

ESSACHES

Journal for Communication Studies

Vol. 7 N° 2(14)/2014

Publication *ESSACHESS*

Réalisation couverture : Stefan Bratosin

Illustration couverture : Stefan Bratosin

© *ESSACHESS*

eISSN 1775-352X

La dimension de genre dans les discours, organisations et pratiques médiatiques

Coordination du numéro :
Margreth LÚNENBORG, Centre International du Journalisme,
Université Libre Berlin, ALLEMAGNE
et
Daniela ROVENTA-FRUMUSANI, Université de Bucarest,
ROUMANIE

Introduction / 5

Dossier / 13

Sylvie THIÉBLEMONT / 15
Ni putes ni soumises. Médias et femmes d'un autre genre ?

Rim MEDDEB / 27
Les représentations des musulmanes dans le quotidien *La Libre Belgique*

April COBOS / 37
"Rape Culture" language and the news media: contested versus non-contested cases

Chiara GIUS, Pina LALLI / 53
"I loved her so much, but I killed her." Romantic love as a representational frame for intimate partner femicide in three Italian newspapers

Almut SICHLER, Elizabeth PROMMER / 77
Gender differences within the German – language Wikipedia

Jennifer TANK, Marlis PRIZING / 95
Remnant "Family": the role of women in the media discourse on families

Sandy MONTAÑOLA / 119

Le sport pour un lectorat féminin : représentations et enjeux. Le cas de *l'Équipe Féminine*

Justine MARILLONNET / 133

Images de mode et images de femmes dans la presse magazine féminine française. Parades normatives ou mascarade stratégique ?

Liudmila VORONOVA / 145

“Send pretty girls to the White House”: the role of gender in journalists – politicians’ interactions

Varia / 173

Anne-Hélène LE CORNEC UBERTINI / 175

La communication paradoxale des institutions publiques. Un cas d'école : l'université française

Notes de lecture et parutions / 187

Introduction

“How does gender matter?” Using the concept of gender as a crosscutting principle underlying all aspects of social life (work, family, religion, migration, research) we intend to highlight the gender dimension of social life, a major phenomenon ignored for a long time. The “liquidity of the modern society” (Bauman) also marked the concept of gender, floating between “social sex”, “gender relations” and “gender difference” understood as a socio-anthropological difference constructed and disseminated through standards, norms and customs articulated by, practiced through and distributed via media. Entered fully into the social sciences and humanities (sociology and history in the first place), gender is built conceptually in a wide range of feminist theories: universalists, differentialists, Marxists, radicals, deconstructionists, culturalists, and queer theory as a “differential valence” (Françoise Héritier). Gender as a dimension of constructing differences offers analytic insights to understand the way in which symbolic as well as structural dimensions of inequality within society are established. Through different theoretical approaches gender is to be seen as a relevant, but not single dimension of social and cultural inequality as discussed in concepts of intersectionality (Aldoory & Parry-Giles, 2005; Gudrun-Axeli Knapp, 2005).

Asking for the ways in which gender matters when looking at media and communication offers at least four approaches: We need (1) to focus how media itself is constitutive with regards to gender – describing an epistemological approach; (2) looking at men and women producing media content opens the way to questioning the gendered structure of a profession and of organizations itself; (3) analysing media content makes it necessary to deconstruct implicit and explicit notions of gender in the use of language, visuals, narratives, in the structure of discourse and the underlying patterns of selection. And (4) gender matters with regard to the audience as it is either implicitly addressed in media content or explicitly looked at in an empirical approach of audience research. These four perspectives of dealing with the relevance of gender when understanding media are not to be seen as distinct, but as intrinsically linked one to each other. Thus the term ‘media practices’ offers opportunities to approach the field in a more holistic way, asking for “the things we do with media” and how they are deeply rooted in gendered structures of society and either re-establish or challenge these structures themselves.

We are aware of profound differences in the Francophone and Anglophone fields of research in media and communication studies (see Averbeck-Lietz, Bonnet & Bonnet, 2014) as well as in gender studies and its underlying theories. Both approaches and concepts discussed in the field of gender studies refer to distinct theoretical framework, but offer complex opportunities for bridging academic cultures. Even if the recently recognized gender infrastructure in social sciences (Chabaud-Rychter, 2010 *inter alii*) has focused the interest of researchers all over the world in a general attempt to deoccidentalization of science, we still assist to a certain “cleavage” between a multiplicity of empirical social-science analyses in the Anglo-Saxon world and a more hermeneutic-based approach in the field of “sciences de l’information et de la communication” in the French tradition. In fact the reflexive awareness in gender analysis (feminist media studies as well as gender media studies) leads to the need of both approaches to understand the deeply rooted structure of gender within media and communication. This diversity of empirical approaches is accompanied by a variety of theoretical concepts: Judith Butler’s (1990, 1993) concept of the performativity of gender – identifying sex as well as gender as socio-cultural constructions realized by repetition and iteration – has inspired a variety of analysis’ looking for the ways “doing gender” is practiced with and in media. Instead, in the tradition of Luce Irigaray (1992) the specific modes of practicing femininity and masculinity as codes of difference in language and genres are essential starting points for the analysis of media and media discourse.

This special issue of the journal *ESSACHESS*, established in the francophone field of media and communication studies, wants to bridge both fields of investigation. Being aware that the identification of the reasons *why gender matters* will only convincingly be done when using multiple empirical and theoretical approaches, relying on feminist theory as well as on post-structuralism and queer theory we have brought together a collection of articles rooted in both traditions.

As we are now in a century characterized by “fast and furious developments in media products, technologies and institutions” (Ross, 2009) it becomes essential to re-examine in a critical perspective the concepts of media representation, media discourse, media practice bridging media culture and academy.

Sylvie Thiéblemont emphasizes a new form of non classical feminism and its compulsory media contact and contract given that no visibility and way to convince the public opinion is achieved without media presence. Since 2000, emerging new women's movement, like *Ni putes ni soumises (NPNS)*, give a new approach of activism: not the classical image of feminists, “but women with claims in the media and through the media about the living conditions of the residents of the suburbs,” claims disseminated in quality newspapers (*Le Monde*), women’s magazines (*Elle*) and TV programmes. The visibility of their acts and discourses passes through the construction of a *public problem* (the situation of the citizens in suburbs) and the algorithm of *naming /blaming/*this situation and *claiming* for relevant solutions.

In the contemporary societies, marked by the digital revolution, the deindustrialization and relocation processes, there is an increasing interconnectedness between the production and reproduction of labor, as well as between the public and private realms. In these hybridized spaces, gender, class, ethnicity etc. intersect, giving new meanings to the multiple activities that shape women's lives. That is why gender studies are impacted by what was called since the founding article of the American jurist Kimberle Crenshaw *intersectionality* or *consubstantiality* of the power report in various socio-historical contexts (usually, combining class, race and gender). The first effect of *globalization is the intensification of race, gender and class inequalities*, driving force and consequence of the re-organization of the worldly labor division and of a formidable concentration of resources, doubled with a re-naturalization of the inequalities justified by specific "identities and cultural diversity."

Rim Meddeb explains in her content and discourse analysis of the Muslim women representations in the daily newspaper *La Libre Belgique* how the sections ("rubriques"), the thematic structures and the reference strategies used in the news articles (of the 2000-2010 decade) construct social hierarchies based on religious and gender identity. Intersectionally grounded, the analysis emphasizes through Van Leeuwen (2009) and Ruth Wodak's (2005) lens the invisibility, subordination and alterization of Muslim women.

In the theoretical tradition of Luce Irigaray articulations and modalities of communication distinguish male and female discourse. If speaking is never neutral to resume Luce Irigaray, the issues related to the use of discourse and media *genres* in some types of media are as important as the presence/absence of women in mainstream media, especially in the news – a question that is renewed in the context of social media and collaborative media production. We need to analyse how men and women use language and in how far language and its use is gendered. The feminist theorists assert that it would be possible to create new forms of female thought, transforming the structures of the traditional way of thinking, because "it is not enough to change certain things in the horizon that defines human culture, but to change the horizon itself" (Irigaray, 1992, p. 36). Yet these changes of horizon include both the change in the message, change of media production and obviously change of the public as well.

Focussing the use of language April Cobos asks how media covers cases on sexual violence in different cultural settings (U.S. vs. Brazil, Kenya and India; military vs. high school). Based on (structured) Critical Discourse Analysis (following Wodak and Meyer) of the two U.S. newspapers, *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, she identifies differences in the way these cases are treated, normalizing criminal "masculine behaviour" in the U.S., while blaming it as patriarchal when referring to foreign countries.

On the same isotopy of "public problem" Chiara Gius and Pina Lalli investigate on a corpus of over 100 articles in three main Italian dailies of 2012 the numerous

femicides presented in media discourse, interpreted by means of two correlated frames: “romantic love” and “loss of control.” The “loss of control” was also employed “to normalize the idea that femicides are crimes difficult to predict, and therefore arduous to prevent”. In particular, the idea that the violence leading to a femicide occurred as an “isolated incident” that no one could have possibly foreseen was suggested in 51 articles. Despite a growing societal attention on violence against women, the narratives of femicide presented by the three major Italian newspapers continue to reproduce the myths and stereotypes of gender violence, excluding structural, in depth views.

Almut Sichler and Elizabeth Prommer deal in a different way with the use of language, when analyzing the debate in the editorial process of Wikipedia. They question the ideal of an open, collaborative knowledge production delivered by Wikipedia as “free and open for everyone.” Referring to the German version of the online dictionary they rely on data about heavily male dominated participation and ask for reasons. By socio-linguistic analysis of the style of communication among authors of Wikipedia they identify distinct and gendered patterns of conflict management and negation strategies finally leading to quieten down female authors.

Feminist Media Studies has worked out a lot of knowledge on gendered modes of media content. Jennifer Tank and Marlis Prinzing continue on this strand being interested in the interrelation between men and women as journalistic authors and the way they focus gender roles in their coverage on family issues. The authors mostly follow a theoretical concept of gender differences (differentiation). Within the corpus of more than 1.000 articles it is (not surprisingly) mostly women journalists reporting on family issues; finally the authors do not find many differences in the way men and women journalists cover the issue. While in Germany the diversity of family arrangements is increasing the media (whether produced by men or women) still mostly rely on a traditional type “far from social reality” as family experts argue.

For a long time sport has played a marginal role at the level of the social dynamics and the academic research as well, being considered less important than economic or political issues. From a peripheral role, sport became nowadays a profitable product, a significant component of the nations’ brands and an index of group and gender dynamics.

Sandy Montanola presents a socio-discursive reading of a women sport magazine *L’Equipe Feminine* based on the editorial positioning of this magazine (between women’s magazine and sport magazine). Starting from the advertisers’ constraints, the feminine audience with its expectancies and the gender dilemma (sport for whom, what kind of sport, what media discourse?) the study emphasize the hypothesis that the targeting of a feminine audience implies a different conception of sport regarding the two sexes and different sports; but the presence of stereotypes does not exclude the emergency of counter models and anti-stereotypes.

Justine Marillonnet proposes to study fashion pictures in a series of representative French women magazines *Cosmopolitan*, *Femme Actuelle* et *Elle*. By means of the “sémiologie des indices” (cf. Anne-Marie Houdebine) the analysis advances as main hypothesis “the complexity of gender identity” and the masquerade possibilities given to the process of stereotyping. Based on the assumption of a contract between audience and media, the analysis shows that the gender stereotype may be prescribed up to a caricature of the womanhood to the readers then identified as co-producers of the media discourse. The plurality of representations even when stereotyped allows to the audience the recognition of several identity models, diverse and characteristic of the contemporary social imaginary. Engaged in an interaction between body, setting and accessories gender is revealed by a multiplicity of images, “products of innovative signs articulations.” Caricatured or discharged, the stereotype lets appear parade as “tactical form.”

Finally, LiudmilaVoronova shifts the focus to the analysis of gendered media production. She works on the interaction of journalists and politicians as perceived by journalists themselves. In a comparative research design she interviewed Swedish as well as Russian political reporters looking for “gender as a social practice”. She is able to describe precisely how forms of gendered interaction take place – both for male and female actors on both sides: Based on this outcome she argues for a *gender logic of political communication* even in a political system as the Swedish supposed to be mostly gender equal.

The relationship between biological sex, gender, media and other social facts is a recently explored area in philosophy, sociology, history, communication and media; this volume marked by *interdisciplinarity*, and *intersectionality* contributes largely by mobilizing a *significant range of subjects and themes* (such as models, roles, myths, stereotypes, cultures, media representations) and *methodological approaches* (content analysis, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistic analysis) to the highlighting of major issues in the Media and Gender Studies and to the shaping of new research perspectives.

We believe that on the agenda of Media Studies in the new millennium marked by the digital post-Gutenberg revolution, new national and transnational public problems will continue to emphasize processes of historical change such as the gendered hegemony/subordination relationship or the significant gender dimension of migration, digital revolution or environmental issues. Thus, Media Studies needs to be prepared to identify *how gender matters* in public discourse.

Margreth LÚNENBORG and Daniela ROVENTA-FRUMUSANI

References

- Aldoory, L. & Shawn, J. Parry-Giles (2005). "Women and Race" in Feminist Media Research Intersections, Ideology and Invisibility." In *Mass Media and Society*, edited by J. Curran and M. Gurevitch. 4th ed., p. 336–355. London, New York: Hodder Arnold.
- Averbeck-Lietz, S., Bonnet, F. & Bonnet, J. (2014). Le discours épistémologique des Sciences de l'information et de la communication. *Revue française des sciences de l'information et de la communication*, No. 4, 2014. [www.http://rfsic.revues.org/823](http://rfsic.revues.org/823) (31.1.2014).
- Bem, S. (1993). *The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequalities*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Blandin, C. & Méadel, C. (eds) (2009). « La Cause des femmes » dossier thématique *Le Temps des médias* no 12, printemps-été.
- Butler J. (2005). *Trouble dans le genre: pour un féminisme de la subversion*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York : Routledge.
- Byerly C. & Ross, K. (2006). *Women and Media. A Critical Introduction*. Oxford : Blackwell.
- Chabaud-Rychter, D., Descoutures, V., Devreux, A-M. & Varikas, E. (eds) (2010). *Sous les sciences sociales le genre. Relectures critique de Max Weber à Bruno Latour*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Carter, C., Branston, G. & Stuart, A. (eds), (1998). *News, Gender and Power*. London: Routledge.
- De Brui, M. & Ross, K. (eds) (2004). *Gender and Newsroom Cultures*. Hampton: Hampton Press.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color, *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, n°6, p. 1241-1299.
- Dorlin, E. (sld) (2010). *Sexe, Race, Classe Pour une épistémologie de la domination*. Paris: PUF.
- Gill, R. (2006). *Gender and the Media*, Cambridge, PolityPress. Gill Rosalind and Scharff Christina, 2013, *New Femininities. Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gubin, E. et al. (2004). *Le siècle des féminisms*. Paris: Editions de l'Atelier.
- Harding, S. (2004). *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*, New York, London: Routledge.
- Héritier, F. (1996). *Masculin, féminin. I. La pensée de la différence*. Paris: Odile Jacob.
- Knapp, G-A. (2005). Race, Class, Gender: Reclaiming Baggage in Fast Travelling Theories. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 12 (3), p. 249–265.
- Irigaray, L. (1993). *Je, tu, nous. Towards a culture of difference*. New Yourk: Routledge.
- Lazar, M. (ed.) (2005). *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power and Ideology in Discourse*. London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lünenborg, M., Majer, T. (eds.) (2013). *Gender Media Studies. Eine Einführung*. Konstanz: UVK.
- McRobbie, A. (2009). *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. London: Sage.

- Neveu, E. (2001). „Le genre du journalisme. Des ambivalences de la féminisation d'une profession”, *Politix*, 13, 51, 2000, p. 179-212. *Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Women and the Media- Advancing Gender Equality in decision-making in media organizations*», 2013, Report realized by EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Robinson, G. (2005). *Gender, Journalism and Equity: Canadian, U.S and European Perspectives*. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, Communication Series.
- Ross, K. (2009). *Gendered Media. Women, Men and Identity Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield Publications.
- Rubin, G. (1975, 1998). « L'économie politique du sexe. Transactions sur les femmes et systèmes de sexe/genre », *Cahiers d'études féministes*, Paris, CEDREF no 7, p. 3-81.
- Roventa-Frumusani, D. (2009). *Concepts fondamentaux pour les études de genre*. Paris: Editions des Archives Contemporaines.
- Scott, J. (1988). « Genre: une catégorie utile d'analyse historique », *Cahiers du Grif: le genre de l'histoire*, n° 37-38, printemps, p. 125-153.
- Saint-Jean, A. (2000). L'apport des femmes au renouvellement des pratiques professionnelles : le cas des journalistes, in *Recherches féministes* vol 13, n°2, p. 77-93.
- Van Zoonen, L. (2002). *Feminist Media Studies*. London: Sage Publications.

