

Attributing responsibility: The case of young journalists working in Romania

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Abstract

In the midst of the unpredictability affecting the journalistic field, journalists and academics alike advance explanations for the current state of affairs and, in a more direct or indirect manner, attribute responsibilities. The aim of this article is to examine how responsibility is assigned when young journalists are brought into discourse. The data is extracted from 22 semi-structured interviews with women journalists that had been active in the Romanian national press, and the analysis is structured by the principles of the Discursive Action Model (DAM). The framework is suitable for determining the discursive devices through which factuality is constructed and, thus, how responsibility is allocated. The results show how in some instances young journalists are made responsible for some of the troubles in the journalistic field, while other actors are absolved or there is a concealment of responsibility altogether.

Keywords

Young journalists; responsibility attribution; discourse.

Résumé

Au milieu de l'imprévisibilité affectant le champ journalistique, les journalistes aussi bien que les universitaires avancent des explications pour l'état actuel des choses et, d'une manière plus directe ou indirecte, attribuent les responsabilités. Le but de cet article est d'examiner comment la responsabilité est attribuée lorsque les jeunes journalistes sont amenés dans le discours. Les données sont extraites de 22 entretiens semi-structurés avec des femmes journalistes qui ont été actives dans la presse nationale roumaine, et l'analyse est structurée par les principes du modèle d'action discursive («discursive action model» ou DAM). Le cadre est approprié pour

déterminer les dispositifs discursifs à travers lesquels la factuelité est construite et, par conséquent, la façon dont la responsabilité est attribuée. Les résultats montrent comment, dans certains cas, les jeunes journalistes sont tenues responsables pour certains problèmes du domaine journalistique, tandis que d'autres acteurs sont absous ou il y a carrément une dissimulation de leur responsabilité.

Mots-clés

Jeunes journalistes; attribuer la responsabilité; discours.

1. Introduction

The “environmental uncertainty” affecting journalism (Lowrey & Gade, 2011, p. 17) has been associated with multiple, interrelated factors, from the innovations of information and communication technologies (ICTs), to the economic recession metamorphosed in the ongoing post-crisis reconfiguration, and to shifting employment and labour practices.

ICTs, especially the Internet, have stimulated consumer autonomy, enabling the fragmentation of the media markets and the demise of the mass media business model to the advantage of the digital niche-oriented media model (Picard, 2006). Concurrently, an emphasis has been placed on entrepreneurial journalism, encompassing both the revitalization of business opportunities and the reframing of journalists as entrepreneurs of their own careers (Cohen, 2015b). Nevertheless, now more than ever, journalistic autonomy remains an actual issue, not only in relation to state power but also in relation to market pressures, deepened by employment insecurity (Bourdieu, 2005; Siapera & Papadopoulou, 2016).

ICTs are ascribed a central role in reshaping the journalistic routines, which have become more labour-intensive, such as the pressure of multitasking (simultaneously performing editorial, technical and marketing activities), the permanent news-cycle and

the constant updating, the decreased resources allocated to specialized coverage which forces journalists to demonstrate a broader expertise (Örnebring, 2010; Witschge & Nygren, 2009). The economic crisis at the end of 2000 is associated with the downsizing of the field (Compton & Paul Benedetti, 2010), nevertheless staff redundancy in journalism preceded and continued in the aftermath of the economic downturn, also in correlation to the changes facilitated by ICTs, adopted to save on labour costs (Cohen, 2015a; Gall, 2000; Ursell, 2001), as the convergence of production processes eloquently shows (Cottle & Ashton, 1999).

In terms of employment, journalists have less control over their careers and increasingly find themselves doing atypical work if they want to keep doing journalism (Walters, Warren & Dobbie, 2006). Atypical or contingent work (such as freelancing, fixed-term or contract jobs) is precarious employment (Vosko, 2008, pp. 133-134), and it has become a constitutive part of the media occupational milieu (Deuze, 2009). This trend has emerged despite the fact that the media industry constitutes a growing economic sector, which has remained profitable (Winseck, 2010), journalism *y compris* (Compton, 2009; Mateo, Bergés, & Garnatxe, 2010). Further, the vulnerability of the occupation has been coupled with the weakening of journalists' unions (Örnebring, 2009), sustained by a transnational pattern of change in the regulatory regime of labour markets, which has normalised the "flexibility" of employment relations, from hiring and dismissing procedures, to wage settlements, training funds and redeployment of skills (Regini, 2000). At the same time, some categories of workers tend to be more exposed to workplace flexibility policies and have diminished opportunities to exert choice in their career, more precisely young people, women and low skills work seekers (Esping-Andersen, 2000, p. 102).

In the journalistic occupation, young and old journalists are simultaneously affected by the "flexibilization" of employment (Platman, 2003; Walters, Warren & Dobbie, 2006). Also, ageism is used against both categories: the experience of old journalists is framed as inherently less adequate in the context of changing technologies (Nikunen, 2014, p. 881), and the youngsters are blamed for worsening work conditions by settling for less and for accepting overtime (Gollmitzer, 2014, p. 834). Given the longtime redundancy, the experience and the networking requisites, older journalists or those who at least have some degree of seniority are more likely to find themselves freelancing (Baines, 1999).

Instead, young journalists are expected to perform unpaid work to obtain entry-level jobs or remunerated collaborations, a practice which is being generalised (Örnebring, Karlsson & Fast, 2014), and as a result those who can't afford to work for free are excluded *a priori* from the occupation. In the newsrooms, as pointed, journalists are confronting deteriorated work and employment conditions, but young journalists appear to be more susceptible to burnout, when compared with older peers, since they occupy positions with lower ranks, characterised by increased workloads and reduced pay (Reinardy, 2011).

The reviewed literature shows that the journalistic occupation is dealing with a series of difficulties, but ultimately these difficulties impact occupational members in various ways, according to age category – and to other categories to which they belong, prominently gender¹. This paper seeks to examine the age dimension of the journalistic occupation, by looking at how the presence of young journalists is discussed in Romanian context. More broadly, it tackles the tension between acknowledging occupational challenges and allocating responsibility when young journalists become a topic of discussion.

2. Data and methodology

The data come from 22 semi-structured interviews with women journalists that have been active in the Romanian national press, working in print and in broadcast media (television, radio and online), some of them having freelance arrangements. The participants were selected through "in chain" and "snowball" sampling (Patton, 2002) for a research centred on journalistic work and the gendered dimension of the occupation. Their age varied between 20 and 60 years old, but half of the participants were aged between 30 and 40. The majority of the participants (i.e. 13) had been working in journalism since the 1990, eight of them started in the 2000, and two had entered the field in 2010-2011. The interviews were recorded and anonymised in the transcribing process, as established in the Information Letter and Consent Form sent to the participants. The extracts that will be discussed here will be accompanied by information regarding the occupational profile of the participant and the age category.

The corpus amounted to 26 hours of verbatim-transcribed interviews and it was systematised in themes, first deductively and then inductively (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The theme relating to the presence of young journalists was obtained through the

inductive strategy, i.e. it was identified with the data-driven approach, it was not the result of an anticipated theoretical perspective, as it happens in the case of the deductive search for patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 83-84). In fact, the interview guide did not contain questions related to generational issues, the topic of the presence of youngsters in the journalistic field was contingent and became visible after performing the inductive thematic analysis.

Instead of presenting the theme with the aid of excerpts organised in sub-themes, I will analyse five extracts discursively, in order to illustrate how responsibility is attributed (or not) in the proximity of young journalists. The choice for a discursive framework is grounded in the objective of paying attention to the nuances and complexities of the fragments while convening “what the participants, rather than the analysts, are doing” with the discourses (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p. 155).

To this end, I draw on the Discursive Action Model, also known as DAM (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Edwards & Potter, 1993; Potter, Edwards & Wetherell, 1993). Within this framework, discourses are not considered merely cognitions about social acts (which happen to be expressed within conversations and texts) but are regarded as social acts *in se* (Edwards, 1997). The principles of the Discursive Action Model can be summarized as follows: i) the focus is on the action, i.e. on how something is achieved in discourse (blaming, praising, justifying, mitigating, denying, etc.), not on the purported perceptions; ii) facts and interest are interrelated: factuality is constructed through discursive devices (eye-witness testimony, affirming consensus, corroborating evidence, etc.), and it shapes the “interest” or “motivation” of the account, working to undermine alternative accounts; iii) agency and accountability (including that of the speaker) are allocated in discourse by means of factuality construction (Potter, Edwards & Wetherell, 1993, p. 389).

In operational terms, I will analyse the discursive devices through which factuality is constructed, which are a vehicle for attributions, focusing on who is held more or less accountable in the economy of the discourses. Attributions of responsibility involve an actor-agent occupying the subject position who performs the blameworthy/ mitigated/ justified etc. activity (Pomerantz, 1978). When the actor-agent is absent the effect is the concealment of responsibility, and in this case it is about “events that happened” rather than “actions performed by actor-agents” (Pomerantz, 1978, p. 117).

According to Edwards and Potter (1992, pp. 160-164) there are nine “techniques of fact construction”: 1) category entitlement – when certain categories or members of groups are associated with a specific knowledge or some type of skill which grants them legitimacy; 2) vivid description – offering concrete details, showing knowledge of events that suggests direct experience and/or observational abilities; 3) narrative – when a description is anchored in a narrative progression, and its outcome is expected or necessary; 4) systematic vagueness – placed in opposition with the vivid description and with the narrative, since little information is given: enough to make certain inferences, but insufficient for refutation; 5) empiricist accounting – overlaps with what is called scientific talk and writing; it uses an objective, detached language, phenomena are introduced as central agents and human actors have derivative roles; 6) rhetoric of argument – deductions and claims in the form of logical arguments where the inferences appear to be a result of the events, not advanced by the speaker; 7) extreme case formulations – making something that is exceptional into an unexceptional situation, often signaled by expressions such as “most”, “all”, “none” (see also Edwards, 2000); 8) consensus and corroboration – indicating that there is agreement on something, and providing supporting evidence from different sources; 9) lists and contrasts – enumerating elements that should offer an exhaustive and immediate perspective on an issue, the three-part lists being considered the most effective; creating contrasts, especially to point out what is less desirable or more threatening. The analysis will pay attention to how the central discursive actions of each fragment are achieved through various devices.

3. The analysis

The fragments are organised into two sections according to the recurring discursive actions: blaming and justifying, and then concealing responsibility. With the exception of corroboration, all the discursive devices theorised to contribute to the construction of factuality have been found in the selected data. The best identified techniques are the narrative (three instances – providing an explanation), contrasts (three instances – emphasizing worse situations), extreme case formulation (two instances – reinforcing what is outside the norm and making a generalization), systematic vagueness (two instances – to deflect responsibility), the other ones being employed once.

3.1. *Blaming and justifying*

In this section, I will present fragments in which the blaming of young journalists and the justification of other agent-actors are achieved.

Extract 1

1. I.: And when you say responsibility [as a professional value in journalism], are you
2. referring to the responsibility related to the public?
3. P.: Related to the public and to the [content of the] information they are offering.
4. It happens very often... lately, I have been talking with many colleagues, and I think that
5. this is a common problem for those who have been practising journalism for a while, and
6. I think that we have reached a point where we are the victims of our own... I don't know
7. how to call it, I will say infatuation. We are in a place where the media have exploded, it
8. has been a period of an extremely strong artificial growth, in which the request was
9. exceeding the existing offer on the labour market, and many employers were forced, at
10. the time, to hire people who... not necessarily had nothing to do with the job, but
11. were insufficiently prepared for the role they were taking, and we have reached this
12. kind of paradoxical situations, in which a youngster finishes the faculty today,
13. and tomorrow is on air, forgetting his role, his mission, and forgetting to give it the
14. importance it really has. (Interview 11 / Freelance journalist and trainer, ex-television producer, 40+)

In the first part of the extract, what the speaker does is to suggest consensus by bringing the "colleagues" into discourse. In the advanced stance, "those who have been practising journalism for a while", i.e. experienced journalists, are presented as being subjected to their own "infatuation", or differently stated, because of their work they have become self-absorbed. The building of consensus is followed by the rhetoric of argument, employed in lines 8-9. More precisely, a deductive inference is formulated, where the occurrence of "an extremely strong artificial growth" of the media has logically resulted in a request for labour that has exceeded "the existing offer". This claim works to justify the actions of the employers, "forced" by the unfolding of the events to resort to inadequately skilled labour. The attribution of responsibility foregrounds an agent-actor, that is, the "people" who "were taking" roles for

which they were "insufficiently prepared". Further, the generic identification of the agent-actor shifts into a specific one, that of "youngster", who manages to advance rapidly in a career at the cost of forgetting the "mission" and "importance" of the journalistic role, for which the blaming appears. The "youngster" is the protagonist of an extreme case formulation (lines 11-14), signalled by "paradoxical", to imply the wrongness of the situation in which someone "finishes the faculty today, and tomorrow is on air".

By positioning experienced journalists as victims of their self-absorbing work, they are given justifications, and thus they are cleared from responsibility, as are the employers, "forced" to adapt themselves to the "strong artificial growth" of the media. In this way, responsibility is laid on those who have accepted professional roles for which they did not have enough experience, epitomised by the figure of the "youngster". The blaming of the young journalist becomes more salient in the continuation of the fragment:

Extract 2

1. P.: It is ridiculous to hear my mother saying: is it true what I have heard on television?,
2. and then I see a kid who does not even know what [she/he] said on television because
3. [she/he] read a press statement or was prompted through a earpiece. I think
4. this is the reason why this side of commitment was lost, this side of... exactly as I was
5. saying, of responsabilization. There are a lot of young journalists still unprepared for
6. this public performance, and they forget to take their role seriously or they are under the
7. impression that the sole scope of going to school is to appear on television or to put their
8. signature on news, forgetting about the effects that news is producing. No matter how you
9. look at it, the reality is they have been jumping over some stages, firstly when it comes to
10. professional formation, because it is not enough to have a degree, as I was saying earlier,
11. is not enough to have a journalism degree to be a journalist, like with any job, you have
12. to start somewhere and grow from there. (Interview 11 / Freelance journalist and trainer, ex-television producer, 40+)

The segment starts with a vivid description (lines 1-3), marked by the use of the first-person narrator, who is giving a firsthand account. On the one hand there is the "mother" who asks confirmation for the

truthfulness of what is reported on television, and given the context, this categorization is hearable as the layperson who does not know how to discern the accuracy of the reported information (for more on categorization see McKinlay & McVittie, 2008, pp. 105-111). On the other hand, there is the “kid”, the categorization being used to indicate the young age of the journalist doing television news reports. The description is followed by an extreme case formulation (lines 5-8), introduced by “a lot of”, in which young journalists are blamed for pursuing public visibility instead of taking “their role seriously” as producers of information. A narrative is employed (lines 8-12) – that of the professional evolution – to make the failing of young journalists predictable, given that “they have been jumping over some stages”, and as such, they are framed as if they have actively chosen an incomplete professional formation.

In the third extract, responsibility is no longer allocated to young journalists, since their hiring is an effect, not a cause of the problematic state of affairs in journalism:

Extract 3

1. I.: Going back to the perception that the youngsters appearing on television are
2. unprepared and to the fact that you have said that this is true, I wanted to ask you why do
3. you think this is happening?
4. P.: Because our press has been... poor and disadvantaged in the last seven, eight years,
5. it's been lacking sufficient resources, resources of any kind, and because a press owner
6. will look to the market and say: can I afford this person of a certain age, with this certain
7. experience and will cost me a certain amount? Or I can afford this person, whom, OK,
8. I get the chance to train. If [the owner] thinks this way, he might think only
9. circumstantially, in order to fulfil a position with minimum costs. (Interview 22 / Radio, ex-television journalist, 40+)

The initial discursive device employed is systematic vagueness, since the characterization of the press situation is limited to two adjectives “poor” and “disadvantaged”, which are resumed with the agentless formulation “it's been lacking sufficient resources, resources of any kind”. This would suffice to infer that because of the lack of investments, which appear not to be incidental, but due to a “disadvantaged” status, the hiring strategy consists in choosing a cheaper

workforce. After obfuscating who is responsible for this hiring strategy, what the speaker does is justify it by resorting to the technique of category entitlement (lines 5-8). The category entitlement is that of the owner and includes speaking in the first person, “as” the owner (lines 6-8). The owner as such is expected to undertake specific actions, particularly to make employment decisions after looking “to the market”. He does this in a context where the press is “poor” and “disadvantaged”, thus his behaviour is derivative, is conditioned by the bad economic shape of the field. The final sentence contains a contrast (lines 8-9), functioning to mitigate the owner's strategy of rejecting the services of established journalists: worse than employing inexperienced journalists is hiring them without investing in their skills, so that the owner can save further on costs.

3.2. *Concealing responsibility*

In the following extracts the employment of young, non-sufficiently trained journalists is discussed again, and although the causes are made explicit, there is no assignation of responsibility:

Extract 4

1. I.: By the way, regarding the comments section, does your publication have a moderation
2. policy?
3. P.: I don't know if they still have money for this, the fact that the media in Romania, and,
4. actually, in the whole world, is dealing with severe economic problems, and this can be
5. seen increasingly in the media content, and also because the universe of the people who
6. are writing about public information is expanding, somehow more and more people write
7. about public information, the quality drops, [and] less money is being invested in quality
8. content. We are fortunate, we still have a copy-editor or two for instance ... but they
9. can't afford to pay the reporters and if only one [reporter] tackles all the subjects, they
10. clearly can't do a good job. Thus, there is a degree of deprofessionalization because of
11. two reasons: first because there aren't enough money, secondly, since there aren't
12. enough money, professional journalists are not being hired anymore, students are being
13. hired and taught to copy-paste [content] from the press agencies, and they think this is
14. what is like to be a journalist. (Interview 21 / Newspaper journalist and radio correspondent, 40+)

What the speaker does is put forward a narrative on the critical situation of the press (lines 3-8), attributed to “severe economic problems”. The second invoked cause is the growing number of people writing on public issues, overall the consequence being the lower quality of the media content. Afterwards, a contrast is drawn (lines 8-10) between the situation that has been narrated and “we”, used in reference to the publication for which the participant works, which “still” affords to pay for the work of revising texts. However, the contrast suggests a volatile situation (marked by “still”), aggravated by the fact that “they” don’t have sufficient resources to pay for reporters. The device of systematic vagueness is adopted by shifting pronouns: “we” is used to indicate the positive aspect (having copy-editors) and “they” to indicate the negative aspect (having a limited number of reporters), working to deflect personal responsibility for the last aspect. The end of the fragment consists in an empiricist accounting of the deprofessionalization of the field (lines 10-14). The sentence is distinguished by the use of the passive voice – “because there aren’t enough money, professional journalists are not being hired anymore” – the focus being placed on the phenomena, not on the agent-actors that generate this phenomenon. The only included actors are the students, “taught to copy-paste” and naively thinking they know “what is like to be a journalist”. A similar backgrounding of responsibility when it comes to whom encourages students to copy and paste content can be found in the subsequent fragment:

Extract 5

1. I.: And why is this thing not happening anymore [journalists doing research for their
2. articles]?
3. P.: There aren’t any competent journalists anymore. I mean, many of the journalists that
4. I know, that is those from my generation, 30+, they kind of left the press, with a few
5. exceptions. The younger ones, who have entered the press, first of all, have not found
6. role models to learn from, and secondly, they were taught some copy-paste practices.
7. Take [content] from there, see what [content] has been already published, and add it
8. too, it is not even tabloidization, it is done simply taking the line of least resistance. (Interview 14 / Online content manager and freelance journalist, 30+)

The first part of the fragment is a narrative about why “there aren’t any competent journalists anymore”

in the newsrooms. The outcome is presented as inevitable because the more experienced journalists have left news organisations, while the incoming journalists have been left without “role models”, and they have been exposed to “copy-paste practices”. The last segment (lines 7-8) uses the three-part list of the copy and paste steps instructed to students. The speaker talks in the first person, “as” the person who instructs the incoming journalists to copy and paste content, and, as a consequence, the actor-agent responsible for this remains indeterminate, it is not named. Also, the “copy-paste practices” are contrasted with the “tabloidization” of journalism, the former being deemed worse.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

To summarise, the extracts analysed above show that responsibility, in the form of blame, is allocated to young journalists, meanwhile, the responsibility of other invoked actor-agents is diminished though justifications or it is concealed through agent-less formulations. When young journalists are not blamed by implying internal, age-specific inadequacies, their appointment in positions which require more journalistic experience is acknowledged as driven by external causes. However, given the pattern of backgrounding the responsibility of other involved actors, the occupational vulnerability of the youngster is not fully acknowledged nor critiqued. When young journalists are brought into discourse what is problematized are not the conditions of their employment, but other issues which are made contiguous with their presence: the loss of journalistic quality through the promotion of inexperienced employees, and the diffusion of copy and paste content. There are also two instances of deflecting personal responsibility when it comes to the hiring situation, which operates with an implicit opposition between journalists and owners: the first as victims of their self-absorbing work and the second ones – “they” – as those who have to take employment decisions in a context of economic difficulties.

Other discursive actions in which the participants engage is to justify owners’ hiring strategy oriented towards cost-saving and resuming the causes that contribute to the downgrading of journalism. These causes are not identified as the product of certain human actions and appear as things “that happen”. They encompass economic problems – the lack of funding, the artificial growth of the journalistic business – and human resources problems – the departure of more

experienced journalists from the newsrooms and the growing number of people writing on public interest facts although they are not journalists.

Beyond the way responsibility is attributed, which generally illustrates a tendency to privilege or at least to demonstrate understanding towards press owners' perspective, the topic of young journalists arises – explicitly or implicitly – in connection with employment and work issues. Choosing the labour force according to the criteria of who costs less is an aspect which is assumed by the participants to be generalised in the Romanian newsrooms. A mechanism which destabilises the ecology of the occupation by pushing senior-level journalists out of the field, and using the work of young journalists as long as they remain a cheap workforce, and without investing in their training, which suggests a lack of interest and effort in the retention of these employees. A similar approach, of dismissing older journalists to keep the younger ones, deemed less expensive and more productive, has been found in a research done with Australian journalists who had been laid-off (O'Donnell, Zion & Sherwood, 2015); in Finland the downsizing targeted the most senior journalists, with whom pensions packages were negotiated in order to determine them to retire at an earlier date, while the younger ones were promoted in key-positions even though they did not have that much experience, since they were considered more prepared to deal with converging newsrooms and to attract younger audiences (Nikunen, 2014).

As already pinpointed, the data contains a pattern of justifying or concealing the responsibility for this hiring mechanism and its consequences by referencing bad economic circumstances. Precarious employment arrangements and invoking the economic background in order to explain deficient work conditions have been found in another study of Romanian young journalists (Surugiu, 2012), and more generally it has been argued that the economic crisis has been deployed to legitimize the downsizing of the journalistic occupation and other types of labour cost-cuttings across newsroom, with the scope of maintaining profit margins (Winseck, 2010; Mateo, Bergés, & Garnatxe, 2010). Although it cannot be demonstrated that this finding applies to the majority of newsrooms or to the overall national context, when looking at the analysed data, it is interesting to note the discursive power that the evocation of economic constraints has gained. In the fragments, when introducing the economic constraints in discourse, they are not placed in an explanatory framework nor are they accompanied by

attributions of responsibility, they are solely affirmed and, therefore, they are granted the status of a given, a self-evident fact that is not open to contestation. The gained discursive power, its dominant character (see Mumby & Ashcraft, 2006), is tangible precisely because the invoked economic constraints function outside the initial discursive context in which they were produced – i.e. the owners' position – and the outcome (the inadequate practices of hiring and work) is made acceptable and inevitable, despite being detrimental to those who end up reinforcing it through repetition, i.e. the journalists.

By comparing the findings with the reviewed literature, it is apparent that both the work and employment issues and the economic problems figure in the discourses of the participants, what is almost missing is the reference to the impact of ICTs. The exception is when one participant, in the narrative of the crisis of journalism, enlists the growing number of people writing about public interest facts outside journalistic settings, a phenomenon which has been made possible by the widespread of Internet, and by the (mostly) unpaid work provided by social media users (Hesmondhalgh, 2010). This infrequency could be partially attributed to the fact that the Romanian newsrooms have been less exposed to the paradigmatic changes made possible by ICTs (Surugiu & Radu, 2009; Șuțu, 2015), but also it must be linked to the fact that the interview guide that generated the data of this study did not explore the presence of young journalists in the field systematically, the topic being circumstantial.

To conclude, if on the one hand the data shows that young, incoming journalists encounter disadvantageous work conditions, on the other hand – because of the blaming, the justifications and concealment of responsibility – an avoidance of showing support for the youngsters can be grasped, a lack of recognition that they do not have the power to exert control over their occupational circumstances in the journalistic field. The age category (as well as the gendered one) correlated with the reconfiguration of the occupation needs to be further investigated in the Romanian press, especially through the lenses of labour (see Örnebring, 2010), through which a mounting precarity of newsworkers has been documented in recent years (for example see Ekdale, Tully, Harmsen & Singer, 2015). The limitation – and the strength – of this paper lies in the discursive approach, which allows for empirical, in-depth analysis of a reduced corpus of data, but does not permit an ample generalisation of the findings,

supporting only a moderate type of generalisation (see Mayring, 2007). The paper contributes to bringing into attention the age divide existing in the Romanian newsrooms and to exemplify a discursive methodology.

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Notes

¹ Given the topic of the article, the focus will be on the age dimension, and will not be included data regarding the gendered dimension. Overall, women journalists are likely to find themselves in the situation to be self-employed precisely because of the gendered relations that attribute to women domestic work and the role of caregivers (Massey & Elmore, 2011), despite the gendered drawbacks (Baines, 1999; Ekinsmyth, 1990).

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