the horrific nature of this brutality towards women. In 2015 one of the most cruel cases of rape in recent times took place in the Vaslui County, when seven young men (aged 18 to 27) kidnapped a very young school girl (barely 18 years old) and raped her brutally for hours, humiliating and abusing her in unimaginable ways<sup>45</sup>. What is even more shocking and relevant for this discussion, is that the

young girl that they sequestered and assaulted was soon ostracized by their community. The people of the village they all lived in actually supported the rapist boys and almost the entire village accused the girl for lewd behavior. Even more worrying, when it came to public support for the victim, shockingly enough a quarter of the Romanians, when asked who carried the responsibility for the rape, included the female victim as co-responsible<sup>46</sup>. Once more, if needed, this clearly indicates a cultural predisposition for discrimination against women and even a general promotion of such behavior.

Seeing such cases we could be inclined to explain them as expressions of the dynamics of a socially and economically backward sub-culture. We could attribute such behavior to marginal groups and disenfranchised individuals. Yet, according to the data made public by the whistleblower organization, *România curată* (Clean Romania), the phenomenon of abuse and sexual exploitation is extremely widespread even in Romanian academia. Our Universities are plagued the same disease, as indicated by recently scandals, when young female students were coming out publicly and were denouncing the fact they were sexually abused by their professors. In several academic centers (from Cluj to Iasi), teachers were exposed to have demanded sexual favors for better grades. In an appalling case, one of the professors of the respected University in Cluj, used his authority and social position and transformed the academia into a place for sexual abuse<sup>47</sup>. Many other cases were made public and they showed that male teachers were demanding sexual favors for promoting exams. The cycle of abuse was practiced even in early school, as indicated by many cases of sexual exploitation practiced by male teachers with their sometimes minor students.

Some relevant illustrations for the qualitative component of our discussion





come from cinematic representations, which provide us with wide variety of contexts for a wide variety of instances when violence against women is practiced as a “normal” social behavior. As showcased by one the most successful films made by recent Romanian movies directors, *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* by Cristian Mungiu, the culture of rape and aggression towards women is not a recent phenomenon in Romanian society. The culture of physical abuse was a terrific reality even during the communist regime. As the plot of the movie takes us into socialist Romania during the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu, the director is placing two young students in an atrocious context. Looking for an illicit abortionist, the man they pay to perform the illegal act ends up raping both of them and the two young women end up silently accepting their subservient position. Another powerful example can be found in a movie which, although not so famous internationally as the previous, offers the viewer a revelatory depiction of the situations many women in this country are trapped in. *Ryna*, by Ruxandra Zenide, presents its viewers with a veridic depiction of the way men handle women in small communities. What is troubling in *Ryna* is not just the brutality of the rape scene, in which the Mayor of a small village rapes a young girl, a teenager who has dreams of professional accomplishment as a photographer. Her life is crushed by the brutal act, but more significantly the rape happens while her father with her in the car of the Mayor, and then later the same drunken father and the authorities (including the Police) are trying to convince the girl not to press charges. Once again, the same culture of silencing the victims becomes apparent. Last but not least is another relevant movie, *Loverboy*, in which the director, Cătălin Mitulescu, describes the awful social and, more importantly private mechanisms which make possible the flourishing of human

trafficking and sexual exploitation of women. Deceived by their male partners and ruthlessly exploited, many women are helpless victims of a macho and patriarchal society based upon gender discrimination.

What can we make of this epidemic of aggression and brutality towards women in our society today? We need to ask ourselves how is this possible? My argument here is that this is not only about public representations, it has more profound connections than just political and media structures or images, it also has to do with the private models we as social group consider acceptable.

#### **The Collective Psyche and the Private Normalizing of Abuse**

One explanation is the widespread acceptance and even condescendence towards the *private and domestic abuse* against women. As indicated by a European survey of violence against women,<sup>48</sup> Romania scores among the top countries (of 28) when it comes to physical and sexual violence perpetrated by present or former partners. Once more, we can identify the manifestations of this mentality in several media contexts. A recent example comes from a television show called “Un show păcătos”, which is highly controversial and in which the most popular Romanian woman (Bianca Drăgușanu) made her claim as eroticized celebrity. In one of these extremely vulgar and sexualized TV shows, an ethno-pop singer, Nicolae Guță, managed to get international attention when he physically assaulted his pregnant girlfriend on a live stage<sup>49</sup>. After pulling his partner’s hair and hitting her while on stage at this live show, after swearing and cursing her on a direct TV, the two claimed that it was a staged event. (Photo 13) Even if this was the case or not, the simple fact that abusing a pregnant woman



is considered as an acceptable situation for amusement is an illustration of the mechanisms described here.

Of course, as argued before, this is only a case of socially marginal people, who display such behaviors because they are living in subgroups that are socially uneducated. Such behaviors are not defined by suburban or peripheral contexts. There are many other negative examples of such private dynamics with people who are considered to be “social models”, individuals extremely popular in the mainstream media culture. As it came out publicly after the breakup of a famous couple, Ștefan Bănică Jr. and Andreea Marin, two of the most popular media figures in Romania, abuse and violence represented a common domestic practice. Andreea Marin, who has been a very successful TV presenter at the National Television came out publicly and admitted that she was abused and beaten, even if not sexually abused by her former husband, himself a famous actor, rock singer and TV star. Another recent scandal involving media celebrities shows a similar pattern. One of the pop singers, Alexandra Stan, who reached international notoriety, was brutally beaten by her boyfriend while driving and then she was abandoned in the middle of a field. Stan, who managed to sell millions of copies of her songs abroad, was disfigured by her own manager and then threatened with more violence if trying to sue him.

Again, the content of advertising might provide an explanation for such actions, since it offers a visible and direct example for how the normalizing of abuse and even how lightly gender violence and objectification is dealt with in our society. The first example is a print ad, for the flower brand “Băneasa”, in which a scarcely clad woman (wearing only an apron as indication of her domestic nature) sits on a table top covered with cooking tools, with flour spread all

over her lower body and an explicit hand mark represented on her buttocks. In an apparent sensual way, the logo says: “Where you hit, it grows”. Yet, if we take a closer look, we observe that this woman has been slapped by a man – since the hand marks on her body are large – and the combination of objectification with violence becomes the ingredient for public “stimulation”. Violence is presented as desirable, as provoking pleasure and, even if it is made in a laughable manner, we need to follow with an interpretation opening the understanding for deeper meanings. We need to see here more than just a funny message (“spend more time in the kitchen”) is more than a promotional for authentic “Romanian made” products. It has to do with the private acceptance of male brutality. (Photo 14) The slogan is not just about playful “hitting”, it is double entendre – if the dough grows when roughing it, also the good relationship between males and females must be based on the acceptance of violence. Male domination and brutality are depicted as a form of rewarding women, as something that most women desire.

As a conclusion, I would argue that these representations of abuse against women, both in the public and the private space, where women are most often distributed as sexual objects, as always available for male sexuality, and presented as being implicitly submissive are integral elements of the patriarchal and macho-ist culture. By public and private distribution of women in such positions we are actually creating an environment in which young girls and young teenager women are taught to accept their condition as objects. By being trained from early ages to be sexually available and to believe that their social success depends on their ability to please men, women are culturally domesticated while men are trained to perceive women as different (read inferior). It is more than providing media roles that women follow, it is a process of image and



identity formation, which must be connected to a deeply rooted stereotype in our collective psyche which provides the basis for discrimination on gender bases. This social model based on aggressive domination by men and the demise of women is constantly reinforcing the dynamics of a patriarchal society. And the vicious cycle of domination cannot be interrupted as long as the superficialized and sexualized representations of women, followed by public displays of disdain and even abuse towards any females that break this circle continue to be cultivated. Any changes in the collective psyche take place gradually and the condition of women cannot be improved unless we change the gender roles of women in Romanian society and the condition of women in our private lives.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/-images/file/Domenii/Egalitate%20de%20sanse/analiza%20statistica.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/-index.php/Gender\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/-index.php/Gender_statistics).

<sup>3</sup> Kate Millett. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Doubleday, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Engels. *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. First edition, 1884. [https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx-works/download/pdf/origin\\_family.pdf](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx-works/download/pdf/origin_family.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Juliet Mitchell. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. London: Allen Lane, 1974.

<sup>6</sup> Gerda Lerner. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Guttman. *The Meaning of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Doru Pop. "Macho (Ro)man(ia). Stereotipii ale puterii în imaginarul românesc post-decembrist", in *T(z)ara noastră, stereotipii și prejudecăți*, Ruxandra Cesereanu (ed.).

București: Institutului Cultural Român, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Ion Mihai Pacepa. *Red Horizons. The True Story of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu's Crimes, Lifestyle and Corruption*. Washington: Regnery Gateway, 1990, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.inscop.ro/iulie-2014-presedintii-romaniei>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-arhiva-1137-670-romanii-prefera-liderii-politici-puter-nici.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> Doru Pop. *Alegerile naibii. Fals tratat despre metehnele imaginarului politic autohton*. Cluj: Indigo, 2007, p. 74 sq.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gandul.info/stiri/basescu-la-cronica-carcotasilor-iliescu-mangafaua-geoanacatavincu-dar-cu-inteligenta-mai-putina-veziaici-cine-e-bibicu-si-cum-se-bea-whisky-farasa-te-imbeti-5150658>.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.inscop.ro/decembrie-2014-candidati-ipotetici-pcr-si-nicolae-ceausescu-presedintii-in-regimul-democratic-comunism-vs-democratie>.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.tvrplus.ro/editie-emisiunea-de-luni-425063>.

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.andreeavass.ro/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Viziunea-pentru-reorganizarea-OFPDL\\_-Andreea-Paul.pdf](http://www.andreeavass.ro/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Viziunea-pentru-reorganizarea-OFPDL_-Andreea-Paul.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Traian Basescu, interview with Mircea Radu, "De ce iubim femeile" [Why Do We Love Women], March 7, 2016, also available here: <https://youtu.be/QvQXEPTn54M>.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-15029-741-basescu-natalitatea-misiune-care-femeile-trebuie-asume-cum-dumnezeu-femeia-romapoate-tine-cinci-sase-copii-iar-romanca-nu-poate.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.romanicriss.org/PDF/RCRISS-%20si%20CRJ%20-%202020.06.2013.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-30178-95-video-verdictul-iccj-cazul-tiganca-imputi-ta-gestul-lui-traian-basescu-este-discriminatoriu-dar-nu-reprezinta-contraventie.htm>.



- <sup>21</sup> <http://www.gandul.info/politica/lavinia-sandru-poveste-cu-basescu-m-am-uitat-la-el-mi-a-zambit-ne-am-imbratisat-a-fost-asa-un-sentiment-9646296>.
- <sup>22</sup> <http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/actualitate/motivarea-deciziei-de-arestare-a-lui-marian-vanghelie-primarul-ar-fi-cerut-10-000-de-semnaturi-pentru-elena-basescu.html>.
- <sup>23</sup> Adriana Săftoiu. *Cronică de Cotroceni*. Iași: Polirom, 2015, p. 44.
- <sup>24</sup> *Idem*, p. 254.
- <sup>25</sup> <http://www.mediafax.ro/politic/basescu-critica-atitudinea-adrianei-saftoiu-5144770>.
- <sup>26</sup> Săftoiu, *idem*, p. 100-101.
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**ABANDONAȚI PROCEDEELE VECHI!**

**«PRACTIC»**  
este aspiratorul de praful ideal pentru gospodărie, permitând curățarea impecabilă, cu efort minim, a interiorului locuinței.

Construcția aspiratorului «PRACTIC» asigură o putere de aspirație mare și un randament ridicat. Dăți une performanțe superioare, consumul de energie electrică pe oră nu depășește 0,15 lei.

Accesorii cu care este dotat permit curățarea eficientă și rapidă a covorașelor, tapeturilor, moalelor, saltelelor, tapeturilor, tapeturilor, peretilor, bălăcilor etc. Construcția și forma accesoriilor permit îndepărtarea totală a prafului din toate cele mai greu accesibile locuri: nișuri, marginile etc.

Pulverizatorul de lichide poate fi utilizat la stroșirea roșilor, umectarea rufelor și pulverizarea cu apă caldă, cu condiția ca ele să nu fie inflamabile.

**ESTE INTERZISĂ PULVERIZAREA DETERGENȚILOR**  
Pe baza experienței acumulate de uzină, în construcția de aspiratoare de praful model «PRACTIC» este compatibil cu aspiratoarele de praful mai moderne.

Aspiratorul «PRACTIC» prezintă o mare siguranță în funcționare. Funcționarea permite economie de timp și comoditate. Se învecină într-o gamă de culori, bogată și strălucitoare, asortate în mod plăcut.

**CARACTERISTICILE TEHNICE**  
Tensiunea: 120 sau 220 Volți  
Putere absorbită nominală: 430 ± 15% Watt  
Debit maxim: 1,2 m<sup>3</sup>/minut  
Depresiune maximă: 1.300 mm coloană apă  
Greutate aspiratorului propriu-zis: 6,4 kg  
Greutate aspiratorului cu accesorii: 8,2 kg

Photos 1-2

**MOBRA**  
**REZISTENȚĂ**  
**și RAPIDĂ**

- Motor în doi timpi, monocilindru, cu răcire forțată cu aer
- Capacitate cilindrică: 50 cmc
- Putere: 4 CP
- 4 viteze schimbate cu piciorul
- Consum benzină: 2,5 l/100 km
- Suspensii cu amortizoare hidraulice și balonajul anvelopelor asigură stabilitate și confort

Poate fi parcat oriunde, deoarece are încuietorea la ghidon  
Sistem de semnalizare complet și comenzi bine plasate  
Aspect modern, funcționare silențioasă



Photos 3-4



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Doru Pop



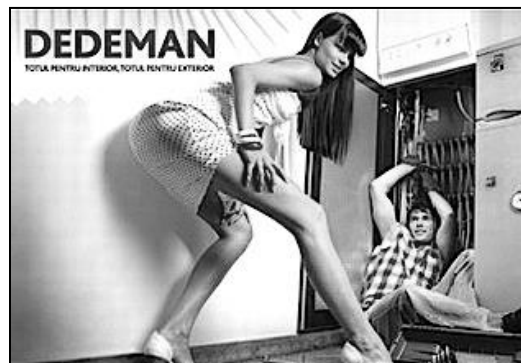
Photo 5



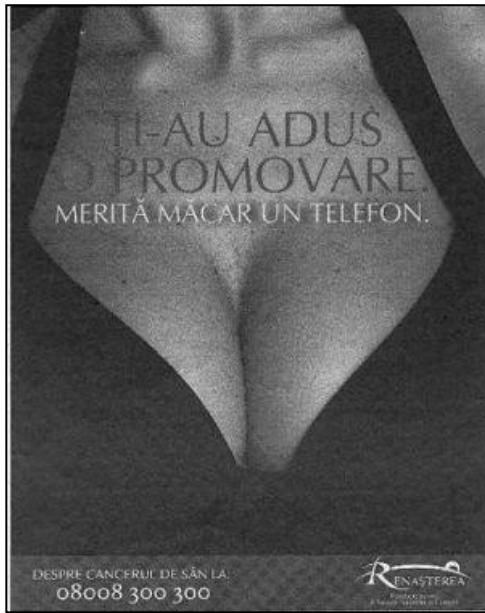
Photo 6



Photo 7



Photos 8-9



Photos 10 & 12



Photo 11





Photo 13



Photo 14