

TRANSFORMATIONS OF JOURNALISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: DISCOURSES, ACTORS AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY*

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ABSTRACT

TRANSFORMATIONS OF JOURNALISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: DISCOURSES, ACTORS AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

This study aims to identify the indicators of the transformation of journalism as profession in the Republic of Moldova. It focuses on the practitioners' anticipation of a stable professional configuration and identity in the context of a potential liberalization of the media market in this country.

Keywords: media transformations, professional identity, the Republic of Moldova.

1. INTRODUCTION

The social and political transformations which have recently put a mark on the professional identity reconfiguration of the Romanian journalists in the Republic of Moldova are more likely associated with an identity “transformation” or “metamorphosis” (*cf.* Brin, Charron, de Bonville, 2004: 69), which is opposed to the “normal change” and is applied to the profession evolution in this particular context¹. The authors quoted place this sociological theory in a new paradigm on

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¹ “It is a general assumption the *normal* change refers to the transformations *within* the structure which has however the same general configuration. Thus, the generally accepted term, *transformation* or *metamorphosis* refers more to a structural change. The former, more general term, defines a *profound* and *durative* transformation, while the later specifies the formal object (the *structure* of the *form*) and of the dimension of the change (until the object cannot be recognized any longer)” (Brin, Charron, de Bonville, 2004: 65–66).

the transformations in journalism, which is considered to be “a specific and singular way of defining and practicing journalism” (Brin, Charron, de Bonville, 2004: 2). We point the fact that specific circumstances defined by a certain national, social, political, economic and cultural context determine specific national transformations in the professional field of journalism. The temporal markers of the journalism transformations are the planning, the flash-forward, the flash-back² and the anticipation; all of these are dramatized with the aid of verb variation on the past – future axis, in order to emphasize the present, which is in favor of a projective film-like perspective on the evolution of the profession.

We shall consider the journalistic practice to be a temporal sequence which acts specifically depending on the social and professional defined context, while the journalist is considered to be the producer of a representation of the actuality, the later being “first of all an instrument of producing the social time” (Tétu, 1999, *Préface*, in Jamet, Jannet: 15) or “a simultaneous presence of the journalist and the reader-spectator on a certain occasion” (Tétu, 1993:719). In other words, “media considers the present and the discourse it makes on its own profession to be two major reference points (of journalism), in relation to which mass-media settles the social bond and consolidates its symbolical, social and political continuity” (Lamizet, Silem, 1997: 10).

For that purpose, we launch the theoretical hypothesis of the paper writing: both the political and social transformations which have left a mark on the journalistic profession in the Republic of Moldova, and the recent transformations of the media space, will determine a profound attitude change among the journalists. The reconfigurations of the media space (the multiplication of channels and newspaper and magazine titles, the market penetration of strong media actors from Romania) will imply a “metamorphosis” of the national media space representations, which can be observed in the journalists’ speech on profession.

The heterogeneousness of the professional and discursive field is one of the greatest challenges for the researchers in the domain. The profession of the journalist, which is very open to the public space, being one of the most disputed and worshipped professions, is delimited by clear heterogeneous parameters, which are either connected to the professional training of the journalists, to the content of the (intellectual) activity and to the type of payment (the salary), to the objectives assumed on the discourse level (the public welfare) and to the economic objectives which haven’t been assumed publicly, to the consciousness freedom, on the one hand or to the responsibility towards the press institution and its leadership, on the other hand. Under these circumstances, the journalist is under the pressure of the collective imaginary and the discourses it promotes, of the critics and analyses produced by the society elites (researchers, professors, establishment), but also of

² Because, contrary to what historians say, the journalists use the flash-back with the unique purpose of building and dramatizing the expectation on the discourse level (cf. Jamet, Jannet, 1999: 28).

the reactions and institutional speeches of media patronages (*cf.* Roșca, 2010: 13). From this point of view, we have taken into consideration two types of premises when writing the study:

a. On the one hand, the results of a research on the professional field of the journalists in the Republic of Moldova (Vasilendiuc, 2007). Analyzing the interviews on a sample of 37 journalists from the Republic of Moldova, the author of the study has emphasized the transformations on the level of the journalists' profile in the last eighteen years, in the social, economic and legislative context, as you can see below:

– More young people and more women have begun working in the field, the phenomenon of professional migration has become steadier, there was a significant growth in the number of freelancers, the obligation to be part of the Journalists' Union doesn't apply anymore and the relationship between the contributors to the written press has changed in the favor of electronic mass-media. Many of the older journalists have gone through an identity crisis (due to the disloyal competition in the field), many men have quit being journalists, the political adherence has developed steadily.

– The particularities of the public have changed (the public of readers has changed into a public of viewers), the attitude of the written press has changed (the soviet vertical pattern has been replaced by the horizontal pattern, which has led to the emerge or more networks of written press on the local level) and advertising has penetrated the media system.

– There are (apparently) favorable conditions for consolidating the democracy, ensured the *Media Law* (1994) and the *Constitution* (1994), but, on the other hand, in media the closed market relationships are effective, which leads to the dependency of the journalistic field on various economic groups and/or corrupt bureaucrats from the institutions of the state, who look after their own interests.

– The development of the market economy in the media field is not yet real: the anti-monopoly laws are not applied, there is no loyal competition.

– The media professionalism in the Republic of Moldova and its flaws: the lack of a structured professional core (culture, values, procedures, ideologies etc.), the lack of conscience and professional responsibility.

b. On the other hand, the analyses and the records of the professional unions and/or the non-governmental organizations in the Republic of Moldova in 2009–2010, which we have theorized in three work hypotheses:

– The government has used the state mass-media in the Republic of Moldova as an instrument of political propaganda.

– The emergence of new media actors on the Bessarabian market has become an important step in the professional evolution in a European context, through the enhancement of the free competition.

– The pro-European attitude will have a benefic influence on the Romanian speaking journalists' perception on their own profession.

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The present paper is considered to be an individual inductive case study focused on the transformations which mark the professional identity of the Romanian speaking journalists in the Republic of Moldova, in a specific context and circumstances which are in favor of planning and projection in the future. Our research has the goal of identifying, on a projective and anticipative level, the identity transformations of the journalists in the Republic of Moldova, its basis being the interpretation of the information gathered from a series of online questionnaires on the profession representations in a temporal perspective. This particular perspective has been reinforced by some semi-structured interviews by e-mail with professional journalists (from top and middle management) who have been present in the initial sample, by the emphasis on the qualitative approach in the analysis of the Bessarabian journalists' expectations and perceptions regarding the future of their profession.

The boundaries of the research are to be observed, on the one hand, in the fact that the questionnaire and the interview were sent by e-mail due to financial reasons, which has considerably decreased the response rate from the sample we have initially taken into consideration. On the other hand, our undertaking is marked by the professional and identity projections that the interviewed journalists describe specifically in the context presented above (the present social context, the specific professional circumstances).

2.1. WORK INSTRUMENTS

The work instruments we have used are the semi-structured questionnaire and the interview. The present paper has used, on the one hand, the secondary data analysis applied on the questionnaires which have been registered in a database where the name or the workplace of the respondent are not mentioned, and, on the other hand, the analysis of the journalists' discourse on profession, as it can be observed from the interviews.

In this particular direction, the questionnaire is made up of eleven questions, eight of them having only one response option (we have included here one screening question which focuses on the respondent being included in specific professional unions, followed by a secondary open question, where the respondent has to name the organization he belongs to, if it applies) and two multiple choice questions, one of them referring to the representation of online media that the journalists have, and the second one focusing on the future of the profession, that is their professional evolution in five years. We note that the registration in the

database made for the respondents' questionnaires has been anonymous, each questionnaire having a socio-demographic and professional file, which has been completed by each respondent and included: sex, age, media segment of work, public or private environment, basic profession, experience in media, whether the respondent has other sources of income. Out of a sample of 50 e-mail addresses, the response rate has been 1: 5 that is 10 completed questionnaires.

Moreover, the semi-structured interview guide includes five open questions: the first one refers to the evaluation of the effects expected after the enactment of a new Law on the Freedom of Speech in the Republic of Moldova (April 2010); the second question suggests commenting on some statements which have been previously identified in the discourse of most of the professional unions or in the records of non-governmental organizations, more specifically the three dimensions summarized under premise b; the third question focuses on explaining the Romanian speaking journalists' status in the professional organizations which are at present in the Republic of Moldova; in the end, we have two open questions which relate to a past-present axis of ten years, which emphasizes the present, what has changed in the profession in the last five years and where the journalists see themselves in five years. We have registered three complete responses to the interview guide on a sample of 15 journalists, who have been selected randomly from management and middle management, which also translates to a 1: 5 response rate, the same as for the questionnaire.

2.2. THE PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

All the journalists who have answered to the interview guide and/or the questionnaire work as journalists in private companies. As far as the questionnaire is concerned, five out of ten respondents are journalists in the written media, two in audio-visual, two in online journalism and written media, and one represents a professional union similar to a NGO. Moreover, three journalists are over 50 and have a large experience in media, two are between 30 and 35 with more than five years experience in media, and the other four are beginners in the field, aged between 20 and 27, with two to five years experience in media. Nine out of ten respondents have selected journalism as their basic profession, and seven out of ten respondents have mentioned to have alternative income sources, others than the journalism.

As for the interview, the ones who answered our questions were: a journalist working for TV channel *Publika TV* (Mihaela Gherasim, 23 years old, news broadcaster and editor), a journalist working for TV channel *Curaj TV* (Oleg Brega, 36 years old, freelancer, who works in a NGO related to media), and a journalist working for the newspaper *Timpul* (Pavel Păduraru, 33 years old, the head of the Investigations Department).

3. JOURNALIST IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: PERCEPTIONS AND PROJECTIONS

Although all the journalists who have responded to our questionnaire consider the Romanian journalism in the Republic of Moldova to be “well represented” (Q1), the opinions differ when we speak about its promotion (Q2), therefore half of the respondents consider the Romanian journalism to be “well promoted” (mostly very young journalists) in the Republic of Moldova, and the other half consider it to be “rather marginalized”.

Thus, the journalist’s profile is quickly created, even if we start from a minimal final sample, so that we notice from the beginning a clear discrepancy between the perceptions on the profession expressed by the young journalists, most of whom have studied in the field, and by the more experienced journalists in the media from the Republic of Moldova. To that purpose, the two respondents aged over 60 state that they have been submitted “on several occasions” to internal political pressures which have prevented them from giving prompt information about a situation or an event (Q3), while the younger journalists (two persons) state they have “never” been submitted to this type of pressures, other two have observed the political interference “only once” in their career so far and four of them pretend it is present “from time to time”. As concerns the issue below, Panel Păduraru from *Timpul* wrote in his interview the following: “No matter what the government and the laws are, when a journalist interferes too much, there are ways of bringing him to silence”. On the same line, Mihaela Gherasim from *Publika TV* said: “Unfortunately, in Moldova, the political interests are still prevalent. I have the great advantage of working at present in a television which follows the principles of equity, equidistance and objectivity. But many of my colleagues continue to act on political interests because they do not have a choice”.

As for the affiliation to a professional organization/union in the field (Q4), five out of ten journalists declare themselves to be members of one of the following organizations: three members in The Union of Journalists in Moldova³ (UJM), a member of The Independent Press Union⁴ and UJM, and, a member of the

³ *The Union of Journalists in Moldova* is often presented as the professional organization of the journalists in the Republic of Moldova founded in October 1957. Its president has been the Bessarabian journalist Valeriu Saharneanu since 1997, and, in 2009, it included 1600 journalists, according to *Media Monitor*. The organization’s website is not active, but we can often find reactions and actions of its members in the media from Moldova.

⁴ *The Independent Press Union* is defined as the first union of this kind which has been officially founded in the Republic of Moldova as early as 1997. At present, IPU includes 16 national and regional newspapers, a press agency, The Independent Journalism Center and 3 freelancers. <http://www.ijc.md/>, last read on 20th of August, 2010. IPU is member of Word Association of Newspapers and News Publishers. Its slogan is: “For a professional, unbiased and profitable press”. <http://api.md/about/history/index.html>, last read on 20th of August, 2010. The Union issues the “anti-corruption appendix” *OBJECTIVE*, the monthly information bulletin, *NPD (the National Plan of Development)*, and the bimonthly appendix *The Farmer*.

Economic Journalists' Union⁵ and of The Committee for Liberation of Press⁶. Even if half of the respondents are not part of a professional journalists' organization, they are not the only ones who consider that the existent organizations represent their professional interests frailly or not at all (Q5). Only one journalist has mentioned voluntarily that The Independent Press Union represents his professional interests "to a great extent", while all the present organizations in the field are judged quite harshly by the respondents: two journalists think there are not represented "at all", other two say that their interests are represented "unsatisfactorily", three of them believe they are "remotely" represented and only two out of ten respondents feel they are represented "to a great extent". Consequently, the perception on the Romanian journalist in the professional organizations in the field, has revealed in the interviews bleak representations, such as Oleg Brega's opinion, from *Curaj TV*: "There is a delimitation impossible to explain of the journalists from the NGO people and vice versa, therefore there are very few associated journalists, who work in a press NGO, and they do not usually do their job as journalists, but they check or teach others how to do it. We also have a number of members of the former union of journalistic "creation", which now pretends to be a press union, which is lead by media patrons and remains a useless undefined mix, both for press professionals and employees".

However, opinions differ: Pavel Păduraru appeals to the contribution of Romanian journalists as path breakers in founding the professional organizations of journalists in the Republic of Moldova: "All the professional organizations of the journalists in the Republic of Moldova have been founded by Romanian speaking journalists. I may be missing something, but I think that none of our Russian speaking colleagues has such an organization". At the same time, Mihaela Gherasim mentions the lack of involvement of the professional associations of this kind in critical cases such as the arrest of the journalist Ernest Vardanean⁷: "Yes,

⁵ *The Economic Journalists' Union* (EJU) is often quoted in the Bessarabian press and the journalist Vlad Bercu is its president. In July 2009, the Union has lead the training "The Economic Journalism for a Sustainable Development", which was meant for Moldavian journalists who worked in the economic press. The training program has been part of the project "The Economic Journalism for a Sustainable Development", with the financial support of the National Commission of the Republic of Moldova for UNESCO. Cf. *EJU Press Handout*, last read on 20th of August, 2010. <http://communicate.md/index.php?task=articles&action=view&article id=1930>

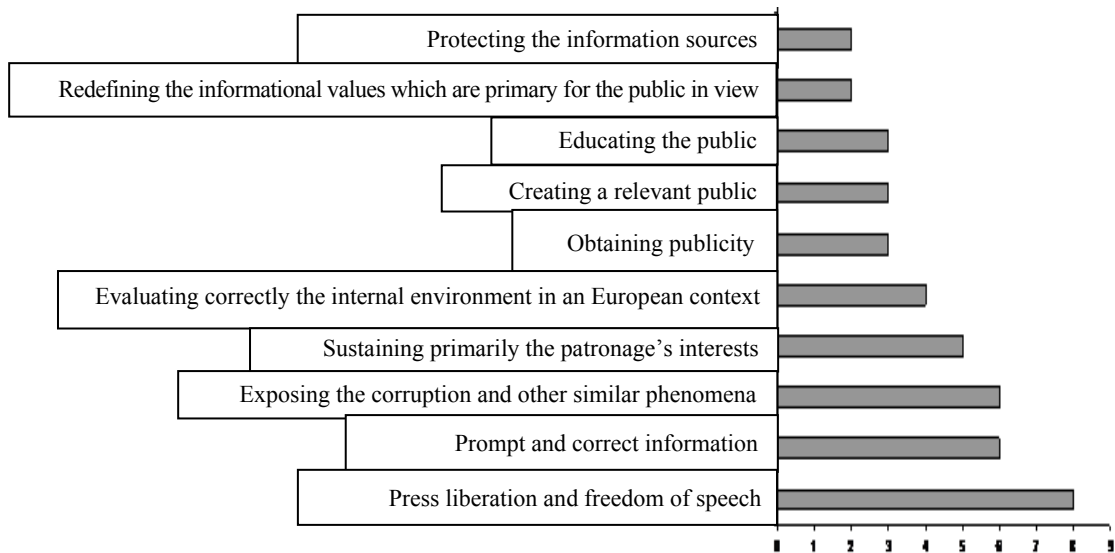
⁶ *The Committee for Liberation of Press* (CLP – Moldova), often quoted in the online references of the Moldavian press, has been officially registered as "a public association" on an "international" level since April 1998. The Association launched on April 15th, 2010, together with Conrad Adenauer Foundation, a project sponsored by the European Union, on a two years span, "whose purpose is to reinforce the free and pluralist media in the Republic of Moldova and to contribute to the development of a functional democratic state", <http://www.acum.tv/articol/11261>, last read on 20th of August, 2010.

⁷ The former correspondent from the branch in Tiraspol of the Russian News Agency Novyi Rezhion, the journalist from Tiraspol Ernest Vardanean was arrested by the Transnistrian secret service in April, being accused of espionage and high treason. In May, the journalist admitted "having worked with the Information and Security Service (ISS) in the Republic of Moldova in a video

indeed, there is a great number of professional organizations. But when the present government has taken office, many of those who were leading these organizations have begun to be part of the team from the public television. So, these organizations are only official. In my opinion, their activity is frail, in fact they always defend the interests of their “favorite” journalists and they do not get involved when some of their fellows really need help. Such an example is Ernest Vardanean, the journalist who was arrested by the Transnistrian forces at the beginning of April.”

Among the values promoted by the journalists in the Republic of Moldova (Q7), the respondents have chosen:

Promoted values:



Taking into consideration the rate at which the Romanian press in the Republic of Moldova “represents correctly the social, political, economic and cultural internal context” (Q9), eight out of ten journalists think that it is effective “to a great extent”, a respondent considers it to be effective “to a very great extent” while another believes it is “remotely” effective. If we refer to the answers for the

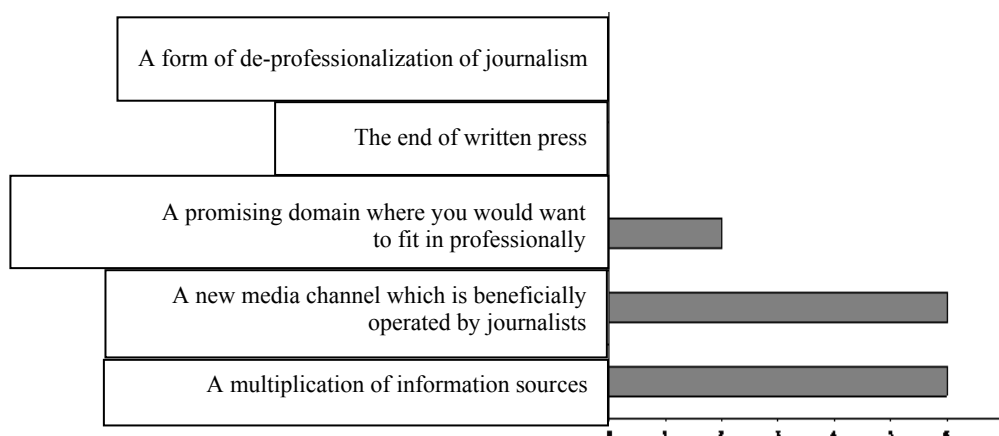
recording broadcast by a Transnistrian television. Vardanean has explained that he has been recruited by the Moldavian Services in 2001, while he was a student in Chișinău. The journalist claims that he has accepted to be a spy for ISS only because he has been threatened he would be expelled from college. (...) The press from Chișinău is skeptical about Vardanean's statements, which he said while he was looking down, being watched by the Transnistrian separatists.” Cf. “Ernest Vardanean: ‘I have spied for Chișinău’”, in *Adevărul Internațional*, May 12th, 2010.

last two questions, we find that the respondents believe that the values promoted by the Romanian speaking journalists, respectively the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech at its highest level, followed by the prompt and correct informing or the exposure of corruption – primarily representing the perception that journalists develop on their own profession – allow, to a great extent, a “correct” reflection of the national context through mass-media. Nevertheless, half of the journalists have mentioned in the questionnaire “the primary support of the patronage’s interests” as a defining value for the journalists or “obtaining publicity” (four out of ten journalists), which reflects a relatively moderate attitude towards the perception on the accomplished mission of journalism in the present internal context.

Nevertheless, when we refer to the projection on the professional status five years from now, one of the interviewed journalists is correlating this personal representation of the professional values he has promoted and he sees himself “useful, read, listened to, taken into consideration by the authorities wherever I am able to do my job freely” (Oleg Brega, *Curaj TV*).

Taking into consideration the numerous online media channels in the Republic of Moldova and the degree in which the information is brought up-to-date by the other electronic channels, we have inserted in our questionnaire a question which focused on the perception of the interviewees on the online journalism, seen as a primary or alternative media channel. The results gathered on the level of our sample identify six out of ten journalists who think that the online journalism is “a new media channel which is beneficially operated by the journalists” and, respectively, “a multiplication of the information sources”; two of the journalists interviewed, other than the three ones who work primarily in the online journalism, consider it to be a professional chance for the future, as it can be seen in the chart below:

The growth of online journalism is:



Even in the interviews, the Internet and, at large, online journalism are mentioned as sources of stimulation for the national press: “The Internet, the blogs, the social networks have revolutionized the press, have brought it to live, have stimulated it” (Oleg Brega, *Curaj TV*).

The specific circumstances that we mentioned at the beginning of this research involve the emerge of Romanian media agents such as the companies on the media market in the Republic of Moldova, therefore an important issue is the evaluation of the impact that such an interference can have for the professional evolution (Q6) of the respondents in our sample. Curiously enough, three out of ten journalists prefer not to answer to this question, saying (voluntarily) that either the emerge of Romanian media agents has not been yet felt on the local media market in the Republic of Moldova, or that they are not in fact Romanian companies⁸. Nevertheless, the young journalist, Mihaela Gherasim thinks the market is normalized once the Romanian media actors appear on the market, as following: “When I came to *Publika TV*, I was considered to be a professional and not a person who has worked for a politically affiliated TV channel (i.d. *EuroTV*). I was given the chance to practice quality journalism, without being judged. And there were other dozens of colleagues like me. Our market was selective and it made the difference between good and bad journalists, before *Publika TV* and *Jurnal TV* came. Now I have the chance to get experience, to be informed and not to be told every day what I should say on TV.”

Furthermore, there are some comments in the interviews to the statement: “*The emerge of new media actors on the Bessarabian market denotes an important step for the professional evolution in a European context through the enhancement of free competition*”, which evince a tense professional context that has witnessed lost causes too many times. Under these circumstances, Pavel Păduraru says: “It is right, but it depends on how long the new actors’ interests last, because it often happens that some media appear on the market on a white horse, and then they just disappear. After other sad examples, we believe, for instance, that the new televisions, *Jurnal* and *Publika*, will last for a few years, until someone interested in money laundry comes... Only the media financed by the European structures could win the trust in the future, but they usually promote some boring ideas, they have exhausting language and themes and nobody buys them.” But from the inside, the things are totally different: “Yes, it is true indeed. At least I have felt it myself. I am broadcaster-editor for *Publika TV*, a Romanian investment, and my job has become a pleasure since I work here. It is a modern television, it doesn’t follow anyone’s interests and, moreover it obeys the principles of European journalism. After the emerge of *Publika TV* and *Jurnal TV*, the other media in the country have tried to change their programs, too, to work more alertly, to offer correct and

⁸ Respondent no. 10: “But we don’t have any media companies, we only have a local channel PRO TV/PRO FM, which appeared ten years ago, and a new TV channel belonging to Sorin Ovidiu Vântu, which has not managed to make its mark yet.”

prompt information to the public, but the lack of money often makes these things hard to achieve” (Mihaela Gherasim, *Publika TV*).

Finally, the last question of our questionnaire is focused on the projection in the future, where the respondents see themselves in five years from now from a professional point of view (Q10). Thus, four out of ten respondents see their professional future in the national written press, a journalist sees himself in the national audio-visual, another one prefers not to answer, while other three imagine they would have another job (one “in the academic environment”, one in “the civilian society”, probably a NGO, and the third one mentions either national written press, or the written press abroad). What is interesting to notice is that none of the interviewees does take into consideration being a correspondent in Bucharest or in Brussels. The youngest of the journalists who have answered to our interview, Mihaela Gherasim, has great hopes for a rewardable professional future, based on the accomplishments achieved in the first four years as a journalist; the projection in the future is based on an obvious positive representation on the profession in an actual unstable professional context, from the point of view of the identity (the proof is the permanent need of explaining): “I think that the journalism offers you the chance to have a progressive career development and we have to take this fact into account. I am proud of what I have managed to achieve in these four years, I have begun working when I was 19 and, today, I’m 23 and I am already moderator for political talk-shows for one of the most valuable channels in Bessarabia. I don’t know what I will be doing in five years from now, but I will definitely not be a housewife, but I will be on the screen or, why not, behind a strong team.”

4. NATIONAL VS. EUROPEAN IN THE JOURNALISTS’ DISCOURSE

The three journalists we have interviewed express openly their pessimistic attitude towards the vague way, as they see it, of applying the “European” laws in their country. When speaking about the new Law on the freedom of speech⁹ (April 2010), Mihaela Gherasim says: “I am pessimistic about the applying of laws in the

⁹ In a *Memoir* published in May 2010, The Centre for Independent Journalism in Moldova explains the founding and the aim of the law enacted in April: “The project has been drafted by a group of experts in a CIJ program since 2006, but its enactment has been delayed by the former government. The law on the freedom of speech offers guarantees for ensuring the right to freedom of speech and information, and also for creating a balance between the right to free speech and information and the right to protect the honor, the dignity, the professional reputation and the private and family life. We expect the applying of this law to be in favor of minimizing the number of lost files at ECHU regarding the freedom of speech and to stimulate the development of the investigation journalism.” Cf. *Memoir regarding the freedom of speech in the Republic of Moldova, the 3rd of May, 2009*, last read on 20th of August, 2010. We point out the fact that the Memoir is signed by eight professional journalists’ organizations from Moldova and the Committee for Press Liberation, which have been mentioned by our respondents, too. http://www.ijc.md/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=524&Itemid=1

Republic of Moldova. It is a good thing that the country's laws become aligned to the European standards, and, it allows, first of all, the development of the media market in the Republic of Moldova. But, unfortunately, the political interests still prevail here. (...) So, it is a good thing that the laws are enacted, but they should be applied, too, and not remain a theory. And still, I am certain of one thing. Since 2010, the freedom of speech in the Republic of Moldova has increased." But its deployment seems to be a few steps away from redefining a functional legislative concept, especially in what concerns the journalism: "We have too many nonfunctional laws, including the press field, the access to information, the freedom of speech, so I don't think that a new similar law will change the situation fundamentally. The new governments have not managed to bring the promised change, either" (Oleg Brega). There is also an extreme case, the journalist Pavel Păduraru, who doesn't hide his lack of confidence in the force of any law: "As for the laws are concerned, they are made for the mobs, because the ones in power have always defied them and they will continue to defy them. The laws are the mask of the magnates and dignitaries' crimes. And it happens everywhere, not only in Bessarabia."

Mihaela Gherasim suggests also her personal view on what we have considered to be "a pro-European attitude" in working as a journalist: "If there is market competition and the journalists set themselves to learn this profession in order to become true professionals and, more than that, to be highly rated personalities on the market." On the contrary, Pavel Păduraru condemns the conceptual approach suggested; for him, the pro-European attitude is comparable with the communist one and is considered to be irrational: "I think it's total nonsense! The journalists' perception of their own profession can be changed only through their own experience, unceasing reading and correct information. But the European attitude, just like the communist one can only hebetate the mobs and confine their rational capacities".

CONCLUSIONS

Taking into consideration the methodological boundaries which are included in the making and writing of this research, the present paper does not pretend to be exhaustive, but its goal is to identify the features of the current transformations in the journalism from the Republic of Moldova, starting from a series of premises which prove to be legitimate or invalid further on.

In the particular context we have presented above, there is a primary socio-demographic parameter that draws our attention – age – which, as it is proven in a research considered to be a theoretical basis to our study (Vasilendiuc, 2007), is an important criterion which influences the journalists' perceptions on the position of Romanian journalism and the political pressures traced when exercising the profession. The first three questions of our questionnaire reveal the interferences

that age has in enhancing the perceptions on their own profession, the variations from one generation to another being obvious in our research, too. At the same time, the affiliation to specific professional unions is not perceived as a *sine qua non* condition for a steady professional evolution in the field, especially for the young and very young journalists. One plausible explanation for this case would be that in the Republic of Moldova the affiliation to the Journalists' Union has been compulsory for a long time for those who chose this profession, which could have lead, additionally, to a definitive rejection of this type of membership.

The answers to the fourth and fifth questions from the questionnaire make us conclude that it is to be avoided and/or rejected a basis in enhancing the professionalism – belonging to professional unions – within the personal evolution of the journalists activating at present.

Furthermore, we draw a series of punctual conclusions from this research: the journalist's professional motivation seems to be frail, from the point of view of both the acknowledgement of the political and patronage's pressures, and the inappropriate payment, which obliges to looking for alternative income sources, other than those from journalism; the perception on the European press procedures is rather negative; the interviewees find the Romanian companies suspicious and even unreliable. Nevertheless, the entire sample has a meaningful positive perception on the role and the potential of online journalism in the Republic of Moldova.

While identifying the professional mission in the current context of Romanian journalism in the Republic of Moldova, we have also tested the categories of professional values that the journalists interviewed promote and the rate at which the press presents a correct representation of the present internal context (questions seven and nine); the interpretation of the answers registered indicates a relatively moderate attitude towards the perception on the accomplished mission as journalists in the present internal context: they identify the mission but, at the same time, they submit themselves to the political and patronage's constraints. Under these circumstances, we note that the perception on the professional context is correct, but the process of taking over the instruments and values is not convincing, even more so as we glimpse in the interviews a very pessimistic attitude regarding the future of the profession.

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