

Representing and consuming women. Paradoxes in media covering violence against women¹

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Abstract. *The role of media is highly important in regards to violence against women, both in terms of how media cover the issue, and how media may become a tool used by activists and decision makers to raise awareness, mobilize people and implement programs on the issue. Even if the relationship between media, public opinion and policy is complex, we know that media coverage matters and so does the construction of a problem as they both may give voice or silence perspectives and people. Violence against women (VAW) generated public protests in Romania starting with 2000, mobilized women's rights/feminist groups to advocate for legislation and policy development. In September 2011, a commercial TV Station launched a raising awareness campaign questioning the adequacy of public measures addressing VAW, thus backing feminist activists. Media further on supported activists during a 25th of November protest in front of the Parliament, aiming to sanction MPs for refusing to pass a bill including the order of protection. At the same time various researches revealed mass-media reflect sensationalist and spectacular depictions of violence against women. It is in this complex context of*

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media covering VAW that the article explores and explains “the strange media case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”.

Keywords: *violence against women; feminist activism; mass-media; protest.*

1. Conceptual framework: gender violence/ violence against women

Political science and gender studies literature together with different researches emphasize gender violence affects human rights and is an outcome of gender inequality. (FRA, 2014; Montoya, 2013; Weldon, Htun, 2013; Htun, Weldon, 2012; Băluță, 2011; Vlăsceanu, 2007; Miroiu, 2004). International documents that Romania ratified or is going to ratify include the two above mentioned framings and underline the former is a breach of women’s rights understood as human rights (Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women, Beijing Platform for Action, The Istanbul Convention).

Violence against women can be subjected to multiple angles of analysis (mobilization of national and transnational feminist movements to support dedicated public policies, gender and citizenship, gender and power, effects on women and society and so on), nevertheless the present article focuses between the intersection of violence against women and mass media as it generates an interesting and peculiar case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

The role of media is highly important in regards to violence against women, both in terms of how media cover the issue, and how media may become a tool used by activists and decision makers to raise awareness, mobilize people and implement programs on the issue. Even if the relationship between media, public opinion and policy is complex, we know that media coverage matters and so does the construction of a problem as they both may give voice or silence perspectives and people (Berns, 2001; Best, 1995; Foucault, 1979). Individuals may draw meanings from different framings of a social problem and the media is a medium still widely used to understand social issues. In regards to the subject addressed in the present article, conceptualization of violence is important, thus the author will critically discuss specific terminological ambiguities as concepts also have strategic purposes, not only descriptive functions. As far national legislation is concerned, there is a linguistic prevalence of “violence within the family”; however in studies elaborated by NGOs and the academic community we encounter expressions such as: “domestic violence”, “violence against women” and rarely “gender violence. Bragă (2011) notices “violence against women” was not included as such by local decision makers in the process of policy making as they preferred a more gender neutral expression “violence within the family”. The author of the present articles considers that by including the expression of “violence within the family” in policy

making, decision makers rather embraced than confront the nonintervention approach in problems of the family and deepened the segregation between a public rhetoric of equality and daily life of individuals (Vlăsceanu, 2007, p. 189)

As far as we notice, in regards to semantics, the author notes that there is still debate on how to label the problem. Both Celeste Montoya (2013) and the European Women's Lobby notice "that there is an increasing use of the term gender in equality and antiviolenace discourse that has actually served to degender these issues" (Montoya, 2013, p. 16) They are gendered form of violence, but predominantly aimed at women as statistics show. Looking at post-communist societies, Katalin Fábíán (2010) emphasizes the preference for domestic violence instead of violence against women and considers it shows state's reticence to approach inequality in the private sphere. (Fábíán, 2010, p. 20). Even if gender violence per se eliminates the association of gender with women, due to strategic purposes, the author prefers the concept of "violence against women" as means to emphasize that when it comes to adults victims of violence, women are by far more numerous than men.

If researches focus on what media actually don't say about violence against women, the article aims to emphasize what a commercial TV station said about the issue as it actually came to indirectly back claims of feminist activists. I use mixed methods to access data, historical traces to show both the situation of violence against women and the efforts behind adopting national law. Second, a research design based on qualitative analysis will be used. The *data collection* will focus on *document analysis* of the all the feature reports broadcasted within the campaign (September- December 2011), to identify how the campaign framed violence against women – violation of human rights, manifestation of gender inequality, a universal and global issue, and/or requiring an intersectional approach (Montoya, 2013). If initially, when designing the research, I also intended to conduct *semi structured interviews* with main 'gatekeepers' of the campaign to explore the rationale behind the campaign, the interaction with public institutions and women's rights/feminist groups, to understand who decided the framings of violence against women and for what reasons, etc., recent developments of Acasă TV station deterred the author from thoroughly addressing media representatives. These developments that will be presented in the paper represent risks that fall outside the control of the researcher. Nevertheless, the author initiated discussions with the producer of the campaign who clarified my questions.

As follows, the article will reveal a brief history of the concentrated efforts to make violence against women a political issue in an Eastern European country like Romania. The historical shortcut will allow the reader to better socially situate the complex process of representing and consuming women. As the article will emphasize, important vulnerability in addressing violence against women comes

from the very difficult and incoherent dialogue between actors of civil society (NGOs and academics) and political ones when it comes to admitting VAW is a political problem in need of political responses.

2. Violence against women on the political agenda. A (too) hard nut to crack

2.1 Law making and policy change

It is tempting to write about **'herstory'** when it comes to violence against women considering on one hand most of victims are women and on the other hand it is especially women mobilizing across time through women's and feminist NGOs or informal groups that managed to change legislation and policies. Herstory becomes more complex in terms of policy making and actors when set in Central and Eastern Europe, in former communist countries. It was only in the late 1990s in correlation with The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 that violence against women managed to shyly become a topic on the public and political agenda in Romania. NGOs came with a different understandings of the issue of violence against women after participating at the UN Women's Conference in Beijing, in 1995 (Krizsán, Popa, 2013).

In Western democracies, the process of understanding violence against women as a political issue and of dissociating it from private sphere started in the 1970s with the second wave of feminism. Radical feminism introduced violence against women on the public agenda (Millet, 1977) and its commitment led to changes of legislation and policies. On the European ground, Celeste Montoya (2013) notices that the issue of violence against women "was first raised as a potential European Community issue in the early 1980s, amid the second-wave feminist movements and the related shelter and anti-rape movements". (Montoya, 2013, p. 6) Initially focusing on national arena, activists introduced the topic on the agenda of European institutions. It was the European Parliament that adopted a resolution on violence against women in 1986 "relatively extensive but largely ignored". (Montoya, 2013, p. 6) Despite constant efforts of advocates, Montoya emphasizes that work is still to be done for an adequate European approach to combating violence against women.

Nevertheless on local ground, law making and policy development on violence against women turned out to be a very painful process and sometimes a (too) hard nut to crack. Taking into account that feminism and communism represent a 'contradictio in terminis' (Miroiu, 2011) and as the second wave of feminism could not develop in a political regime disregarding women's rights we are actually dealing with a delay of almost three decades.

It took thirteen years of learning democracy in order to adopt for the first time in Romanian history a law on combating and fighting violence against women, in 2003. The integration into European Union was not gender neutral and in the

context it is worth emphasizing that EU “has been reluctant to establish rational-legal authority on the issue of violence against women” influencing member states in terms of normative pressures, “the one exception to this is in the accession process, where conditionality of membership provides the EU with more institutional leverage”. (Montoya, 2013, p. 7)

Further on, other nine years passed before including some structural changes in the legislation to more adequately protect victims. It was in 2012 that the law was amended to include the order of protection. None of the two changes, neither from 2003, nor from 2012 happened without some civic mobilization. In 2003 when a law on combating women was about to be adopted, NGOs created a Coalition, VIF (Violența împotriva Femeilor/Violence against Women). Some NGOs from VIF Coalition are part of another informal Coalition that was formed at the end of 2011 – nine NGOs used to be part of the Coalition, Transcena Association, GRADO- Romanian Group for Defending Human Rights, Center Partnership for Equality, Sensiblu Association, Association, FILIA Center and FRONT Association; they were later joined a an NGO supporting Roma women’s rights, E-Romnja – Association for the Protection of Roma Women Rights.

In the first post-communist decade, violence against women was still considered a private and personal experience and the contestations of the rigid demarcations between public and private sphere were met with resistance on behalf of politicians. NGOs did not succeed in convincing politicians and political parties that violence against women was a form of abuse that needed prevention and combating policies. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, in 2003, international organizations, especially EU played an important role and became the most important actor in making violence against women a political issue. Political measures adopted due to requests made by international organizations paved the way to a new brand of feminism, “room-service political feminism”, a term coined by Mihaela Miroiu (2004) to explain a process having as key actors the European Union, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and others: “imposing gender sensitive legislation in Central and East-European countries through the authority of a political international actor, particularly a European one, before the public recognition and presence in internal political agendas of such a necessity and agenda” (Miroiu, 2004, p. 256)

However if in 2003, EU was an important actor in the process of law making, nine years later, it was NGOs, especially women’s rights/feminist NGOs, that became the main actors in amending legislation on violence against women. This second phase, concentrating especially around 2011, strongly intersects with public protests.

After 2003, both policy and institutional development addressing violence against women were rather poor and far from the expectations of NGOs (and

needs of women) in terms of prevention and sanctioning. Advocators criticized political capabilities, government responsiveness, and institutional development. The financial and economic crisis had an important impact on the institutions coordinating policies on gender equality and violence against women. In 2009, the Romanian Government decided to restructure central administration as a means to rationalize expenses supposedly due to an agreement with IMF. The decision was made in the day when the European Parliament adopted a resolution concerning violence against women, urging states to strengthen legislation and policies while also emphasizing the negative outcomes of the financial and economic crisis on violence against women as it raises women's vulnerability. Poor commitment of states in regards to "the three P's: protection, prosecution and prevention" raised criticism of women's rights and feminist NGOs. (Montoya, 2013, p. 8)

Between 2009-2011 various actions were coordinated by NGOs in order to sanction the poor involvement of the state and to mobilize MPs to include the order of protection in legislation. In 2011, two main strategies were used by civil society in order to adjust legislation to the needs of women: on one hand, working with the state and on the other hand pressure from outside through engagement and protest activism. The latter tactic was used when legislative amendment was blocked during the parliamentary process. A protest was organized in 2011 in front of the Romanian Parliament in order to put substantial pressure MPs to unblock discussion. Activism on violence against women triggered changes in regards to feminism but also in connection with mass-media as following.

3. Mass media covering violence against women or the strange case the strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde²

3.1 The beginning of a paradox: women as commodities

The main premises of the section emphasize mass-media have an important role when it comes to the construction of social reality, its ability to convey specific information to the public/citizens and also its willingness to render visible the problems citizens confront with. At the same time, as researches revealed mass-media reflect sensationalist and spectacular depictions of violence against women despite both expectations and requests of NGOs and academics that emphasized other framings are needed not to perpetuate negative myths associated to the topic.

2 The title is in no case meant to show disrespect towards medical cases of dissociative identity disorder, but to express a serious split within mass media when reflecting violence against women. The inspiration comes from the novella written by the Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson that was first published in 1886, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Starting from a 2003 research addressing depiction of violence in the media, two years later Simona Ștefănescu conducted a study addressing moral neutrality and social responsibility of journalist in regards to portraying violence within the family. Her conclusions emphasized that in central newspapers the topic is framed “as an out of the ordinary action, rather sensational, spectacular, meant to draw the attention of particular readers and less as a social problem that the journalist ought to emphasize, so that later the reader may reflect on and eventually react”. (Ștefănescu, 2005, pp. 21-22). Ștefănescu (2005) also noticed the absence of information concerning specific legislation in the field, that is “of one that may be indeed relevant for the readers and may present the journalist as a socially active and responsible actor” (Ștefănescu, 2005, p. 22).

Research conducted in Romania on how media (newspapers, TV and radio) represent women and illustrate violence, emphasized media rather distort images (Bulai, Stănciugelu, 2004; Grünberg, 2005; Altfem, 2011). Generally, stereotypes and sexual allusions are present on TV and violence against women is framed in terms of *degendering the blame where* the roles of gender and power are ignored. Articles addressing violence against women are often *sensationalised*, affecting the seriousness of the issue, and do not question how appropriate are the measures introduced by public authorities (Bulai, Stănciugelu, 2004, p. 203) A gender sensitive Press review made by Front NGO emphasized sensationalist framing of violence against women.

Media articles addressing violence against women usually include *shocking declarations of the victims*, for instance “he beat me with the pitchfork, the shovel, fists and feet. He always beats me. He appreciates nothing, not even the meals. He broke my ribs. Now it is impossible for me even to eat³”; *specific details* on how the victim was beaten “she was beaten by its partner with feet and fists⁴”; *inadequate pieces of advice*: the women should forgive his outburst.

In this context, it is worth mentioning, it was violence against women that **generated** the first public protests of women in Romania after the fall of communism. In April 2000, Playboy magazine (Romanian edition) published an article on **how to beat your wife without leaving any marks** presenting 10 strategies used by the former Secret Police. The images accompanying the article portrayed

3 *Femeie bătută de soț până i-a rupt maxilarul și coastele* article, 10th of August 2010, http://adevarul.ro/locale/galati/femeie-batuta-sot-i-a-rupt-maxilarul-coastele-1_50ae74d37c42d5a6639ce0c8/index.html.

4 *Liftiera spitalului Găești, în stare gravă. A fost bătută de concubin cu pumnii și picioarele* article, 13rd of November 2014, <http://www.gazetadambovitei.ro/eveniment/liftiera-spitalului-gaesti-in-stare-grava-a-fost-batuta-de-concubin-cu-pumnii-si-picioarele/> accessed on the 28th of Decembrie 2014.

a man dressed as a policeman hitting a woman with the stick while holding her by the hair; then, the final image, pictured the woman returning the stick as if asking to be beaten even more. Playboy's article 'exceeded expectations' in terms of obscuring violence in a space void of legislation and policies to address violence against women. After street protests organized by feminist and human rights NGOs, the Romanian editor in chief argued it was a joke for the April's Fool Day.

While violence against women is almost invariably put on the policy agenda by women's movements (Htun & Weldon, 2012), rarely have media been an ally of women's rights/feminist groups in framing violence against women as a violation of human rights/women's rights or in mobilizing people or sanctioning decision makers for not complying with their task: representation of citizens' interests. Playboy's scandal (2000) is just an example since different researches revealed the inappropriate depiction of women and of violence causing feminist and women NGOs to react.

Nevertheless, in September 2011, a commercial TV Station launched a raising awareness campaign questioning the adequacy of public measures addressing violence against women, thus, in fact, backing feminist activists who were trying to persuade decision makers to amend legislation on violence against women. In the light of the above, the campaign of Acasă TV station turned out to be quite 'an oasis' since this commercial TV Station became a vocal 'partner' of feminist activists, seeking support for a better politicization of violence against women.

3.2. Slow dripping of change in an sensationalist ocean: women as citizens

Nevertheless, despite the ocean of sensationalist depiction of violence against women, media also revealed slow drippings of change by supporting activists' claims during the 2011 protest in front of the Parliament, aiming to sanction MPs for refusing to pass a bill including the order of protection. In 2011, we find civic actors mobilizing citizens on the 25th of November to a street protest to urge the adoption of the bill including the order of protection for victims of violence.

The article will discuss how the campaign of Acasă TV station framed violence against women – violation of human rights, manifestation of gender inequality, a universal and global issue, and/or requiring an intersectional approach (Montoya, 2013). It will also try to identify "predictors of success", respectively the main factors that urged a commercial TV Station to become a vocal 'partner' of feminist activists, seeking support for a better politicization of violence against women.

In Celeste Montoya (2013) argues that framing violence against women is crucial and she identifies four such types. *Violence against women as a violation of human rights* has been one goal of advocators and this framing requires both national and international intervention. Under this frame, there has been important mobilization to bring violence against women in the public sphere. The

frame is also correlated with the growing interests for the human rights regimes after the Second World War, when international institutions (United Nations, Council of Europe, European Union) showed their commitment. (Montoya, 2013, pp. 14-15) *Violence against women as an outcome of gender inequality* puts a strong emphasis on “the gendered nature of violence” and it is how feminists define it, as a manifestation of gender inequality. In addition to this frame, Montoya notices that advocates added also a public health and economic issue, to draw attention to the “societal issue” since different framings “may have a strategic purpose in expanding support”. (Montoya, 2013, p. 16) *Violence against women as a universal and global issue* serves to bring back unity among women as it is framed as an experience that cuts across societal boundaries challenging the misconception that violence against women occurs only in certain groups in society with poor economic and educational resources, particular ethnic or racial groups. *The intersectional approach of violence against women* takes into account that when it comes to policy development, the intersections between race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc. may provide a better answer for interventions. Recognizing and working with intersectional oppressions may support development of more inclusive policies to address the needs of women. (Montoya, 2013, pp. 19-20)

3.3. “Pain is not love” awareness raising campaign

“Pain is not love” awareness raising campaign had its debut in September 2011 at Acasă TV station and included feature reports of almost 18 minutes each, broadcasted weekly. Acasă TV is a niche commercial TV station of Central European Media Enterprises (CME) designed for predominantly women audience that began broadcasting on the 8th of February 1998. Its strategy included international soap operas, but also local products, news and entertainment. This “short happy life strategy of Acasă TV” suffered major changes in 2014, as on the 9th of May some departments were restructured, among them “Poveștiri Adevărate”, the department that coordinated the 2011 “Pain is not love” campaign. “Poveștiri” is made of two words: „povești” and „știri”, that is “stories” and “news”. “Poveștiri Adevărate” can be transposed in English as *True Storynews*. The new strategy designed under the motto “Life is a soap opera. Acasă TV is your life” aims to focus on romance products. According to the PR & Marketing Director “it is essential to grow the petite of Romanian women for authentic soap operas with captivating stories”⁵.

“Pain is not love” campaign was launched in a vivid advocacy and activist context, however without any direct correlation or partnership with NGOs dedicated to preventing and combating violence against women. The campaign

5 <http://www.iaa.ro/Articole/Stiri/Acasa-tv-lanseaza-o-noua-strategie/6803.html>.

opened a petition on its webpage⁶ and asked for support signatures in order to change the legislation. The petition gathered more than 74,000 signatures. At the end of December 2011, they were handed to one of the MPs supporting legislative amendments to law on domestic violence, the order protection among them. The producer of "Pain is not love", Ionela Bănărescu declared on the station's website that: "the campaign proved domestic violence represented a mass phenomenon"⁷. "Pain is not love" was broadcasted during "True Storynews" and constantly gained support of public women and men from various areas, politicians, musicians, actors, from media, universities, etc. Especially people close to Acasă Tv (nevertheless not exclusively) openly supported the campaign and discussed about stories of violence against women they knew or witnessed.

The construction of the report features included a story of a woman's experience of violence, interventions of various public persons and experts discussing about violence against women (lawyers, NGOs representatives, politicians, doctors). In some cases the images of women victims were blurred and the voices altered. At the same, viewers could send their personal stories to a dedicated email address⁸, and some were uploaded on the website.

The story of the report features included various **types of data**: information on the legal instruments, consciousness raising emphasizing violence against women is not personal, but political and it is not an incidental experience of a few women, but an extended phenomenon, specific procedures to follow in case of abuse, interactions of victims with police representatives, input on good practices from other countries, psychological effects, types of violence women face, reflections on lack of support from the family and society that tolerates and places the burden on the victim and messages on zero tolerance, emphasis on the fact love has nothing to do with violence, alcohol as a trigger of abuse and others. Overall the campaign revealed a complex editorial approach, with a sensitive input, bringing both emotions and rationality on the screen. It is difficult to conceive another approach, less emotional, taking into account – for the sake of the argument – one of the stories, from 11th of October 2011, when the abusive husband himself gave a pair of sun glasses to the victim after putting her into hospital due to beating⁹.

Nevertheless the general and constant message of videos underlined the need to have legislative adequate changes to protect women victims and children. One

6 <http://durereanueste iubire.acasatv.ro/>.

7 <http://www.acasatv.ro/durerea-nu-este-iubire/s-a-schimbata-legea-iti-multumim-ca-ai-votat-in-campania-durerea-nu-este-iubire.html>.

8 durereanueste iubire@acasatv.ro.

9 <http://www.acasatv.ro/povestiri-adevarate/durerea-nu-este-iubire-o-femeie-povesteste-cum-a-indurat-23-de-ani-de-batai-si-umilinte-video.html>.

woman sadly remarked the poor construction of legislative changes in cases of violence against women despite change of political regime.

“It is degrading for the legislative component not to have violence against women punished”. (Monica Pop, doctor)

“Laws do not adequately protect women separated from abusive partners. Legislation on women’s rights should be seriously changed. Now women are like leaves under the wind”. (Maria Ghinea, singer).

Reporter: “Why did you stayed with him more than 20 years?”

Woman sharing her story: “We women, we have never been protected by our legislation. (...) I did not have where to go to. (...) I was very surprised that after 1989, our laws did nothing to protect women against domestic violence.”

The framing of violence against women comes closer to a manifestation of *gender inequality* where women are victims and men aggressors. Social practices create dependency and they blame the victims in case women leave abusive relationships. There is a patriarchal understanding reflected in “you married him, you die near him”. Unfortunately, women did die near their husbands, but not because of old age. Women’s behavior is questioned in a traditional gender regime and women interviewed by the reporter did notice it. As previously mentioned, *violence against women* was also framed as *a universal and global issue* that cuts across societal boundaries.

Besides these two framings of violence, what was clearly emphasized by the campaign was the statute of women as citizens, they were not commodities anymore within a TV show. This time, media represented women as citizens and rather deterred from consuming them as commodities. What the campaign did as well was to focus on one goal for combating violence against women: on protection. It was protection underlined continuously during interviews by women. The order of protection was also on the agenda of NGOs because it removed the victim from an abusive situation.

We see by know, there is a rather complicated history between the intersection of media with the topic of violence against women. The campaign appears to be an intriguing one. So far, in regards to the “predictors of success”, respectively the main factors that urged a commercial TV Station to become a vocal ‘partner’ of feminist activists, seeking support for a better politicization of violence against women, I can mention, in fact, a combination of factors. The almost feminine audience of the TV station cannot be neglected and the strategy of the TV station that allowed news reporting, a context favorable to the introduction of this theme on the agenda of media (it shouldn’t be forgotten there was a law almost under debate in Parliament). Nevertheless, the author of the article believes the position of the editorial staff was of crucial importance. The role played by the editorial

staff is reflected in the dialogue to come between the author and Ionela Bănărescu, the producer of the campaign

Author: Why did you choose this topic for a social campaign?

Ionela Bănărescu: According to studies, violence against women is a sore spot in Romanian society. At the same time, I am a woman, I am a mother of two daughters. I thus have a double motivation, both a rational and an emotional one.

A.: Was it difficult to create this agenda setting? Did you face opposition or was the idea welcomed?

I.B.: No, the editorial staff welcomed the idea.

A.: Did the campaign impacted you emotionally?

I.B.: Yes, of course. The stories are overwhelming, they are real people with real life experiences and you almost come to live them while being told.

From a normative approach, media products addressing violence against women ought to include specific pieces of information. First of all, *they ought to inform* the public/citizens on instruments to prevent and combat violence: available legislation, social services for victims, shelters, particular institutions, necessary steps to obtain the order of protection, active NGOs in the field. Then, the media products *ought to emphasize nuances within the system*, both its inner errors and examples of good practices to support the idea victims can leave abusive relations, the involvement of the community in addressing the issue together with its high rates of tolerance. There are also specific Guides¹⁰ addressed to journalists, where useful recommendations are made to journalists for adequately framing violence against women. These Guides emphasize that aggressions against women affect human rights and represent a breach on women's rights, they advice journalists not to confuse morbid curiosity with social interest and underline infotainment is far from an adequate framing; these Guides also draw attention to the fact that violence is by far an incident or a conventional piece of news and the main aim of a journalist is not to be the first conveying the information but solving the problem by carefully dealing with data. Journalists should also provide useful information and discuss with experts/individuals familiar with the phenomenon in order to frame the issue.

10 RTVE Guide (Corporación de Radio y Televisión Española) privind reprezentarea violenței împotriva femeilor în programele de știri, <http://manualdeestilo.rtve.es/cuestiones-sensibles/5-5-tratamiento-de-la-violencia-contra-las-mujeres/>, accessed on the 6th of October 2014; *Telling the Full Story: An Online Guide for Journalists Covering Domestic Violence*. The *Online Guide*, 2012, <http://www.dvonlineguide.org/en/> accessed on the 27th of December 2014.

Alongside the above analyzed TV campaign in the 'paradigm' of slow drippings of change within journalist practices it is worth referring to another media project. Avon Romania is a private women dedicated company, with an important social responsibility branch in the area of awareness on violence against women. In 2014, the company offered three scholarships for media products addressing the topic within Superscrieri Contest, targeting writers in print media or on digital platforms, journalists and bloggers or amateurs¹¹. The action was included in the Superscrieri Prizes, one initiative of Friends for Friends Foundation. The three scholarships were awarded for the following media projects:

1. Lina Vdovii (journalist) and George Popescu (photographer) for the project „The orde of protection. The instrument of the victim or of the aggressor? (*Ordinul de protecție. Instrumentul victimei sau al agresorului?*) published on the Casa Jurnalistului digital platform.
2. Elena Stancu (journalist) și Cosmin Bumbuț (photographer) for the project Withoutany record (*Fără antecedente penale*) published in Esquire Romania.
3. Ana Maria Ciobanu and Oana Sandu (journalists), supported by Solene Cesbron (audisovisual artist) for the project The map of domestic violence (*Harta violenței domestice; narativ*) published in Decât o Revistă magazine.¹²

4. Conclusions

Taking into account the above analysis of the private campaign conducted by Acasa TV station and the individual media projects financially supported by a women dedicated private company, it is the authors opinion that the 'paradigm' of journalistic practices can be slowly adjusted so that media products framing violence reveal responsibility, understanding the phenomenon, an authentic intention to inform the public/citizens and to urge them raise questions on the topic and the involvement of the institutions and that of the larger community. The examples also emphasize that private media or companies may generate socially responsible journalistic products. It is the general expectation that public institutions are more likely to generate awareness raising campaigns and products revealing social responsibility of media institutions.

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