



Ge.M.I.C.

Gender, Migration and Intercultural Interactions in the Mediterranean and South-East Europe

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- International Centre for Minority Studies & Intercultural Relations (IMIR), Bulgaria
 - University of Cyprus (UCY), Cyprus
 - University of Bologna (UNIBO), Italy
 - "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati (UDJG), Romania
 - Institute of Childhood and Urban World (CIIMU), Spain
 - "Euro-Balkan" Institute (EU-BAL), FYROM
 - Bilkent University (BILKENT-U), Turkey

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Gender, Migration and intercultural Interaction
in South-East Europe
(www.gemic.eu)

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Thematic Workshops Report on “National Identity and the Media” (WP4)

Romania, Greece, FYROM

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Grant Agreement no. 216065

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I. Purpose of the research

The research carried out within the framework of the Thematic WP 4 “National Identity and the Media” generally aims (as stipulated in the DoW) at identifying and studying in-depth media representations and constructions of the national self and the national other, as related to issues of gender and migration. The researchers of the three (Romanian, Greek and Macedonian) teams involved in the work package focus on a corpus that, though not meant to cover exhaustively the wide range of media texts currently available, comprises an extensively rich selection of relevant and highly influential films and written press articles. Accordingly, function of the specificity of the text type under discussion, the methodological perspectives range from imagology and textual analysis (in the case of films) to critical discourse analysis (in the case of written press). The ultimate aim of analysis is to clearly delineate the patterns of positive/negative, stereotypical/non-stereotypical representation of gender and migration-shaped identity, to reveal the attitudes that underlie them, and, ultimately, to assess the potential of the selected media text types to raise awareness of the dangers of oversimplification in the representation of national and/or gendered self and other, as well as of the need to improve representation policies in the sense of promoting intercultural dialogue and a positive perception of cultural diversity and mobility.

II. Starting points

- Media, in general, and films and written press, in particular, play a significant part in shaping national perception and representation, and in constructing cultural identities.
- Whether filmic or journalistic, media discourse is highly subjective, shaped by a wide range of attitudes and behavioural patterns manifest in the broader context of social and cultural phenomena (here including gender relations and intercultural interaction in the process of migration).
- Media texts may contribute to fixing and reinforcing dominant mainstream conceptualizations about gender and migration, but they may equally be used to challenge established patterns of thinking and representation, in the development of intercultural relations.
- Awareness of the context-determined subjectivity of both media text production and reception processes is essential for a better understanding of the dynamics of representation and identity-construction patterns, and, implicitly, for promoting policies that would encourage a positive perspective on the impact of cultural diversity and mobility in the European societies.

III. Thematic Workshops

A. Thematic Workshop 1: May 14-16, 2009, Galați (Romania)

1. Purpose of the workshop

The first thematic workshop, organised by the Romanian coordinating team, was aimed at attaining a double goal: on the one hand, it was meant to stimulate a fruitful exchange of ideas among the partner teams with a view to rounding off the discussion of the methodological framework to be applied for the selection and the subsequent analysis of the texts – films and newspaper articles – making up the national case studies; on the other hand, as it was organised within the framework of the international conference *Identity, Alterity, Hybridity* (Galați, May 14-16, 2009), the workshop was open to participants from other universities as well and contributed to disseminating to a wider academic audience the research that the partners in the Ge.M.I.C. project carried out with regard to issues concerning gender, migration and intercultural interactions in the Mediterranean and South-

East Europe (in general), and their representations and impact on the sending/receiving societies' sense of national identity (in particular).

2. Organisation details

The workshop took place on May 14-16, 2009, at “Dăneasa de Jos” University of Galați (Romania), and it was attended by representatives of all three teams, namely: on behalf of the Romanian coordinating team (UDJG) – Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă, Ioana Ivan-Mohor, Michaela Praisler, Mariana Neagu, Gabriela Dima, Antoanela Marta Dumitrașcu; on behalf of the Greek team (UPSPS) – Maria Paradeisi, Ioanna Vovou; and on behalf of the Macedonian team (EU-BAL) – Jana Lozanoska.

The workshop was structured so as to cover the following main points:

- theoretical framework(s) applied for the study of media texts (films and written press articles), with special reference to: selection criteria, amount of texts making up the corpus for analysis, analysis grids;
- practical demonstrations of how these frameworks could be efficiently applied to the filmic/journalistic texts in the form of brief case study presentations by representatives of the partner teams;
- conclusions regarding certain methodological issues and means of harmonising the case studies (with a view to the final synthesis report), as well as the steps to be further taken in carrying out WP4 research (logistics and timeframes). (See Appendix)

3. National case studies

3.1. Romania

Film: The Romanian team sustained their conviction that imagology would be a very useful tool for the analysis of the representations of gender and migration-related differences as well as of the ways in which they shape up national identity in the context of intercultural interactions, by presenting samples of their preliminary assessment, in imagological terms, of films from their already selected corpus. The case study presentation of the Romanian team was structured so as to reflect the two-fold perspective that the selected corpus should be relevant for, namely the sending (Romanian) and receiving (e.g. Italian, French) societies' representations of gender and migration-related differences. Consequently, representations of the Romanian migrant other as seen through the eyes of the receiving community were commented upon by Ioana Ivan-Mohor, who referred to the French production *Un nouveau trouve très beau* (2005), and by Michaela Praisler, who focused on the Italian production *Resto della Notte* (2008). A different insight into the (woman) migrant's identity construction was provided by the presentation of the documentary *Stella* (2006) made by Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă

Written press The Romanian team, represented by Mariana Neagu and Gabriela Dima, developed upon the importance of considering not only discursive representations of crisis-engendering events (like the attack on an Italian woman, Giovanna Reggiani, of which the Roma Romanian migrant, Nicolae Romulus Mailat, was accused in November 2007), but also images of the Romanian migrants as perceived throughout 'uneventful' periods, which may provide equally rich ground for analysis by their reflecting the emergence of a new stereotype, i.e. the Romanian “strawberry picker.”

3.2. Greece

Film: On behalf of the Greek team, Maria Paradeisi emphasised the importance of textual analysis, to be used next to imagology, in an attempt at better decoding the mechanisms that underlie a certain combination of cinematic codes in the representation of gender and migration-determined alterity in both documentaries and feature films. To illustrate her point of view, she made a presentation of the documentary *Sugar Town* (2006), considered as

representative for the impact of the gender and cultural differences on domestic relations in the context of migration in the receiving country.

Written press The representative of the Greek team, Ioanna Vovou, presented some of the preliminary findings of the research she conducted on a number of articles from two Greek national newspapers *Eleytherotypia* and *Eleytheros Typos* focusing on the attack on the Bulgarian migrant worker and union leader Konstantina Kouneva in December 2008.

3.3. Macedonia

Film: As the Macedonian team had difficulties in finding the necessary human resources to embark upon the study of filmic texts up to the moment when the workshop was organised, there was no film presentation on its behalf.

Written press Jana Lozoska insisted on the specificity of the Macedonian case given by the particular focus on trafficking in women and on migrants transiting this cultural space, and she made general comments on how these aspects are represented in the Macedonian press.

4. Proposed further steps

Film: The participants defined clearly the structure of their corpus, which should contain both feature and documentary films produced between 1990 and 2009. They agreed upon using imagology as the main methodological approach to the filmic text, but also embraced the suggestions for enriching the analytical framework made by the representative of the Greek team, Maria Paradeisi, who emphasised the benefits of a combination of imagology and textual analysis in the study of the filmic text, and pointed out that interviews with film directors could significantly enhance the understanding of the filmic representations of otherness as foregrounded in a certain historical, political, social and cultural context. If filmed, such interviews could also make a valuable contribution to the documentary to be produced for dissemination purposes during the final stage of the project.

Written press The participants decided that the articles to be analysed using the CDA approach should be selected from national quality press published between 2007 and 2009, and that they should refer to both moments of crisis (considered, of course, in a larger context – one month before and one month after the crisis in question) and the “ordinary” relationships that established between the dominant (sending/receiving) majority and the migrant minority.

Several methodological aspects came up in the discussion of the participants’ approach to their national cases. For instance, the Romanian coordinator invited the partners to ponder on the relevance of a contrastive study of the receiving and sending societies’ perspectives on gender and migration-related differences as well as on their impact on identity construction and representation. Both the advantages and the disadvantages of this type of approach were considered and the final decision was that the main corpus for analysis should be selected from national newspapers, but, where particularly relevant (as in the Romanian case, for example), international press could also be resorted to for a more in-depth study of intertextuality and of its role in shaping power discourse.

Another very much debated methodological aspect referred to the relevance for this thematic work package of focus groups bringing together readers selected according to different criteria (sex, age, education, etc.) in order to comment on different representations of gender, migration and intercultural interactions at the level of the written press discourse. Though the participants acknowledged that, for a better understanding of the changes in representation, the reception process has to be considered as well, the final decision was, however, against using the focus group as a method of data collection since the researchers of all three teams would take interest, above all, in the production processes and in the

analysis of ways in which social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted at the textual level in a certain social and political context. Hence, the preference for critical discourse analysis applied to the corpus selected according to the mutually established criteria and, if possible and necessary, for non-structured interviews with journalists and/or editors on policies which the media generally adopt in representing cross-cultural encounters, disseminating information on and raising (or not) awareness of the sensitive issues related to gender, migration and national identity.

5. Conclusions. Results.

The partners reached an agreement on the criteria for corpus selection, set the main lines of the methodological framework within which media texts (films and written press articles) would be analysed, and decided to continue their research according to the timeframe previously established in order to be able to draft the WP4 national reports in due time. All the significant results of this thematic workshop, aimed at harmonising the partners' analytical approaches, basic concepts, research objectives and questions, as well as their methods of data collection and interpretation, were coherently transposed in ~~the~~ *Synthesis Research Design* subsequently delivered by the Romanian work package coordinator.

B. Thematic Workshop 2: November 27, 2009 – Athens (Greece)

1. Purpose of the workshop

At the project coordinator's suggestion, at the beginning of the final phase in the timeframe of WP 4, after the partners finished selecting the corpus and carried on with the analysis of the available (filmic and journalistic) texts which they considered illustrative for both the main research lines of the project and the specificity of the context in which they were produced and received, a second thematic workshop was organised in Athens. Its aim was to allow the partners to present the main findings of their research on media texts, to speak of the difficulties and shortcomings which they might have come across in selecting and/or analysing the corpus and which led to inevitable readjustments of the original research proposal, as well as to decide on the main lines along which the national reports are to be drafted and on the deadlines to be observed in delivering the national reports to the package coordinator in charge of drafting the final work package report.

2. Organisation details

The second thematic workshop on WP 4 was organised as part of a series of three workshops related to some of the main thematic work packages of the Ge.M.IC. project (i.e. WP5, WP8 and WP4, in order of the dates when they took place – November 25, 26, 27, 2009), by the project coordinator UPSPS. It brought together representatives of all the three teams involved in WP 4, namely: on behalf of the Romanian coordinating team (UDJG) - Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă, Ioana Ivan-Mohor; on behalf of the Greek team (UPSPS) – Maria Paradeisi, Ioanna Vovou; and on behalf of the Macedonian team (EU-BAL) – Jana Lozanoska and Slavco Dimitrov.

The workshop was structured so as to cover the following main points:

- technical aspects of the analysis of filmic and journalistic texts, including the participants' presentations of the corpus that they eventually focused on and of some of the preliminary conclusions of their research throughout the latest phase of the work package;
- the identification of the main keywords/thematic lines of the corpus analysis with a view to establishing a coherent pattern for the structure of the national reports;
- the deadlines for report delivery (for both the national reports and the synthesis work package report). (See Appendix)

3. National case studies

3.1. Romania

Film: The Romanian team made an extensive presentation of the findings of their contrastive study of several feature films and documentaries (from among the 15 films making up the corpus) focusing on gender and migration-related images that either reinforce or challenge mainstream stereotypical representations of identity and alterity as foregrounded by Romanian and/or foreign film producers. Thus, Ioana Ivan-Mohor's analysis of four Romanian feature films *Asfalt Tango* (1995), *Italiencele* (2004), *Schimb valutar* (2008), *Weekend cu mama* (2009) – as well as Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă's comments on several documentaries produced by foreign directors *The Last Peasants. Temptation* (2003), *Leaving Transylvania* (2006), *Human Traffic* (2006) – pointed out the complementarity of auto- and hetero-images in the construction of gender and migration-defined Romanianness, and the dichotomic coordinates as well as the attitudes underlying them considered in the larger historical, political, social and cultural context of the Romanian society in transition.

Written press The presentation of the progress made by the Romanian team in analysing the corpus of articles extracted from the issues of the Romanian quality newspaper *Adevărul* and *Cotidianul* published between 2007 and 2009 was structured in two major parts. On the one hand, specific reference was made to the articles published before and after the crisis-engendering moment of the Mailat case (November 2007) in order to emphasise how discursive representations of Romanianness were re-negotiated in intersectionally reflecting the dynamics of dichotomically-organised in-group/out-group relations, namely between the Romanian migrants and the Italian majority and between the Roma minority and the Romanian majority. On the other hand, considering the more general discursive framework in which Romanian migration for (il)legal labour was written about, a second part of the presentation followed the evolution of the new stereotype of the Romanian migrant, the strawberry picker, that entailed significant changes in interpretation through demeaning generalisation, and paid special attention to the ways in which the journalistic discourse transposed various attitudes towards and policies in relation to Romanian migrant workers in both the sending and the receiving societies.

3.2. Greece

Film: On behalf of the Greek team, Maria Paradeisi summarised the preliminary conclusions of her research on a corpus made up of 25 Greek feature and documentary films (here including short films), insisting on the importance she attached in her comments on the filmic text to such aspects as the production context (state-supported productions, co-productions, etc.), the film genre (with a significant impact on the choice of the type of narration), and the cinematic codes the director opted for in the representation of (women) migrants.

Written press Ioanna Vovou's presentation of the Greek case study revealed the possibility of a significant modification of the corpus to be analysed given the unexpected changes in the status of one of national newspapers originally envisaged, namely *Eleytheros Typos* which thus would be most likely replaced by *Kathimerini*. Apart from that, the presentation described extensively the main lines of the analysis carried out on articles from *Eleytherotypia* whether dwelling on the December 2008 attack on Konstantina Kouneva or, in more general terms, on gender and migration issues throughout 'uneventful' periods, with a special stress on journalistic strategies that gradually came to challenge established attitudes toward and modes of representation of such issues in the Greek receiving society.

3.3. Macedonia

Film: The representative of the Macedonian team, Slavco Dimitrov detailed the structure of the Macedonian corpus including 4 productions (feature and documentary films), and addressing various aspects of gender, migration and intercultural interactions in the national-specific context as follows: on the one hand, films like *Before the Rain* (1994) and *Cash and Marry* (2009) which explicitly consider migration, identity, gender, redefinition of marriage and imagotypical representations as their main theme; on the other hand, *Gypsy Magic* (1997) and *The Shutka Book of Records* *The Champions of Shutka* (2005), which, though indirectly touching upon migration issues, focus on representations of Roma people and the models of problematization of gender issues that such representations imply.

Written press The case study presented by Jana Lozoska covered a corpus of 15 articles on trafficking in women in Macedonia as a particular manifestation of the intersection of gender and migration issues in the national context, placing the critical analysis of the journalistic discourse against the larger background of migration/trafficking policies and mainstream stereotypical representations of gender differences in Macedonia.

4. Proposed further steps

Film: The participants' comments on each national case presented contributed to bringing to the foreground several major aspects to be touched upon in the national reports. For instance, the difficulties encountered by the Romanian team in getting access to documentaries on Romanian migrants by Romanian directors drew the participants' attention to the need for an introductory section in the national reports detailing the selection process and the constraining factors that determined the choice of only certain films for analysis. The Greek team's stress on the production circumstances and the film genre as having a decisive influence on the nature of the filmic representations of gender, migration and intercultural relations revealed the need for an appendix to each national report enclosing details regarding the film director, the producers, the actors, the photography and the music directors as well as brief synopses of the films, which might help the reader of the reports to understand better the contrastive study and the conclusions eventually advanced. The presentation of the Macedonian case pointed, among other things, to the need for flexibility in the methodological approach to be applied to the filmic text which might accommodate, where relevant, next to the imagological and textual analyses, references to interviews with film directors and even NGO activists for a better rounded-off picture of the context of production and reception.

However, the most important outcome of the participants' exchange of ideas over the national case presentations consisted of a list of key issues/themes to be tackled in the analysis of the filmic text (and not only) by all three partner teams, including: narratives of transition, gender issues (with particular stress on marriage and motherhood), migration, citizenship, transgression, multiple Others/multiple Us and stereotypical representations dominated by a tendency towards naturalization of differences and oversimplification. Addressed in each national report, these key issues/themes would impart coherence to the partners' analyses of their corpus and, implicitly, to the final synthesis report.

Written press The presentations by the representatives of each national team of the most important results of the article selection and interpretation processes revealed both the common points of and the essential differences between the national case studies. Thus, whereas the Greek and Romanian case studies follow the same pattern considering, on the one hand, the impact and representation of major crisis events involving (women) migrants, and, on the other hand, the more general discursive approach to gender and migration issues in the national press over periods of 'uneventful' relations between the migrants and the sending/receiving society, the Macedonian case focuses only on a certain national-specific aspect of gender-marked migration, i.e. trafficking. Under the circumstances, the

coherence of the national reports would be ensured by the partners' observing the selection criteria agreed upon (articles from the national press, published between 2007-2009) and by their building up their comments around the same thematic issues/ keywords. It is important to mention at this point that all the participants agreed that the key issues/themes discussed about in relation to film analysis should be adopted for written press discourse analysis as well.

Suggestions were also made with regard to potential stress in the analysis of written press discourse on the ideological orientation of the newspaper publisher (where possible), to representations of migration, in general, and of gender-related aspects of migration, in particular, in both positive and negative terms and in the larger context of European societies in transition.

Last but not least, considering the problems encountered by some of the partners in accessing the intended corpus (see the Greek case), the partners agreed that the analysis could be carried on a combination of hard copy and electronic versions of relevant articles from the national press.

Taking into account the findings of their research, the problems previously encountered and the suggestions advanced in order to overcome them throughout the final stage of report drafting, the partners concluded the meeting by making the following decisions with regard to the structure of the reports and the timeframe for their delivery:

1. All national reports should mainly consist of two sections corresponding to the two types of text analysed, namely film and written press, each of them containing up to 15,000 words. These two large sections are then to be followed by a synthetic assessment of the overall research findings, pointing to the similarities and dissimilarities in the representations of gender, migration and intercultural relations in the national media (film and written press) in more general terms. Ultimately, the reports will be rounded off by a set of policy recommendations as to how media discourse(s) could be used in promoting intercultural dialogue and a positive image of migration in the European societies.
2. In both main sections, the analysis of the media texts aimed at foregrounding the representations of self and other in the context of gender and migration-marked intercultural relations will be focused on several main and subsidiary keywords/thematic issues as follows: a) gender, migration, national identity, media; b) narratives of transition, citizenship, transgression, stereotypes.
3. The deadlines for the delivery of the reports will be:
 - a. end of February 2010: first drafts of the partners' national reports;
 - b. end of March 2010: final versions of the partners' national reports;
 - c. mid-April 2010: first draft of the coordinator's synthesis report;
 - d. end of May 2010: final version of the coordinator's synthesis report.

5. Conclusions. Results.

All in all, the partners' sharing their experience in analysing media texts turned out particularly productive in the sense that their dialogue contributed to identifying the major lines along which the national reports should be structured and to discerning the ways in which difficulties in harmonising national reports in drafting the final work package report could be overcome without diminishing in the least the particular touches given by the specificity of each national case.

Appendix

Thematic Workshop 1 METHODOLOGY WORKSHOP IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE MEDIA

May 14-16, 2009 – “Duărea de Jos” University of Galați (Romania)

May 13, 2009: Arrival of partners (Greece)
Dinner

May 14, 2009:

Morning Arrival of partners (FYROM)

16.30 – 18.30:

- Welcome address
- Discussion of the methodological framework (I): Feature and documentary films
 - Presentation of the consulted materials (selection criteria; amount; relevance; analysis grids; further intentions)
 - Case study presentations by the partners (Greece: Maria Paradeisi; Romania: Ioana Ivan-Mohor, Michaela Praisler, Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă)

May 15, 2009:

11.30 – 13.30:

- Discussion of the methodological framework (II): Written press
 - Presentation of the consulted materials (selection criteria; amount; relevance; further intentions)
 - Clarification of methodological framework(s) (analysis grids; focus group organisation; in-depth interviews)
 - Case study presentations by the partners (1) (Greece: Ioanna Vovou; FYROM: Jana Lozoska)

15.00 – 17.30:

- Discussion of the methodological framework (II): Written press
 - Case study presentations by the partners (2) (Romania: Mariana Neagu, Gabriela Dima, Antoanela Dumitrașcu)
- Round-off discussion on methodological issues, means of harmonising the case studies (with a view to the final synthesis report) and the steps to be further taken in carrying out research on WP4 (logistics and timeframes).

May 16, 2009:

Boat cruise on the Danube

Departure of partners

Participants:

- **Dunărea de Jos University, Department of English Language and Literature (Romania)** Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă; Ioana Ivan-Mohor; Michaela Praisler; Mariana Neagu; Gabriela Dima; Antoanela Dumitrașcu.
- **Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Centre for Gender Studies (Greece)** Maria Paradeisi; Ioanna Vovou
- **Euro-Balkan Institute, Research Centre in Gender Studies (FYROM)** Jana Lozoska

Venue: The meetings will take place at “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați, the main building (No. 47, Domnească St.).

Thematic Workshop 2
Athens, 25-27 November 2009

November 27, 2009

WP4 THEMATIC WORKSHOP INATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE MEDIA

10.00-12.30

Representations of National Identity in Film Discussion of preliminary research findings and of the structure of national reports: Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă, Ioana Ivan-Mohor (UDJG); Maria Paradeisi (UPSPS); Slavco Dimitrov (EU-BAL).

12.30- 14.00

Lunch

14.00-16.30

Representations of National Identity in the Written Press Discussion of preliminary research findings and of the structure of national reports: Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă (UDJG); Ioanna Vovou (UPSPS); Jana Lozoska (EU-BAL).

16.30-17.00

Coffee break

17.00-18.00

Round-off discussion on drafting national reports, means of harmonising the case studies (with a view to the final synthesis report), logistics and timeframes.

Participants:

- **Dunărea de Jos University, Department of English language and Literature (Romania)** Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă, Ioana Ivan-Mohor;
- **Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Centre for Gender Studies (Greece)** Maria Paradeisi; Ioanna Vovou, Alexandra Zavos;
- **Euro-Balkan Institute, Research Centre in Gender Studies (FYROM)** Jana Lozoska, Slavco Dimitrov.

Venue: The meetings will take place in Athens, at Panteion University, the Centre for Gender Studies (No. 134, Syggrou Avenue).