



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in
Strategie di Comunicazione
Classe LM-92

Tesi di Laurea

Media's Power: Shaping Perceptions of Transgender Candidates

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Anno Accademico 2022 / 2023

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Introduction

This thesis examines the role of the media in narrating and representing transgender individuals, focusing on transgender individuals as political candidates, to determine whether they contribute to discrimination, and if so, in what ways such discrimination occurs. Therefore, the topic of this thesis was chosen because I found it interesting to analyse if transgender discrimination in politics is still present, in fact this thesis explores the presence and evolution of transgender discrimination in politics over time, through the analysis of Italian newspaper articles, to determine if the phenomenon has decreased, improved, or remained unchanged. Additionally, the thesis aims to develop and propose an analytical framework that includes recommendations for avoiding discriminatory or stereotypical representations of transgender individuals and the LGBTQI community in media. These recommendations are directed toward the “*Ordine dei Giornalisti*”, the “*Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana*”¹ (FNSI) and other professional associations of journalists in Italy. Furthermore, it could be interesting to conduct studies similar to those contained in my thesis beyond national borders. For this reason, recommendations have been developed and gathered to prevent discrimination and stereotypes in the representation of transgender individuals.

Another motivating factor that led me to analyse the main Italian newspapers was to understand whether they have implemented specific measures aimed at protecting the representation of the LGBTQI+ community, especially, in this case, of transgender individuals, or if there are still no specific principles for their representation, especially analysing their ethical codes. My interest in these issues also arose thanks to the "Communication Practices, Diversity, and Inclusion" course taught by Professor Padovani, and specifically during a lecture by Guest speaker Lucia Vásquez Rodríguez. For the first time in a university course, the protection of transgender individuals and the LGBTQI+ community in general in media representation was discussed, especially through the analysis of newspapers. This helped me reflect on a world that was completely unknown to me, or rather, underestimated, and I became more aware of the daily struggles that transgender individuals, especially in politics, must face, starting from the acceptance of their identity and

¹ *Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana* is the sole and unified union of Italian journalists. On behalf of all Italian journalists, it negotiates national collective labour agreements for journalistic work with employer organizations in various sectors of the information industry.

the need to confront discrimination, in this case in newspaper articles, stemming from collective ignorance on this issue.

The analysis presented in this thesis is conducted through the examination of articles from the four most widely read newspapers in Italy: *Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica*, *La Stampa*, and *Il Sole 24 Ore*. According to *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa*², these newspapers have been found to be the most widely circulated in almost all Italian regions and, consequently, have the most significant influence on information dissemination throughout Italy. In this thesis, a total of 42 newspaper are analysed and reported. These articles focus on the two main political figures analysed in this thesis, Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano.

Vladimir Luxuria is an Italian activist, writer, television personality, opinion leader, artistic director, actress, singer, playwright, and former politician. She served as a member of the Italian parliament during the XV legislature from 2006 to 2008, during the Prodi II government, becoming the first transgender person to be elected to the parliament of a European state. Monica Romano is an Italian activist, writer, and politician. She is the first transgender person ever elected to the City Council of Milan, serving from 2021 to the present.

The objective of this thesis is to uncover discriminations in news and determine whether these two Italian politicians have indeed been victims of discrimination in news coverage, through the analysis of newspaper articles during the periods 2006-2009 and 2021-2023. This is particularly relevant to Vladimir Luxuria since, before 2006, the transgender community in Italy was primarily associated with the common scenario of "viados"³ in the context of prostitution and/or nightlife entertainment. Luxuria's entry into politics marked a significant change in this perception. Through her political position, Luxuria sought to raise awareness among the Italian people regarding transgender rights and identity, becoming the spokesperson for the LGBTQI+ community for the first time. The year 2006 marked a turning point between two eras, during which there was a gradual change in how this topic was treated by the media.

² ADS Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa is the company whose purpose is the certification and dissemination of data on the circulation and circulation and/or distribution of daily and periodical press of any species published in Italy. It certifies and publishes circulation data for the Italian daily and periodical press in print and digital formats. Since 1975, they have been the point of reference for the certification of Italian publishing data. <https://www.adsnotizie.it/>

³ The term "viado" refers to men of Brazilian or more generally South American origin, both crossdressers and transsexuals, who engage in prostitution. In its original language, Portuguese, the slang "viado" is used with a derogatory connotation to refer to homosexual men.

In the case of Monica Romano, we see the results of the change fostered by Vladimir Luxuria, but we also perceive the consequences of increased awareness of this community and a broader, generalized interest in these issues. This has given rise to new forms of discrimination, which are even more complex to detect, as they are not explicit but often justified under the guise of "making news", as is evident from the analyses presented in this thesis.

Preparing for the analysis of selected newspaper articles, this thesis delves into the theories underlying the main topic: unequal gender representation of political subjects. The first chapter of the thesis addresses theoretical foundations that underlie the distinction between sex and gender, as defined by Butler (1999, pp. 10-22), Stryker (2008, p. 11), and Stoller (1968, p. 17). We see how gender is socially determined, as it is indeed a social construct that does not include individuals like transgender people, making them susceptible to discrimination and stereotyping. Individuals enact their gender in accordance with cultural norms and expectations of what it means to be male or female. As a result, any portrayal of gender in media, including representations of transgender individuals, is inevitably influenced and assessed through the lens of prevailing cultural norms and beliefs about these genders. Additionally, Fleras (2014, pp. 3-36), Mulvey (2010, p. 202), and hooks (1999, pp. 307-309) talk about the media gaze and how those engaged in observation carry with them a set of cultural preconceptions that shape their interpretation of the provided content.

In support of the analysis of Italian newspapers, in the first chapter we see that an examination of representations of transgender individuals can offer insights into the cultural beliefs surrounding gender and physical forms, as explained by Richardson (2016, p. 10). The experiences of transgender individuals can serve as a window into the social mechanisms that give rise to the concept of gender (Keegan, 2013). This is related to the term "transnormativity", and to the fact that stereotypical representation of transgender individuals occurs due to a limited understanding of the transgender community.

Transgender individuals are part of what Fürsich E. (2010, p. 113-120) defines as minorities, explaining that minority groups within a society are depicted as fundamentally different, unique, special, exotic, or even deviating from the norm. In fact, language is the primary means of conveying meaning, and therefore, language plays a central role both in creating messages and transmitting cultural values (Hall, Evans, Nixon, 2013, p. 581-592).

The term "transnormativity," is also in-depth, as the ideological framework that evaluates how transgender people express themselves and their gender experiences by comparing them to a predetermined set of standards, a concept tied to transgression, in which anyone who

does not conform to a rigid binary gender division (male or female) is seen as nonconforming. Also, it is related to the concept of "correction" as a rectification of transsexuality, which helps maintain the gender binary. This concept is extensively explored in the newspaper analysis, where it will emerge prominently.

Terms like "glass ceiling" and "symbolic annihilation" are also crucial for our analysis. These two terms are consistently revisited in the analysis of newspaper articles, as they are still very current phenomena evident from the conducted analyses, because this type of representation is equivalent to relegating the different as "exotic" or even as deviant and abnormal.

In the second chapter of this thesis three quite recent North American qualitative studies are analysed and serve as the basis for the theories in the newspaper analysis to be conducted in the fourth chapter. The three studies in question are "*Media's Influence on Perceptions of Trans Women*" by Haley E. Solomon & Beth Kurtz-Costes (2017), "*Writing in the Margins: Mainstream News Media Representations of Transgenderism*" by Thomas J. Billard (2016), and "*Explaining public opinion toward transgender people, rights, and candidates*" by Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018).

"*Media's Influence on Perceptions of Trans Women*" by Haley E. Solomon & Beth Kurtz-Costes (2017) demonstrates, on the bases of studies conducted on a sample of the American population, that the media indeed influences public perception. Specifically, according to the authors, prolonged exposure to media that convey a positive image of transgender individuals leads to a slight increase in support for transgender people. On the other hand, even minimal exposure to news that conveys a negative, discriminatory, and stereotyped message about transgender individuals results in a significant change in their public perception.

"*Writing in the Margins: Mainstream News Media Representations of Transgenderism*" by Thomas J. Billard (2016) identifies an improvement over time in the representation of transgender individuals in American newspaper articles, with a decreasing use of delegitimizing terms in favour of a more respectful treatment of transgender individuals. However, this increase, although very positive, does not correspond to a complete cessation of discrimination, as, albeit to a lesser extent, discriminations still exist.

This theory is the foundation of the idea behind the analysis in this thesis, as I found this study intriguing and believed it was important to apply it to the Italian context, as a similar study has not been conducted in Italy to such an extent. Furthermore, it makes it clear that, even though the current state of society is moving towards greater understanding and protection of transgender rights, discrimination still exists, albeit in a less obvious form. Applying this knowledge to the Italian context can reveal aspects that can be improved in the

representation of transgender individuals and the LGBTQI+ community through newspapers and media in general. This can make journalists, as well as the public, more aware and respectful towards transgender individuals.

Also, thanks to Billard (2016), an analytical framework for analysing newspaper articles was developed, inspirational for what is proposed in the conclusion.

"*Explaining public opinion toward transgender people, rights, and candidates*" by Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018), on the other hand, presents an analysis of the American population's perception of transgender political candidates. According to the findings of this research, even those who are more supportive and defenders of transgender rights are less likely to support transgender individuals in politics. I considered this study important precisely to showcase the political, social, and cultural attitudes of the population. While it is based on the American population, I find it very useful as a starting hypothesis for a future study on the Italian or European population. Additionally, it greatly helps in understanding the general social attitudes towards transgender individuals, taking into account factors such as gender, age, religion, and political affiliation in their studies.

The third chapter is dedicated to exploring existing guidelines for representing transgender individuals through the media, especially in newspapers, as outlined in the Style Guide (2023) of the Trans Journalists Association⁴, GLAAD⁵, and Billard (2016, p. 5). Additionally, in this chapter the world of Italian journalism is explored, especially the ethical codes that pertain to it. The exploration starts with an analysis of "*Testo Unico dei Doveri del Giornalista*" an ethical code that establishes the ethical rules that journalists should follow in the course of their work. So, the main principles regarding the protection of individuals are analysed, with a focus on whether this code also includes the LGBTQI+ community. It is also examined how each newspaper's own ethical codes and whether they have indeed adhered to these rules or fallen short in compliance. All of this is studied to understand the main reasons for the change in the representation of transgender individuals that is analysed throughout this thesis. Furthermore, in the third chapter, it is addressed how journalists find information sources and assess the credibility of a source. In this context, another important theme discussed in this chapter is the connection and influence that politics exerts on newspapers, specifically those analysed, to better understand whether, behind the discriminations

⁴ The Trans Journalists Association is a professional membership organization that promotes more accurate, nuanced coverage of trans issues and communities in the media and supports gender-expansive journalists in their workplaces and careers.

⁵ <https://glaad.org/>

examined in this thesis, there may also be a political reason based on the ideologies of parties opposed to those to which the two politicians analysed have belonged and currently belong (Padovani et Al., 2021).

Additionally, in the final section of this chapter, an analytical framework is proposed upon which the entire research in Chapter Four is based.

Chapter four presents the empirical analysis I have conducted. Specifically, a selection of newspaper articles from the four most diffused Italian newspapers reporting about the two transgender political actors has been chosen. These articles have been analysed following the guidelines outlined in the previous chapter, taking into account the background of the Italian journalism sector previously examined. The analyses have been based on the following questions: *How do newsmade report transgender politicians? Are newspapers vehicles of discrimination against transgender political candidates? If yes, how are they discriminated against? Has the amount of discriminatory or stereotypical representations increased or decreased over time?*

In the concluding Chapter of this thesis, the collected information is analysed and discussed, and it is explained how the theories proposed from the beginning have been almost entirely fulfilled or how these have not been met.

In the conclusion, as is better explained at the end of this thesis, it is possible to understand that there is still discrimination against transgender individuals in politics today yet different. An analytical framework is proposed that could be regarded as recommendations and analysis guidelines for future research in this field.

Terminology

As the research of this thesis focused on understanding the discrimination transgender people experience as individuals, then as political candidates, through the media (especially newspapers), it is essential to understand the specific terminology contained in the first part of this study. These terminological definitions are provided by GLAAD, McLaren (2018) and the National Center for Transgender Equality (2009).

As McLaren (2018, p. 6-7) explain “Gender” refers to sociocultural construction that establishes roles based on sex, while “Sex” refers to a set of biological characteristics, especially genetic and hormonal, on the basis of which the distinction between men and women is established. It does not necessarily determine the subject's behaviour or gender identity (Butler, 1999, p.10 and Stroller 1968). In Addition, “sexual orientation” refers to the affective and sexual attraction that people feel for other people (GLAAD Media Reference Guide). “Gender identity” refers to the subjective perception that a person has about themselves in terms of feeling male or female, both or neither Stryker (2008, p. 11). Gender identity does not necessarily have to coincide with the sex assigned at birth and has nothing to do with the person's sexual orientation. “Intersex” refers to the condition of some people who are born with some variation of the biological elements that define people as male or female. “Transsexual/transgender” refers to those persons whose gender identity does not coincide with the sex/gender they were assigned at birth (Jobes, 2013, p.5). It includes transgender people, transsexuals, transvestites and, in general, those who question the male/female binary as the only option for individual and social identification. Being trans does not imply having a specific sexual orientation. Other variations include transperson, transpeople, transwoman, transman (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2009). “Cisgender” is a person who identifies with the sex/gender attributed at birth, while “non-binary” applies to people who do not self-identify as male or female and who may identify with a third gender or no gender at all. In addition, “Queer” is adjective embraced by some individuals, particularly among the younger generation, who do not exclusively identify as heterosexual in terms of their sexual orientation (e.g., a queer person or a queer woman). Those who choose to identify as queer often do so because they find terms like lesbian, gay, and bisexual too restrictive or laden with cultural connotations that they believe do not fully encompass their experiences (Butler, 1999, p. 22). It's important to note that while queer was once used pejoratively, many LGBTQ individuals have reclaimed it to describe themselves. However, it's essential to recognize that the term queer is not universally accepted even

within the LGBTQ community. Therefore, caution should be exercised when using it unless it's in the context of describing how someone identifies or in a direct quotation. When the letter Q appears at the end of LGBT, it typically signifies "queer" (GLAAD Media Reference Guide).

“Lesbian” is a woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adj.) or as gay women. Avoid identifying lesbians as “homosexuals.” Lesbian can be used as a noun or adjective. Prior to assigning a label to someone's sexual orientation, it is advisable to inquire about how they personally define or describe themselves. It is advisable to ask people how they describe themselves before labelling their sexual orientation. On the other hand, “Gay” is an adjective used to describe a person whose enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex (e.g., gay man, gay people) (Gill, 2007, p.103). Avoid identifying gay people as “homosexuals” an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people (GLAAD Media Reference Guide).

Chapter 1: Sex, Gender and Media Representation

This research focuses on how transgender people are depicted in newsmedia. In particular the work analyses how the two political figures Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano have been portrayed by Italian newspapers in recent years. In relation to this, it is also important to analyse the etymological and theoretical origin of terms used in this chapters and understanding where discrimination and stereotypes originate, as well as to clarify the theoretical framework underlying this study.

This first chapter explores the difference between sex and gender, as defined by Butler (1999, p.10-22), Stryker (2008, p.11) and Stroller (1968, p.17), who claim that gender is predetermined by society, because it is actually a mere social construct that does not include people like transgender people, making them subject to discrimination and stereotyping. Individuals put their gender into action in line with cultural norms and expectations regarding what it means to be male or female. Also, Fleras (2014, p. 3-36), Mulvey (2010, p. 202) and hooks (1999, p. 307-309) discuss the media gaze and how those who engage in observation carry with them a set of cultural preconceptions that shape how they interpret the given content.

Section 1.2, focuses on transgender representation and how culture influences this representation. In fact, Richardson (2016, p. 10) explains that an examination of representations of transgender individuals can offer insights into cultural beliefs surrounding gender and physical forms. Keegan (2013) observed that transgender individuals' experiences can serve as a window into the societal mechanisms that give rise to the concept of gender. Keegan's work is linked with the term "transnormativity". In addition, in various forms of media, including newspapers and social platforms, language and content often depict transgender individuals in stereotypical ways due to a limited understanding of the transgender community. Also, Film, television, and newspapers can serve as influential platforms for portraying transgender individuals and serve as valuable educational tools.

In Section 1.3, the representation of minority is in-depth. Fürsich E. (2010, p. 113-120), it is elucidated that newspapers and entertainment programs frequently resort to stereotyping individuals from marginalized communities, such as people of colour, non-elite groups, and the transgender community. This is achieved either by sidelining them in the agenda-setting process or by presenting a consistently limited range of portrayals. Typically, minority groups within a society are depicted as being fundamentally different, uniquely special, exotic, or even as deviating from the norm. Hall S., Evans J., Nixon S. (2013, p.581-592) go on to

expound that language serves as the primary conduit for imbuing something with meaning, and these meanings can only be effectively conveyed through a shared language. Consequently, language assumes a central role in both the creation of messages and the transmission of cultural values.

In Section 1.4 the term “transnormativity” is referred to as defined by Johnson (2016, p. 466) as ideological framework that evaluates the way transgender individuals express themselves and their gender experiences by comparing them to a predefined set of standards. This framework arranges transgender experiences, identities, and stories into a hierarchy of authenticity that is based on a binary medical model and its associated criteria. The term also serves a dual role: it seeks to streamline and simplify transgender experiences for audiences, making them easier to understand, while also aiming to diminish their complexity or perceived deviation from what is considered the norm. “Transnormativity” is linked also to concept of transgression, where anyone who doesn't adhere to a rigid binary gender division (male or female) is seen as unconventional, and also to the concept of “fixing” as rectifying transness, thank to which the gender binary is upheld.

In section 1.5 the terms "crystal ceiling" and "symbolic annihilation" will be explained. The first term is use to explain gender segregation in media productions and is used to give meaning to the gender gap between male and female (Krijnen T., Van Bauwel S., 2015, p. 105-120). While, “symbolic annihilation” result from a stereotypical and limited representation of transgender and other minorities. This type of representation equates to relegating the different, to an "exotic" subject, or even as deviant and abnormal.

In section 1.6, the “bathroom problem” will be discussed and will be shown how this leads to discrimination, but also imprisonment of transgender people from the society that, as mentioned in the first chapter, recognizes only the bionomy of sexes, that is, male and female (Buttler, 1999, p. 22).

In the last section, will be explained that through in the media transgender people become victims of violence, psychological and physical, and how this is related to the lack of proper representation of them and the stereotypes employed in media production.

All of the above so far, demonstrates how in fact transgender people live parallel to a constant discrimination of their personhood, which stems from a cultural factor, of representation, but also of lack of public understanding of these figures, all concepts that will be discussed extensively throughout this chapter.

1.1 Sex and Gender

Sex and gender can be distinguished as separate concepts. Schilt (2006, p.14) posits that biological factors, such as chromosomes, hormones, primary, and secondary sex characteristics, are typically considered to define the division into men and women within the context of sex. On the contrary, gender is primarily associated with the cultural dimensions of identifying as male or female. According to Stryker (2008, p. 11), gender can be defined as the social arrangement of various types of bodies into distinct classifications of individuals. Furthermore, Stryker asserts that individuals are not inherently born with a predetermined gender identity. Instead, gender identity is shaped by cultural influences, yet it remains a long-lasting perception of one's own gender. Stryker characterizes gender identity as a personal feeling of alignment with a specific gender classification. Further analysis of the two terms is given by Stoller (1968, p. 17), who explains that sociologists distinguish between these two meanings to emphasize the distinction between biology and culture. Sex is "the biological distinction between females and males" (Croteau D., Hoynes W., 2018, p. 242), determined at conception, while gender refers to "socially constructed cultural expectations associated with women or men". To illustrate this distinction more clearly using two straightforward examples: the innate biological capacity for individuals with the uterus to bear children, compared to those without, represents a difference based on sex. On the other hand, a woman's ability to freely choose to wear high-heeled shoes, in contrast to men, reflects a gender-based difference influenced by cultural norms. While most individuals are biologically classified as male or female at birth, some individuals may exhibit mixed reproductive or sexual anatomy, such as intersex individuals. Sexual distinctions distinguishing between men and women can be categorized as either absolute or relative: absolute sexual differences encompass all aspects related to the reproductive system, while relative sexual differences pertain to the varying levels of hormones present in both men and women.

Transgender individuals experience a disconnect between their gender identity and their biological sex, where they identify with a gender opposite, another or none to their assigned sex at birth. It's important to distinguish this from other gender-fluid identities like cross-dressing, drag, or being intersex, which involve different aspects of gender expression or biological characteristics, such as having a combination of both male and female reproductive organs. Stryker's (2008, p. 11) definition of transgender encompasses individuals who

depart from the gender they were assigned at birth, those who traverse the societal boundaries that culture has constructed to define and confine that gender.

Butler's theory (1999, p. 10) of gender performativity holds significance because it underscores the role of cultural gender expressions. According to her understanding, individuals enact their gender in alignment with cultural norms and expectations regarding what it means to be male or female. Consequently, any form of gender representation on screen, including that of transgender individuals, is subject to influence and scrutiny by the prevailing cultural beliefs concerning those genders. Furthermore, Butler asserts that culture shapes the concept of being assigned a specific sex while giving the impression that one's sex inherently carries predefined characteristics (gender). Butler's thoughts, particularly in the realms of subjectivity and the construction of gender, draw inspiration from the theories put forth by Foucault (1990, p. 2). In alignment with Foucault's ideas, Butler is making the argument that the creation of gender constructs the notion of gender as significant and attractive. Within the framework proposed by Butler and Foucault, it follows that a man would aspire to exhibit masculinity, while a woman would aspire to embody femininity (McLaren 2018, p. 8). Butler also emphasizes that the body is, in itself, a constructed entity, just as the diverse "bodies" that make up the realm of gendered individuals are also constructed.

Given that the notion of a gendered subject plays a pivotal role in recognition (the classic "are you a boy or a girl?" question), the absence of recognition would likely result in a negative response. This underscores why issues related to representation carry significant importance. In general, as outlined by Butler (1999, p.156) she contends that discourse both empowers and regulates gender. Butler also draws heavily from Foucault's (1990, p. 2) concepts regarding the regulation of the body. Cultural discourse surrounding gender serves as a means of policing the gendered body. Crucially, Butler suggests that the boundaries of what is considered possible in terms of gender are always established within the framework of a dominant cultural discourse founded on binary structures that are presented as the language of universal rationality. In the Western world, for instance, strongly believes in a binary gender system exists, where male and female are seen as mutually exclusive categories. On the other hand, in other countries, such as India, the third gender has existed for a very long time as Nanda (1999, p. 13) explain. The third gender category in South Asia primarily comprises the hijras, among other groups. Hijras are individuals who are typically born male but adopt the appearance and attire traditionally associated with femininity. Many, although not all, opt for a castration ceremony, wherein they undergo the removal of their male

genitalia as a symbolic offering to the Hindu goddess Bahuchara Mata. Some hijras are also born intersex. While outsiders often refer to them as transgender, both Indian society and most hijras themselves identify as third gender, signifying that they do not align with either the male or female category and are not in the process of transitioning from one to the other; they represent a distinct gender identity. However, it's important to acknowledge that hijra identity is multifaceted, and recently, some individuals within this group have chosen to identify as transgender and have expressed a desire to undergo gender reassignment procedures.

Another example of a country with a third gender is Thailand with the “Kathoey”. Levon and Mendes Ronald (2014, p. 1-19) explain that in contemporary Thai society, the term "kathoey" is used to describe individuals who are male-to-female transgender. These individuals are born in male bodies but, at some point in their lives, take on certain traditionally female roles, practices, or characteristics, although the degree to which they adopt and express femininity can vary widely. "Kathoey" holds historical and cultural significance in Thai society. According to traditional Thai Buddhist beliefs, "kathoey" is recognized as one of the genders within a three-part system, which includes males, females, and "kathoey" for transvestite/transsexual/hermaphrodite individuals. Etymologically, the term "kathoey" used to be a broader umbrella term encompassing various non-normative gender identities. Furthermore, it was applied to individuals who did not fit squarely into the categories of either male or female. While today "kathoey" is more specifically used to refer to male-to-female transgender individuals, the three-part system of man-woman-kathoey remains relevant, as non-normative gender identities are often collectively classified as "third sex/gender" or "people with "sexual/gender diversity." In English, the term "ladyboy" is commonly used to describe kathoey individuals, and they are also referred to as "the second type of woman."

However, it's crucial to note that in Thailand, kathoey individuals are generally regarded as "a variety of male, not female," rather than being seen as "a genuine intermediate category," as highlighted by Jackson in 1997 (Jackson 1997, p. 171).

However, as said above, many other systems are built upon a binary system, with male being assumed to be superior and more significant than female, there is a pervasive discourse emphasizing innate and unalterable biological gender differences. In this discourse, sex is equated with gender. Butler (1999, p. 12-14) proposes a more humanistic view of gender, in which gender is seen as an attribute of the whole individual - a "relative point of

convergence" within culturally and historically specific sets of relationships - rather than being dictated by biological sex.

When we observe gendered individuals on screen, we tend to culturally recognize them as either men or women, leading us to subconsciously associate them with stereotypical traits. Since individuals "only become understandable when they align with recognizable norms of gender identity," this poses a challenge for the representation of transgender and genderqueer individuals (Butler, 1999, p. 22). It becomes more challenging to fit within societal norms if one is in the process of transitioning, presents an androgynous appearance, identifies as genderqueer, or does not conform to traditional gender norms as a transgender person. A more nuanced form of representation has the potential to challenge and reshape the prevailing cultural concept of a binary gendered subject.

Butler (1999, p.34-45) contends that gender fundamentally operates as a performative act, shaping the very identity it purports to represent. These performances collectively form our gender identity. Butler asserts that gender constitutes the "repeated stylization of the body, a series of recurring actions within a highly structured regulatory framework that gradually solidify over time, creating the illusion of substance, a semblance of natural existence." Similarly, West and Zimmerman (1987, p. 126-127 in McLaren 2018) also view gender as performative. They argue that the "practice of gender" is carried out by individuals, both women and men, whose social competence is dependent on its enactment. They conceive gender as an emergent aspect of social interactions, portraying it as an everyday performance in which we engage to establish our sense of gender identity. West and Zimmerman describe gender as a "systematic, methodical, and recurring achievement." In essence, there is significance in being recognizable as a gendered individual. Furthermore, West and Zimmerman describe a Western binary perspective on gender, wherein culture perceives "women and men as naturally and unequivocally defined categories of existence" (West and Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127-128). Defining the spaces that exist between, outside of, or straddling these two gender categories proves to be challenging. Consequently, the representation of individuals who do not conform to the gender binary becomes crucial yet intricate. Crucially, engaging in the "act of gender" necessitates a recurring performance. This repetition serves as both a reenactment and a re-experiencing of a set of meanings that have already been established within society. Simultaneously, it represents the everyday and ritualized means by which these meanings are validated (Butler, 1999, p. 191). This cycle of repetition is guided, regulated, and shaped by culturally rooted perceptions and interpretations of gender. Culture deeply instils in us the notion that individuals who visually

appear as either men or women will possess corresponding sexual organs. This presumption then extends to the expectations regarding how men and women are expected to behave. For instance, "engaging in gender involves making choices in such a way that, regardless of the specifics, the result is perceived and observable in its context as conforming to the expectations of gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 135-146). In connection with Butler's assertion that the very act of performing gender constructs gender itself, West and Zimmerman (1987, p. 136) acknowledge that "engaging in gender involves establishing distinctions between females and males...once these distinctions are established, they are employed to reinforce the perceived 'inherent' nature of gender". When we persist in engaging in gendered behaviours or actions, we reinforce the notion that gender is an inherent and essential aspect of identity. West and Zimmerman argue that by adhering to established gender norms, we concurrently support, perpetuate, and legitimize societal structures founded on sex categories. Butler, West, and Zimmerman all share the belief that conforming to the gender binary contributes to the perpetuation of that binary itself. Jagger (2008, p. 26) explicitly links Butler and West and Zimmerman, asserting that Butler demonstrates that "gender...is an act in the sense that 'doing' gender involves 'sustained social performances' that encompass the repetition of socially established meanings".

Two crucial points emerge from this discussion. First, our everyday lives involve the continuous enactment of gender. Second, we perform our gender in accordance with social and cultural norms that dictate how a man or woman should behave and present themselves. The very act of "doing gender" serves to construct and solidify the concept of gender itself. Individuals who exist between or outside the confines of this binary system, such as transgender or non-binary individuals, often face repercussions for failing to conform to these established norms. As Butler (1999, p.191) affirm "performance is carried out strategically to preserve the boundaries of gender within its binary structure." In essence, the more we continue to enact traditional gender performances, the more we reinforce and uphold the binary nature of gender.

Understanding these gender theories is crucial for grasping the significance of representing transgender individuals. To begin with, the societal pressure to conform to a binary gender system excludes and marginalizes those who exist beyond that binary framework. When these individuals are portrayed in media, they encounter greater challenges in being recognized as valid and comprehensible gender identities. Consequently, Butler's (1999, p. 2) argument concerning the representation of women can be extrapolated to encompass the representation of transgender individuals: she assesses that representation serves as the operative

term in a political process aimed at expanding visibility and legitimacy for women as political subjects. In addition, representation functions as the standard role of language, which is expected to either reveal or distort what is presumed to be true about the category of women. Butler asserts that the criteria for attaining subjecthood must be met before representation can be extended. Transgender individuals are currently engaged in a political struggle to establish their right to be recognized as subjects, thereby warranting more nuanced and comprehensive representations.

Representation within popular media is shaped by prevailing cultural belief systems. Fleras (2014, p. 3-36) delves into how mainstream media often falls short in accurately portraying minority groups. Significantly, mainstream media, including popular television, is heavily influenced by what Fleras terms the "media gaze." Fleras (2014, p. 3-36) examines how media gazes have a tendency to both reveal and conceal, playing a pivotal role in defining what is considered normal, acceptable, or desirable. This gaze forms a significant dynamic between those appearing on screen and the audience. Fleras asserts that a "gaze" involves purposeful observation, imbuing the object of attention with meaning while establishing an uneven power dynamic between the one who gazes and the one who is being observed. Mulvey (2010, p. 202) also delves into her own concept of the "gaze," which she characterizes as a gendered interaction between a male gaze and a passive female object. Transgender individuals, in this context, are subject to voyeuristic scrutiny that aligns with Mulvey's theory regarding how cinema fulfils a primal desire for pleasurable observation. Mulvey elucidates how the act of viewing a cinematic work, whether it be a film or television, arises from a blend of curiosity and a desire to explore, intertwined with a fascination for similarity and identification. This fascination centres on elements like the human face, the human body, and the connection between the human form and its surroundings. Viewers are encouraged to intently gaze at the screen and actively engage with whatever image is presented. Consequently, viewers assume the active role in the dynamic between themselves and the object of their gaze, which, in this context, pertains to transgender individuals.

Furthermore, hooks (1999, p. 307-309) asserts that the act of observing is inherently influential. Those who engage in observation carry with them a set of cultural preconceptions that shape how they interpret the given content. hooks also underscores that every narrative places the viewer in a position of influence; and factors such as race, class, and sexual dynamics impact how this role is filled by the viewer. Expanding on this argument, audiences of the two shows will exercise some degree of influence over the preexisting beliefs they

bring into the viewing experience, aiding their comprehension of the specific representation presented by the show. There is a dynamic of power inherent in both the act of looking and being looked at. We can expand the concept of the gaze to encompass the relationship between those who are observing a portrayal and the depictions presented on screen. Viewers of the show possess the ability to both witness and critically analyse the representations depicted on screen. Kaplan (2010, p.209), asserts that representations serve as intermediaries, intricately interwoven with the prevailing ideology of the time. These representations are strongly shaped by cultural beliefs. Building on this notion, Hall (1997, p. 15), argues that representation, in a broad sense, entails using language to convey something meaningful about, or to symbolically represent, the world in a way that holds significance for others.

The representation of diverse gender identities holds particular significance because, as Fler as (2014, p. 36) points out, people's perceptions of reality are often shaped by subconscious preconceptions and sometimes irrational biases that filter what they perceive and think. Representation plays a crucial role in influencing these preconceptions. However, the media tends to portray transgender individuals in a very specific manner. As highlighted by Fler as (2014), media depictions of diversity and difference tend to be filtered through the lenses of race, gender, Eurocentrism, and class. Overcoming these limited media representations poses a significant challenge for popular media.

1.2 Representation and Culture

Throughout history, the portrayal of transgender individuals on screen has predominantly taken a negative form. As examined by Mocarski, Butler, Emmons, and Smallwood (2013 p.250), "when transgender individuals are featured in media, it is often in a manner that marginalizes them... this marginalization serves as a strategy to reinforce the stability of gender binaries." In simpler terms, when producers decide to include transgender characters, these characters are typically depicted in ways that do not challenge the conventional binary understanding of gender. In essence, they conform to the existing binary framework. If transgender (or those who defy the gender binaries) were portrayed in more intricate and non-marginalized ways, it could potentially challenge the very concept of a gender binary itself. Hence, there is more at stake than merely whether transgender individuals are represented equitably or not.

To begin with, it's essential to recognize that culture plays a pivotal role in shaping how representations are constructed. As Richardson (2016, p. 10), elucidates, "the body is shaped and moulded by the norms and values of culture". Therefore, an examination of representations of transgender individuals can offer insights into cultural beliefs surrounding gender and physical forms. Keegan (2013) further highlights that "transgender bodies exemplify the social processes that give rise to our understanding of gender, even as they may provide reassurance that individuals can eventually 'come home to' or 'arrive at' their true gender". This relates to the prevalent idea that transgender individuals neatly transition from one gender to another, marking a distinct departure from the gender they were 'assigned at birth' and an arrival at the gender they identify with internally. This concept aligns with "transnormativity", which will see in next chapter. Onscreen, the journey during a physical transition is less commonly depicted compared to images of a 'before transition' or 'after transition' state. When transgender representations, not limited to actors or actresses, are featured in television or film, they tend to conform to a limited range of portrayals. McNroy and Craig (2017, p. 34), contend that LGBTQ individuals have often been typecast and depicted as sources of humour, antagonists, or lawbreakers, as well as being portrayed as mentally or physically unwell and subjected to violence.

Representation, in a broader sense, can function as an educational tool that either reinforces cultural beliefs and standards or challenges them. For example, Johnson (2016, p. 486) elucidates that "on-screen transgender depictions serve as a means through which both transgender and cisgender individuals develop a certain perception of what constitutes authentic transgender identity, and these depictions can impact the identity formation processes of transgender individuals". Particularly for transgender individuals, including transgender youth who are still in the process of self-discovery, these on-screen representations can assist in shaping their own understanding of themselves as gendered individuals. Moreover, this can also be seen in other media, such as newspapers and social media, where words and content portray and describe transgender people in a stereotypical manner, resulting from a lack of knowledge about the transgender world itself. Cowan (2009, p.96 in McLaren 2018) illustrates that "challenging heteronormative assumptions and ideologies about sex and gender that underlie prevailing medical, legal, and social discussions of all forms of transgenderism also mold the sexed and gendered experiences of non-transgender individuals". This implies that the discourse surrounding transgender individuals exerts an influence on the broader discussions regarding gender. Representation possesses significant potential as a potent instrument for aiding society in comprehending the essence

of transgender identity, thereby dispelling the apprehension often associated with the unfamiliar.

A related issue is that being featured in mainstream media does not necessarily translate into equitable representation. This is a significant concern because, as Johnson (2016, pp. 485-486 in McLaren 2018), points out, "media representations offer readily accessible depictions of transgender individuals and, as a result, function as the culturally available knowledge that shapes our perception of transgender identities and experiences". Film, television, and newspapers can serve as influential platforms for portraying transgender individuals and serve as valuable educational tools. Hence, apart from their role as valuable educational instruments, film, television, and newspapers can also function as mirrors that reflect the existing legal and social contexts, providing a window into contemporary values and the prevalent societal perspectives concerning transgender individuals.

1.3 The representation of minorities

As we saw in the previous chapter, representations are factors that contribute to shaping culture, meaning, and our understanding of the world around us. They are not mere mirrors that reflect reality but rather construct reality themselves by providing and normalizing certain perspectives or ideologies. Scholars are particularly interested in representations that carry ideological connotations because they produce culturally shared meanings, and problematic representations can have negative political consequences by perpetuating meanings that support social and political inequalities, for example (Fürsich, 2010, p. 115-117). Media representation of minorities has long been a central focus of research for scholars examining the role of media in perpetuating stereotypes that can be problematic. Media studies have often demonstrated that newspapers and entertainment programs stereotype people of colour, non-elite groups, and other minorities (such as the transgender community), either by excluding them from the agenda-setting process or by offering a limited and unchanging number of representations. Minority groups within a society are often depicted as different, special, exotic, or even abnormal. According to Fürsich (2010, p. 119), there are three main reasons why a type of representation so closely tied to traditional values persists: firstly, repetitiveness in mass media serves to reinforce a certain type of representation over time. The media industry, driven by economic interests, has often been criticized for its inability to create complex and problematic representations of reality,

favouring what is known as the simple and normal. This approach allows it to gather a broader audience consensus. Secondly, the media has historically been aligned with the thinking of a society's elite or controlled by them, so it has no interest in changing its status quo. Thirdly, media can be seen as a "cultural centre" with the power to introduce new and socially progressive ideas. However, it often chooses not to disrupt the socio-political situation.

With the advent of the Internet and new technologies, the possibilities for accessing information have increased for everyone, with an almost infinite plurality of sources that have weakened the traditional and repressive representation system. The growth and fragmentation of the audience, along with the increase in the number of accessible sources, have reduced the impact of negative representations. However, since representation is an image supported by major media channels, traditional representation could still persist for a long time. Media itself does not create meaning, but the media industry and the audience together contribute to constructing a message. Language is the primary vehicle through which something takes on meaning, and meanings can only be conveyed through shared language. Therefore, language plays a central role in message production and the transmission of cultural values (Hall S., Evans J., Nixon S., 2013, p. 581-92).

1.4 Transnormativity

A central theme in the literature is the normative criteria used to evaluate transgender individuals. Johnson (2016, p.466 in McLaren 2018), delves into the concept of "transnormativity", which can be defined as the "ideological framework that measures transgender individuals' expression and gender experiences against a set of established standards...[it] organizes the transgender experience, identity, and narratives into a hierarchy of authenticity that relies on a binary medical model and its associated criteria". "Transnormativity" serves a dual purpose: it aims to simplify transgender experiences for audiences and reduce their complexity or deviation from the norm. "Transnormativity" leads to certain narratives of transgender individuals appearing more valid than others. The narrative of being "born in the wrong body" contributes to an idealized notion of what it means to be transgender. When this narrative dominates public discourse, it can create challenges for individuals with diverse gender identities or experiences to attain similar representation or societal recognition. Consequently, it is expected that the theme of a

transgender character feeling like they were born in the wrong body will be prominently featured in fictional portrayals. An intriguing observation is that historically, male-to-female (MTF) transgender characters have received more representation than female-to-male (FTM) transgender characters. As Rigney (2003, p. 5) concludes, female-to-male characters have "largely remained unnoticed except in a heterosexual context". The cultural spotlight has thus far been more focused on transfeminine representations than on transmasculine portrayals. In fact, the analyses contained in this thesis focus more on transfeminine as these figures have emerged more in politics in Italy.

The flip side of transnormativity is the concept of transgression, where anyone who doesn't adhere to a rigid binary gender division (male or female) is seen as unconventional. Transgression is interconnected with discourse in that it refers to something that falls outside of conventional beliefs. As Capuzza (2016, p. 91-96) points out, the "transgender body challenges preconceived notions about gender because it doesn't neatly align with the either/or categories established by society." This could potentially challenge the established order that plays a role in supporting other oppressive systems.

The fundamental issue at hand is that there exists an expectation that transgender individuals must conform to a binary classification, such as "pre-op" or "post-op," "transvestite" or "transsexual." As Siebler (2012, p. 75) points out, mainstream media representations often lack portrayals of transgender individuals who defy these predefined categories. In terms of media representation, there is no middle ground. Our culture finds it more straightforward to comprehend individuals who have neatly transitioned from one gender to another. Understanding androgynous and transgender individuals who do not seek medical or surgical interventions poses a greater challenge. This issue is closely linked to our cultural beliefs about gender binary concepts and the definitions of masculinity and femininity. Being unintelligible as a gendered subject is seen as the ultimate act of transgression. Another superficial stereotype involves depicting transgender characters as emotionally unstable. Keegan (2013), examines how the "fictional transgender character has often been depicted as susceptible to or responsible for intense emotional states, either portrayed as the emotional focal point of a storyline...or as disturbed, unpredictable, or mentally unstable...or even as violently psychotic". Failing to establish a relatable connection with a character who is mentally unstable (or simply unlikable) will likely hinder the audience from developing a profound understanding of transgender experiences. McLaren (2018, p.17-20) argues that the stigma associated with transgressive portrayals poses several issues., such as when transgender is featured in newspaper articles or films, they frequently conform to the

stereotypes that have already been employed in previous movies or television programs. For this reason, we can affirm that fictional depictions have the potential to impact the real-life experiences of transgender individuals. Journalists and producers often depoliticize the transgressive potential of gender variants or transgender characters.

Sandercock (2015, p.175) contends that producers tend to "integrate trans characters with prevailing norms and make 'transgender' difference ultimately solvable, something that can be seamlessly integrated into heteronormative family and social structures." One way to achieve this is by depicting a smooth transition from one gender to another. Given that the trans body is framed as something 'problematic' and the solution is to fix it. As explored by Keegan (2013) "while transitional and non-conforming bodies may momentarily challenge the idea of static gendered categories, transgender representation can also be manipulated to reinforce these categories". Ultimately, the transgressive aspect of existing outside the gender binary is rectified. Keegan also contends that most mainstream portrayals "almost always conclude with a reinforcement of a binary gender system, serving as a form of narrative resolution". So, being pre-operative and transgender is portrayed as a condition requiring correction.

The theme of rectifying transness is intricately connected to both transnormativity and transgression, resulting from these concepts. The first aspect of "fixing transness" pertains to being the focus of attention or analysis. To be "fixed" suggests that transgender characters are objects or subjects to be observed or scrutinized. This can also serve an educational purpose by making transgender individuals more understandable to viewers. The second aspect relates to the belief that the transgender body requires correction. "Fixing" the transgender body entails altering it to align with one's gender identity. As proposed by Johnson (2016, p.468), the adherence to a medical model of transition emphasizes the discourse of being "born in the wrong body" and a narrative of discovering one's transgender identity. This "wrong body" discourse is influenced by the medical model, which views transgender individuals as needing medical or surgical intervention to rectify a "mistake of nature." This essentialist, symptom-based model of the transgender experience perpetuates the idea of transgender individuals being born in the wrong body and discourages alternative narratives that view gender identity as fluid, emerging, process-driven, or shaped by social norms and influences. Ultimately, the act of fixing transness reinforces a gender binary assumption, as it implies a clear departure from one gender and an arrival at another.

The act of fixing transgender bodies serves to uphold the gender binary. It's worth noting that the term "fixing" can be applied both in the sense of repairing something that is perceived as

"broken" and in the sense of immobilizing something to prevent change. Ultimately, transgender individuals and their portrayals are regulated to perpetuate the existence of this gender binary. Sloop (2000, p.169) highlights that "a transgendered person becomes a foil through which the presuppositions of contemporary culture's gender and sexual norms are reiterated and reaffirmed, where rituals and taboos work to ensure this". Transgender individuals are depicted in a manner that erases the intricate complexities of gender. Butler (1999, p.191) also underscores that the performance of gender functions to "sustain gender within its binary framework". A "transnormative" portrayal of transgender individuals does not deconstruct the broader "illusion of a fixed gendered self" but instead reinserts transgender individuals into a stable binary structure.

Linked to the concept of 'fixing' there is the idea that surgery is viewed as a remedy for the disconnect between one's physical body and their gender identity. Surgical procedures for transgender individuals are frequently regarded as an essential component of their transition process. This also negates the identities of those who opt not to undergo surgical procedures. Surgery is often perceived as the final and crucial stage in the transgender journey. According to Siebler (2012, p. 76), the stereotyped representations of transgender individuals who have had surgery and take hormones lead us to internalize the notion that these steps are necessary to "fit the mold of a content transqueer," which implies conforming to the ideals of being a hyper-masculine male or an ultra-feminine female. Throughout history, most transgender portrayals have featured characters who either aspire to or have already completed some form of medical transition. Representations of individuals in the midst of their transition are exceedingly rare. Ultimately, surgery allows transgender individuals to feel as though they can conform to the ideals of a hyper-masculine man or an ultra-feminine woman. The desire to align with one end of the gender binary or the other through surgical means is a manifestation of the societal pressures related to the performance of gender. Drawing upon Foucault's ideas, Butler (1999, p. 25) argues that the "category of sex... is a product of a diffuse regulatory system of sexuality". For transgender individuals, undergoing surgery is a component of the regulatory system governing gender, as certain body parts and characteristics are deemed either masculine or feminine. The transnormative aspects of sexual reassignment surgery impose a sense of conformity on transgender individuals, compelling them to alter their bodies to align with a normative gender framework.

1.5 The "crystal ceiling" and "symbolic annihilation"

A recurring theme found in the literature is the absence of depth or intricacy in either the transgender characters or the narratives, which tend to be overly simplistic and stereotypical. Furthermore, these representations tend to oversimplify sexuality and gender, ultimately reinforcing conventional notions of gender presentation that are heterosexual and cisgender in nature. The concept is often closely related to the issue of underrepresentation of certain groups of people, that is called the "Glass Ceiling" as Krijnen and Van Bauwel (2015, p. 105-120) explain. This term is commonly used to explain gender segregation in media productions and is used to give meaning to the gender gap between male and female (Krijnen T., Van Bauwel S., 2015, p. 105-120). The disparity manifested in the glass ceiling often represents a gender or ethnic inequality in reaching positions of power in terms of career. The reason why it's called a glass ceiling lies in its invisibility: it is a transparent material that is not perceived unless you bump against it. It's not something that isn't there, but something that appears to not be there. Similarly, some groups are treated this way by the media industry: they are there, present in the world, but being underrepresented or not represented, they seem not to exist. However, when the glass ceiling is broken, referring to the realm of gender discrimination, we often witness a phenomenon of sexualization of the subjects. "While homosexuality is much more present in advertisements than ten years ago, it is denoted by specific and sexualized codes" (Gill, 2007, p.103): the representation of gay masculinity often involves the portrayal of heightened sexuality, and the inclusion of queer elements introduces a seductive and daring aspect, all this aimed at an audience heterosexual male consumer. Hence, representations are integral to a larger framework that necessitates comprehension within historical and cultural parameters. This framework comprises the creation of media texts on one hand and their reception by the audience on the other. Due to the absence of direct interaction with the audience, a product's content cannot foretell the interpretations it will receive. Frequently, media representations adhere to predetermined and rigid patterns for portraying transgender, to the extent that an entire population can be marginalized in these representations through omission or neglect of their perspectives. In our information-saturated culture, this "lack of attention" inevitably means silencing or, as described by some scholars, a symbolic "annihilation" that can, in turn, result from a stereotypical and limited representation of transgender and other minorities. This type of representation equates to relegating the different, to an "exotic" subject, or even as deviant and abnormal (Fürsich E., 2010, p. 121-122). The responsibility for this approach is closely

linked to the role of the broadcaster and often the journalist: the power to represent the other always lies with the production team (those holding the microphone, pen, or camera).

Some strategies that have been implemented in recent years to reduce the control of journalists and producers in conveying a message include "trans-coding" (Hall, 1997, p. 13-17), which is the practice of taking a subject to which a shared meaning is attributed and "repositioning" it according to a different code of meaning. There is also the attempt to make some news more "personal" and subjective and to open up to an external perspective to generate new ideas and approaches. However, there cannot be a journalist who is entirely objective in their perspective, completely free from preconceptions and external influences since representations are always developed within a hegemonic cultural system. Simon Cottle in 2007 proposed strengthening and recognizing a more politically productive representation of traditional journalism. Cottle describes five procedures to address the issue of annihilating the representation of what appears to be different: firstly, the journalist can become the "champion of Others" (Fürsich E., 2010, p. 125) by giving them a voice and establishing ways of representing the Other or expanding the public debate on controversial issues, Secondly, the journalist can intervene more actively as a public interlocutor by opposing political decisions and thus working in a more democratic exchange. Thirdly, it is important to support programs that allow those who have been "silenced" to tell their own story and version of events, thereby helping marginalized groups gain "media recognition". Fourthly, it is important to broadcast events that deviate from the predominant culture to inform the public about the history and different lines of thought of community groups different from their own. Lastly, it is important to humanize the other and work empathetically to break stereotypes and reposition different identities as active subjects, not just objects inserted into someone else's discourse (Cottle, 2007, p. 35)

1.6 The Bathroom Problem

The 'bathroom problem' concerning transgender individuals can be broadly defined as the dilemma surrounding which restroom to use and the potential consequences that result from these choices. For instance, if a pre-operative transgender person, who may not completely appear as their chosen gender identity, opts to use the restroom corresponding to their gender identity, they may encounter harassment. As Sandercock (2015, p. 445 in Mc Laren, 2018) asserts, "the act of using public bathrooms is highly political for gender minorities". In this

context, a trans individual is perceived as a victim and is segregated, thereby subtly promoting a hierarchy of legitimacy and acceptance in which heterosexual and gender-conforming cis men and women acquire privileges. Their spatial concerns and freedoms are privileged, while the concerns and positions of others are marginalized. The bathroom problem is frequently depicted in transgender representation as it reflects a facet of everyday life. This predicament is further complicated by the decisions regarding surgery and/or hormone replacement therapy made by transgender individuals.

All this is linked with the perception of deception toward transgender. In popular culture, individuals who are transgender and successfully blend into society are often portrayed as engaging in deception. The concept of 'passing' pertains to transgender people who choose not to reveal their gender transitions to new friends or colleagues (Schilt, 2006, p. 15). Another term used for this phenomenon is 'going stealth.' As Schilt (2006, p. 15) argues, the term 'stealth' conveys notions of 'covert' and 'clandestine,' which are more aligned with the idea that gender transitions are part of a private history that may or may not be disclosed depending on the circumstances. For some, a person who appears to be male or female but does not possess the expected genitalia may be perceived as 'deceptive.' This topic will prove fundamental in the analysis of the discrimination Vladimir Luxuria faced during her political office, as will be seen in the next chapters.

1.7 Victims of Violence

Transgender films, television shows, and articles frequently depict transgender as victims of violence. As highlighted by McInroy and Craig (2017 p. 606), viewers often perceive "LGBTQ young people in traditional media were depicted as weak, insecure, and bullied". Unfortunately, the strength and resilience of transgender characters are rarely portrayed in such media representations. Another form of violence is the complete omission or erasure of transgender individuals, which, in itself, constitutes an act of violence. McInroy and Craig's research discovered that identities such as bisexual and transgender were notably absent, with transgender men being particularly underrepresented. Moreover, when transgender individuals are represented, it has predominantly been transgender women. These transgender characters often become victims of various forms of violence, including physical, psychological, and sexual violence, as previously discussed by Sandercock (2015, p. 438). It's possible that violence is used as a warning to those who challenge or deviate from the gender

binary. Additionally, transgender individuals can be particularly vulnerable when it comes to their romantic relationships, facing harassment or rejection when pursuing individuals they are attracted to.

1.8 To Sum Up

In conclusion, it is possible to state that a recurring theme is that transgender representation continues to be characterized by stereotypes, oversimplification, and a prevalence of negative narratives. Some of the negative themes explored in the literature encompass the portrayal of violence against transgender individuals, the compulsion to disclose or unveil, and the suppression of transgressive possibilities (McLaren, 2018, p.17-49). In addition, it has been highlighted that this negative attitude toward transgender people is due to the binary normative gender system that characterizes Western countries and how, admitting the very existence of transgender people, might imply breaking this socially imposed pattern (Butler, 1999, p. 22). The prevailing “transnormative” motif in most transgender representation underscores the adherence to a medical paradigm that regards surgical intervention as essential for rectifying transness. The narrative of feeling "born in the wrong body" contributes to an idealized perception of transgender experiences. When this narrative becomes dominant in public discourse, it can present obstacles for individuals with varied gender identities or experiences, making it more challenging for them to achieve equitable representation or societal acknowledgment. Beyond all that, we saw how transgender people are seen by cisgender as “deceptive”, a perception strongly conveyed by the media itself, which in turn becomes a reason for discrimination and stereotyping, as the reality of transgender individuals is not fully understood, but sometimes regarded as unnatural and non-conforming.

As mentioned, some strategies employed in recent years to reduce journalists' and producers' control in conveying a message include "transcoding" (Hall, 1997, p. 13-17). We will see how the world of Italian journalism is based on certain codes of ethics that regulate the work of journalists, as well as the ethical codes of the newspapers themselves. There is also an attempt to make some news more "personal" and subjective and to open up to an external perspective to generate new ideas and approaches. However, there cannot be a journalist who is completely objective in their perspective, entirely free from biases and external influences, as representations always develop within a hegemonic cultural system. As Padovani et al.

(2021, 327) will explain, Italian journalists can be both a source and a vehicle of discrimination because the information they write in articles is influenced by their own perspectives and personal experiences, as well as the professional context. Furthermore, the accuracy and transparency of news sources depend on the journalists' choices, as they are the ones responsible for the accuracy of the information on which they base their articles.

This research holds significant importance because the gender binary is an oppressive construct that impacts society as a whole. By delving into the mechanisms by which transgender individuals are monitored and depicted in media, we can initiate the process of challenging and dismantling this oppressive system. This thesis will highlight, especially in the analysis of newspaper articles about two leading transgender figures in politics, namely Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano, this gender discrepancy and how or if the media conveys a sense of discrimination toward transgender people. In addition, it will be analysed whether with time from the perspective of language and representation, the situation for transgender people, especially political candidates, has improved.

Chapter 2: Reporting Transgender Politicians

2.1 Discriminatory Representation

Nowadays media is pervasive in our society. Therefore, media plays a pivotal role in disseminating information. The manner in which various groups are portrayed in media can serve as a mirror reflecting society's perceptions, which may, at times, be laden with stereotypes. The study that will be carried out in this thesis will show how in fact the media influences this perception and how it is the source of a negative and myopic view of transgender people, especially by analysing them mainly from the perspective of political candidates. In support of this, a number of studies on the subject will be presented and will highlight how everything said so far is part of the concrete reality of our society today.

The transgender community frequently encounters misrepresentation in media. Collectively, transgender individuals confront substantial prejudice within contemporary society, and the current portrayal of transgender individuals in media possesses the potential to perpetuate detrimental stereotypes (Jobe, 2013, p. 6). In most films, TV series, and newspaper articles, it's evident that transgender individuals are often depicted in a humorous manner, trivializing their challenges and perpetuating widespread misconceptions and negative stereotypes about being transgender. Media platforms frequently fail to exercise responsibility in portraying the transgender community accurately. There is a pressing need for society to demand greater accountability from the media regarding the content it disseminates. As Jobe (2013, p. 6) explain equally significant is society's responsibility to critically assess the information it chooses to embrace.

Jobe (2013, p 7) explain that television shows and movies are just one facet of the media landscape continually inundating our senses. Newspapers, magazines, the internet, and books also contribute to this media saturation. However, it's essential to recognize that not all media, even those intended for educational purposes, necessarily impart accurate and unbiased information. Many forms of media feature fictional characters placed in real-life settings, and consumers often overlook the fact that writers, producers, and actors don't always represent real-world scenarios faithfully. When consumers base their expectations on what they observe on television or encounter in books, they may unintentionally form misconceptions about different cultures or environments. These false assumptions can morph into prejudices when reinforced frequently and, ultimately, lead to discriminatory attitudes. This harmful cycle perpetuates and amplifies these prejudices, as they are continually

portrayed and reproduced in the media. In this context, media both serves as an educator and a mirror reflecting our society's beliefs, whether or not these portrayals and beliefs align with reality. Given the profound integration of media into our lives and its considerable influence on our beliefs, it becomes crucial for informed viewers to ensure that the information and narratives presented are anchored in ethical principles and do not inadvertently contribute to the cultivation of prejudice and discrimination. Jobe (2013, p. 7-8) explain that the most effective means of countering media-induced prejudices is through comprehensive education. When the media attempts to depict a culture or situation that demands a deeper understanding than the general population possesses, it creates a challenge. However, a more subtle and pervasive consequence of unrealistic portrayals in the media is the misrepresentation of diverse communities.

For instance, the transgender community grapples with discrimination across various facets of life, including the medical, legal, workplace, and social spheres. Unfortunately, these struggles are often mirrored in the inaccurate portrayal of transgender characters and individuals in the media. All too frequently, the act of putting characters in drag is used for comedic effect. Additionally, the intricate and arduous process of gender transition, which is both emotionally and financially taxing, is oversimplified, often reduced to a single day of surgery. However, the sole distinction that should distinguish a transgender person from a cisgender person is the alignment between their physical sex and their gender identity, as well as how they may choose to address any incongruities. It's important to note that many cisgender individuals may have never had the opportunity to meet or interact with a transgender person (Jobe, 2013, p. 8). Consequently, they may lack a fundamental understanding of what it truly means to be transgender. In fact, a significant portion of the population mistakenly conflates being transgender with being homosexual, despite the fact that gender identity and sexual orientation are entirely distinct concepts. Unfortunately, it is these individuals who often develop misconceptions and prejudices against the transgender community, largely shaped by inaccurate portrayals in the media.

According to the above, the next chapters will display some researches showing how the media influences the perceptions of individuals, both in everyday life and at the political view, showing that transgender people also experience discrimination as person and as political candidates. The first research is called "*Media's Influence on Perceptions of Trans Women*", of Haley E. Solomon & Beth Kurtz-Costes (2017) in which we will see a study of discrimination perpetrated against transgender people, with a special focus on trans women,

through the media and how media reinforce a negative opinion when it becomes a vehicle for stereotyping and disinformation.

In the second study called “*Writing in the Margins: Mainstream News Media Representations of Transgenderism*”, by Thomas J. Billard (2016), transgender discrimination will be analysed primarily through the writing of newspaper articles. This study is important for the research of this thesis because in chapter four, Italian newspaper articles will be analysed precisely with respect to two Italian transgender political figures namely Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano. The last research study “*Explaining public opinion toward transgender people, rights, and candidates*” by Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe and Hoffman (2018), instead, will show how people discriminate transgender political candidates, either because influenced by the distorted view of the media or because of people's own values.

2.2 Media Influence

In the article “*Media’s Influence on Perceptions of Trans Women*”, Haley E. Solomon & Beth Kurtz-Costes (2017, p. 35) report that between 2008 and 2014, a tragic total of 1,731 transgender individuals were documented as victims of homicide on a global scale. The emotional and psychological toll of such discrimination places a significant number of transgender individuals at heightened risk for conditions like depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. This risk is further exacerbated when they directly experience acts of violence or harm. All this is due to prejudices. Among a survey of Canadian college students, one of the most prevalent stereotypes regarding transgender women was the perception that they suffer from mental illness or confusion. So, being a transgender is perceived as mental disorder. Study participants also commonly used the gender assigned at birth when referring to transgender individuals, implying that participants regarded trans men as women and trans women as men. This stereotype, wherein trans women are seen as men, has been identified as a contributing factor to violence against trans women, as evidenced in various legal cases.

Solomon and Kurtz-Costes (2017) also explain that certain demographic groups are more prone to exhibiting transphobic attitudes than others. Numerous studies have consistently shown that men tend to display higher levels of transphobia compared to women. Additionally, these studies have revealed that men tend to report higher instances of hostile sexism than women, with a positive correlation between hostile sexism and transphobia. Researchers have proposed that cisgender men may be less inclined than cisgender women to

accept or tolerate gender ambiguity or what they perceive as a feminization of men within the transgender female identity. This resistance is rooted in their concerns about potential threats to the stability of their own gender identity and sexuality. In contrast, women typically do not perceive trans women as posing a threat to their own sense of gender identity.

Solomon and Kurtz-Costes (2017, p. 35) affirm that the link between religiosity and unfavourable attitudes toward homosexuality is extensively documented, and there could be analogous religious-based motivations behind negative attitudes toward transgender individuals. Individuals who adhere strongly to religious beliefs, particularly within fundamentalist traditions, might harbour prejudiced views due to specific doctrinal teachings against homosexuality and behaviours that deviate from traditional gender norms. Consequently, they may exhibit intolerance towards individuals displaying gender nonconforming behaviour and engaging in same-gender sexual relationships. Those who highly prioritize their religious beliefs are more inclined to feel justified in expressing homophobia. While there has been relatively less research examining the connection between religiosity and transphobia compared to religiosity and homophobia, these doctrinal attitudes and value systems could similarly extend to attitudes toward transgender individuals, as indicated in some studies.

Solomon and Kurtz-Costes (2017, p.35) also state, regarding the political view, that there are differences in attitudes toward transgender individuals that might also be associated with political ideology. Political conservatives frequently prioritize tradition, strict adherence to established rules, and clear-cut categorical distinctions, including traditional gender norms. Consequently, they might perceive transgender individuals as violating these norms to a greater degree than gay and lesbian individuals. Furthermore, conservatives might exhibit lower tolerance for transgender individuals because the awareness of and advocacy for the transgender community are relatively recent developments, and conservatives typically exhibit a slower acceptance of social change compared to individuals who hold moderate or liberal political views.

Furthermore, the authors (2017, p.36) explain that while transphobia can unfortunately be present within lesbian and gay communities, it is worth noting that cisgender lesbian women and gay men tend to exhibit higher levels of tolerance toward transgender individuals compared to heterosexual individuals. Cisgender lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals belong to a shared community of sexual minorities, and LGB communities are increasingly engaging with and embracing transgender communities in both social and activist contexts. Moreover, many LGB individuals themselves express various degrees of

actual or perceived gender variance. Because of this shared experience related to gender nonconformity, cisgender LGB individuals are generally more inclined to be accepting and understanding of transgender individuals compared to their heterosexual counterparts.

Solomon and Kurtz-Costes (2017, p. 36) clarify that while some personality traits and personal belief systems can indeed predict attitudes toward transgender individuals, it's important to recognize that social psychology research has a long history of indicating that negative attitudes can emerge based purely on social identities. In this context, cisgender individuals may harbour unfavourable evaluations of transgender individuals due to distinctions between ingroups and outgroups. People often exhibit positive bias toward those who belong to the same social groups as themselves while forming negative beliefs and attitudes about individuals from different groups. These ingroup biases against outgroup members frequently persist unless there is some form of social intervention. In an educational setting, for instance, it has been found that conducting a live question and answer session with a panel of transgender individuals is more effective in reducing transphobia compared to a conventional lecture on transgender issues.

Solomon and Kurtz-Costes (2017, p. 36) also talk about virtual and vicarious intergroup contact. They state that while intergroup contact has proven effective in reducing prejudice, the practicality of direct contact with transgender individuals on a large scale is often limited. Transgender individuals frequently encounter unwelcome or exclusionary environments where intergroup contact could potentially occur. Similar challenges have emerged in the examination of prejudice against other minority groups, prompting researchers to propose virtual alternatives to intergroup contact. The authors suggest that the absence of attitude change following interventions might be attributed to the fact that individuals' opinions of gay men are deeply ingrained and relatively resistant to change. In other words, these opinions are well-established and not easily altered, making it less likely for imagined intergroup contact to have an impact when participants already possess strong and unyielding views about the outgroup. Scholars have suggested the concept of "vicarious intergroup contact" as an attainable method for facilitating interactions between individuals from different social groups, especially for those who have limited chances for direct contact with outgroup members. This form of intergroup contact involves participants witnessing positive interactions between members of their own group and members of another group, typically through pre-recorded video footage.

Linked to the vicarious intergroup contact is the parasocial contact. Mazziotta (2011, p. 255) employed vicarious intergroup contact by utilizing video footage featuring two actors

engaging in scripted interactions on the screen. He affirms that many people consume media with the desire to immerse themselves in an alternate reality through the perspective of fictional characters, and these individuals often establish empathetic connections with the characters they follow. Kanazawa (2002, p.167-168) suggested that individuals tend to perceive fictional characters much like they do real people. Consequently, watching a television character onscreen can trigger similar psychological effects as if the viewer had interacted with the character personally. In certain instances, viewers can develop such intense feelings of closeness and fondness for a character that it begins to influence their attitudes toward the social groups to which the character belongs (Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes, 2005, p. 93). This phenomenon is referred to as parasocial contact. The theory of parasocial contact posits that because individuals perceive watching media characters akin to real personal interactions, viewing a positive portrayal of a character from an outgroup can be just as effective as real intergroup contact in reducing prejudice towards that outgroup among viewers. Parasocial contact has proven effective in diminishing prejudice against racial and sexual minorities. Viewers of television programs featuring at least one gay character displayed a significant increase in their support for gay equality. Numerous studies have lent support to parasocial contact theory as an efficient approach to mitigating prejudice against outgroup members, especially among individuals who have limited real-life interactions with such outgroups. These findings hold significance as films and television shows have broad accessibility, making them influential mediums that can reach a wide and diverse audience.

Talking about negative media representation of trans women Solomon and Kurtz-Costes (2017, p.37) in their research convey that while media can serve as a potent and accessible tool for fostering parasocial contact and diminishing prejudice against specific outgroups, it's important to note that not all media portrayals yield positive effects. Negative or stereotypical depictions of minority characters can actually reinforce viewers' negative biases and attitudes. Clark (1969, p.18-22) delineated four stages in the representation of minority groups in media. In the non-recognition stage, these groups are entirely absent from media representation. In the ridicule stage, they are portrayed in manners that provoke mockery and derision from audiences. In the regulation stage, minority characters are depicted in ways that conform to majority norms. It is only in the final respect stage that minorities are fully and equitably represented, standing as equals alongside majority characters.

Until recently, media depictions of trans women have predominantly aimed to mock and perpetuate damaging stereotypes about them. While more recent portrayals of trans women have become somewhat more compassionate, there remains a risk of these representations

reinforcing negative notions. The recent surge in trans rights activism, while fostering greater public awareness and endorsement, has also triggered social and political opposition. Consequently, it is crucial to scrutinize how media can impact public perceptions of trans women and other sexual and gender minorities.

From this theoretical premise arise the two studies conducted by Solomon and Kurtz-Costes (2017, p. 38-39) in which they posited that individuals who watch positive portrayals of fictional trans women in movies or TV shows may establish parasocial connections with these characters, leading to reduced prejudice against trans women as a whole. In contrast, they anticipated that negative portrayals of fictional trans women would exacerbate viewers' negative biases against trans women. So, they evaluated changes in attitudes following exposure to media representations of trans women, and their results confirm the power of fiction media in leading to attitude change.

The results of their studies showed that given the social stigma surrounding trans women, it may require prolonged and repeated exposure to positive fictional portrayals of trans women to establish parasocial contact effects. Schiappa et al. (2005, p. 109) suggest that exposure to diverse representations of outgroup members is more likely to generate parasocial contact than exposure to similar outgroup members. Conversely, consistent media exposure to negative representations of trans women led to more negative attitudes in both studies. These findings underscore the capacity of even brief media exposure to foster negative perceptions of outgroup members.

Zillman's exemplification theory (2002, p. 19-21) posits that audiences tend to generalize evocative representations of outgroup members to the entire outgroup more readily than they do with less emotionally charged, nuanced, or abstract representations. The authors' results align with Zillman's theory, as participants were more inclined to generalize dramatically negative behaviours and traits to trans people in general, compared to the less emotionally stimulating positive behaviours and traits depicted in the positive condition. This suggests that short media interventions are more likely to induce attitude change when the depictions are negative than when they are positive.

Solomon and Kurtz-Costes (2017, p. 44-45) initially hypothesized that these problematic portrayals of transgender might produce negative attitude change due to the casting choice, perpetuating the stereotype that trans women are not "real" women or vice versa. However, it's possible that the actor's gender alone doesn't determine the character's influence on viewers' attitudes. In media designed to promote trans awareness and equality, a cisgender man might assume a trans role for specific narrative reasons, such as portraying a pre-

transition or non-medically treated character. Therefore, if these portrayals indeed have negative effects on viewers' attitudes toward trans women, these effects may be more nuanced.

To conclude their articles, the authors explain that psychological studies have consistently underscored the potent role of media in moulding attitudes toward specific groups, and various media forms are becoming ever more prominent in our society. Media's impact is particularly pronounced when it comes to shaping our perspectives of marginalized minority groups that grapple with discrimination rooted in prevailing stereotypes and bias. While it's important to acknowledge that media alone won't comprehensively address the multitude of challenges faced by trans women, their findings suggest that media can wield considerable influence, either in support of or in opposition to this community.

2.3 Writing in the Margins

A second study, by Thomas J Billard (2016), called "*Writing in the Margins: Mainstream News Media Representations of Transgenderism*", proved relevant for the analyses that will be present in Chapter 4.

Billard (2016, p. 1-2) explains that his research delves into the portrayals of transgender individuals and the concept of transgender identity as presented in widely circulated newspapers. The primary objective is to gauge the degree to which news media contributes to either validating or discrediting the transgender community. Billard (2016, p.2) explain that transphobia is deeply ingrained in global culture, a culture that both shapes and is shaped by media. This creates a troubling cycle of ignorance and prejudice directed at transgender individuals, a cycle that is mirrored in how the media portrays them, how society perceives them, and the policies that govern transgender issues. In addition, he explains that studies focused on transgender discrimination as far as the paper's media source is concerned are very few indeed. Indeed, the study being developed through this thesis is aimed at thickening the ranks in this area.

Billard (2016, p.3) argues that news media holds a central role in the political arena, functioning as the primary force that legitimizes communities and their concerns. Extensive research has demonstrated the pivotal role of news coverage in shaping the perceived legitimacy and political viability of various groups and issues.

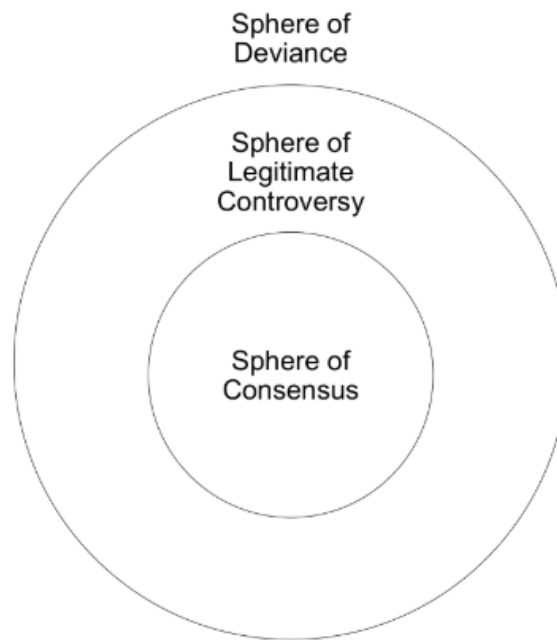


Figure 2.1: Hallin's Model

Hallin (1986), initially proposed a model (*Figure 2.1*) consisting of three concentric spheres within news media coverage, each influencing the perceived legitimacy of an issue or a group. The innermost sphere, known as the "Sphere of Consensus," is surrounded by the "Sphere of Legitimate Controversy," which, in turn, is enclosed within the "Sphere of Deviance." These spheres are governed by distinct reporting norms. The Sphere of Legitimate Controversy is characterized as the only realm where objectivity prevails. Journalists operating within the Spheres of Deviance and Consensus are not expected to adhere to objectivity; instead, they are tasked with either ignoring or condemning deviant subjects while supporting the consensus. In the intermediate Sphere of Legitimate Controversy, authorized parties can engage in discussions about validated topics and receive impartial news coverage. In addition, Taylor (2014, p- 1-18) has shown that the projected legitimacy of groups varies over time as the political climate changes, and equal to this, changes in the lexical choices journalists make in their articles are observable.

Billard (2016, p.3) explain that another way in which groups and issues are marginalized is by being rendered invisible, as news media may choose not to cover them. This phenomenon, referred to as "symbolic annihilation" by Gerbner and Gross (1976, p.182), involves the deliberate omission of individuals or topics on the fringes of political hierarchies and social acceptance. It is a means by which these groups are kept marginalized, in part, through neglect and lack of representation. While "symbolic annihilation" of transgender individuals

is gradually diminishing, there remains a question about the language employed in early news coverage and whether it contributes to delegitimization.

Billard (2016, p.3-4), by analysing other studies concerning this issue, was also able to outline five distinct patterns that play a role in delegitimizing transgender individuals and their concerns.

In the first place misnaming and misgendering: previous studies have highlighted numerous cases in which news media incorrectly referred to transgender individuals using the wrong names and gender pronouns, intentionally or unintentionally. This practice, limits the ability of transgender individuals to assert themselves and diminishes the legitimacy of their self-identifications. Secondly, misrepresentations of transgender identity, that include instances where transgender womanhood is equated with drag performances and transvestitism. Another common misrepresentation is the use of the "wrong body discourse," which defines transgender identity as being "born in the wrong body." This restrictive portrayal limits the understanding of transgender identities, primarily focusing on postoperative transsexualism. All this is sometimes linked to the idea that behind it there is a trauma reaction against a sexual abuse as a child. Fourth, use of the transgender "trickster" stereotype, which is linked with the idea expressed in the first chapter of transgender seen as deceiving. Lastly, the sexualization of the transgender body, primarily through focus on sexual organs as the source of gender identity, and also through the hypertextualization of the transgender body.

Billard (2016, p.5) also explain nine legitimacy indicators that he used in his research, such as:

- naming, indicating whether an author or speaker uses a transgender individual's birth name (delegitimizing) instead of their preferred and chosen name (legitimizing);
- pronoun usage, that indicates whether an author or speaker uses the pronouns assigned at birth (delegitimizing) or the preferred pronouns of a transgender individual (legitimizing);
- past tense references, indicating whether an author or speaker accurately portrays a transgender individual's past by either explicitly stating the person's previous gender (delegitimizing) or by referring to them by their self-identified gender (legitimizing);

- application of terms, that indicates whether an author or speaker correctly uses terms like "transgender" or "transsexual" (legitimizing) or uses them incorrectly (delegitimizing);
- characterizations of transgenderism, indicating whether an author or speaker misrepresents transgenderism (delegitimizing) in various ways, such as grouping transgender men with women or transgender women with men, equating transgenderism with drag, cross-dressing, or transvestitism, or describing transgenderism as a choice, lifestyle, or disease, among others;
- slurs and name-calling, that indicates whether an author/speaker refers to a transgender person by calling him or her "trans," "male," or by other transphobic terms; whether he or she equates transgenderism with sexual perversion, addiction, etc.; or whether he or she calls a transgender person by a name he or she intends to offend, e.g., "Mr. Mom," etc.;
- defamation, that indicates whether an author or speaker implies a transgender individual has a criminal or unethical history without any basis or supporting evidence, or when such information is entirely unrelated to the story (delegitimizing);
- shock tactics, indicating whether an author or speaker employs a transgender individual's gender identity as a sensational or attention-grabbing tactic (delegitimizing). This category specifically refers to instances where the author tries to startle the audience by introducing a person and then revealing their gender identity as if it were a surprising twist;
- genital focus/sexualization, that indicates whether an author or speaker directs the conversation about a transgender individual toward their genitalia or portrays the individual as a sexual object (delegitimizing).

All these parameters of legitimization will be used in the analysis of newspaper articles that will be done in chapter four, showing in effect how much newspapers are and have been vehicles of discrimination.

Billard (2016, p. 13-15) with his research was able to prove that there is a significant gap in transgender media representation research by conducting the first comprehensive empirical analysis of news media content, spanning various news sources and story types and conducted over a significant period. The majority of the articles analysed from him showed that the legitimacy indicator of naming was present, followed by the use of their pronouns assigned at birth. Anyway, also the use of their preferred pronouns was very frequent. In fact, the usage of pronouns was most often delegitimizing in political articles and opinion editorial. In half of the articles, there was a tendency in using the pre-transition name.

Nevertheless, as Billard (2016, p. 15) affirm, all the tendencies showed above are decreasing over time, and we will see this phenomenon also in the analysis conducted in chapter three. In fact, the other remaining indicator of legitimacy, obviously in the delegitimization form, were very low in all the articles and constantly decreasing over time.

During the study's duration, news coverage predominantly centred around transgender women, with minimal attention given to non-binary transgender individuals. This aligns with findings from previous research that reached similar conclusions. Similarly, the significant underrepresentation of transgender men compared to transgender women underscores a hierarchy of importance within world culture. It suggests that media, including both mainstream and queer media, has a historical tendency to focus on discussions related to transgender women, as also explained in the first research "*Media's Influence on Perceptions of Trans Women*". This phenomenon may be attributed to the observations made by Schilt and Westbrook (2009, p. 443-445), who argued that the enforcement of gender and sexual identity is inherently gender-biased. Transgender women are more frequently subjected to societal punishment for challenging gender expectations, which are primarily centred around masculinity, compared to transgender men who transgress societal expectations of femininity. However, it's important to note that the greater media coverage of transgender women does not necessarily work in their favour. In the analysed sample, transgender women are more frequently misrepresented and become targets of particularly egregious forms of delegitimizing language, including derogatory language, defamation, and sexual objectification. Furthermore, in this study it was shown that the vividness of delegitimizing representations, characterized by their ability to evoke strong emotions and vivid mental imagery, is likely to be more readily accessible. So, it's easier to be influenced by a type of information that remains most intensely etched in memory. Also, as a matter of fact, human beings are more influenced by negative news, which sticks in the memory much more than positive news.

Nonetheless, the results showed in Billard's study confirms the concerns raised by transgender activists and scholars who have critiqued news media for their portrayal of transgender issues. It is evident that such criticisms have a valid basis, although there is a general trend of reduced use of delegitimizing language in news media content and these changes have not kept pace with the alterations made to the Associated Press (AP) Style Guide's guidelines for reporting on the transgender community back in 2006.

2.4 Public Opinion Toward Transgender Candidates

In the study by Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe and Hoffman (2018), called "*Explaining public opinion toward transgender people, rights, and candidates*" the perceptions related to the individual attributes of transgender individuals are explored, and several aspects of transgender rights are highlighted, also in relation to the candidacy of transgender individuals to public office.

The authors explain that in recent times, there has been a growing focus on transgender individuals in both popular culture and political discourse, accompanied by a wave of criticism and stereotyping of transgender people that suggest a widespread dislike of trans people. However, this is not really the case, as there are many supporters of transgender rights. Feelings toward transgender individuals and backing for their rights frequently align with values such as equality, moral traditionalism, conservatism, religiosity, and the extent of contact with LGBT individual. Indeed, previous studies indicate public support for transgender rights.

Norton and Herek (2013, p.738-740) discovered that survey participants who held binary views of gender, displayed higher levels of authoritarianism, held fewer egalitarian attitudes, embraced more conservative ideologies, and had stronger religious beliefs tended to rate transgender individuals less favourably on feeling thermometers. Similarly, Flores (2018, p.201) reported that moral traditionalism, political partisanship, as well as mere exposure to images of transgender people, influenced transphobia and discomfort with gender nonconformity.

Other studies have focused on predicting support for laws safeguarding transgender rights. Flores (2015, p. 400-401), found that gender and interpersonal contact with gays and lesbians (though not with transgender individuals) significantly predicted support for antidiscrimination laws. Moreover, he demonstrated that respondents who believed they were

well-informed about transgender issues were more supportive of such protections. Other research corroborates these findings and indicates that core values such as authoritarianism, ideology, partisan affiliation, and personality traits like disgust sensitivity are also significant predictors.

Haider-Markel (2017, p. 404) conducted a study in which respondents were asked to evaluate their likelihood of voting for a transgender candidate who shared their views on most issues. Interestingly, a majority of voters expressed that they would probably or definitely vote for such a candidate, with liberals, Democrats, and those with lower religious adherence being the most likely to offer their support. This self-reported support contradicts previous research that has documented significant opposition to politicians belonging to other marginalized groups. For instance, both experimental studies (Herrick and Thomas 1999, p. 170-191; Golebiowska 2001, p. 535–565) and observational research (Haider-Markel, 2010) have revealed negative reactions to lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) candidates.

Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018) explain that given these findings, coupled with the electoral losses experienced by transgender candidates in recent years, one might initially anticipate greater opposition to transgender candidates than what respondents themselves reported. However, considering previous research showing that personal values and partisan affiliations influence support for LGB candidates in much the same way as they do for LGB rights, it is also reasonable to expect that these predispositions might moderate opposition toward transgender candidates.

Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018, p.260) also talk about interpersonal contact, as it is explained in the previous paragraph. They agree that positive interactions with individuals from an outgroup have been shown to decrease prejudice against that particular group, and they found some examples in Floras' (2015) work in which, he did not identify any impact of contact on backing non-discrimination policies, while Flores (2018, p. 208-209) demonstrated that simply exposing participants to information and images of transgender individuals in a survey experiment reduced feelings of transphobia and discomfort with gender nonconformity.

Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018, p. 256-257) explain that at the bases of this non-transphobic or transphobic attitude there are some values, such as: egalitarianism and moral traditionalism, as well as overarching political orientations like political ideology and party affiliation, in addition to religiosity and support for LGB candidates. Prior researches have explored the impact of many of these values on shaping attitudes towards transgender individuals, such as, that of Norton and Herek (2013, p.749-750), which found

that anti-egalitarianism, conservatism, and religiosity were predictive of less favourable feelings towards transgender individuals. Based on this, the authors of "*Explaining public opinion toward transgender people, rights, and candidates*" posits the following hypotheses:

"Individuals with more egalitarian beliefs are likely to have more positive attitudes towards transgender people, their rights, and candidates. Conversely, those who are more religious and conservative are likely to hold less positive views regarding transgender individuals, their rights, and candidates. Additionally, individuals with more morally traditional beliefs are expected to hold less positive attitudes toward transgender people, rights, and candidates, while Democrats are anticipated to express more favourable views compared to Republicans" (Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman, 2018, p.256).

Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018, p. 257) also have deepened the concept of cognitive closure, associating to it the word "need". They add that personality traits play a role in influencing how individuals perceive and respond to various people and situations. The concept of a "need for cognitive closure" (NFCC) reflects an individual's inclination to impose definitive interpretations on situations and to have an aversion to ambiguity in information and experiences. Those with a high need for cognitive closure may find it challenging to navigate the inherent ambiguity associated with the idea of a gender identity that differs from the assigned sex at birth.

Taking that into account, they hypothesized that:

"Respondents high in NFCC will hold less positive views of transgender people, rights, and candidates" " (Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman, 2018, p. 257).

Referring to media exposure they affirm the same concept of the two previous researches, that is media can shape the perceptions of the viewers. They also mentioned the parasocial contact hypothesis, that was explained in the previous chapter. For this reason, they hypothesized that:

“Respondents with greater levels of overall television exposure will hold more positive views of transgender people, rights, and candidates” (Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman, 2018, p. 257).

and also

“Will news media exposure among respondents predict their views of transgender people, rights, and candidates?” (Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman, 2018, p.257).

Based then on the research previously explained in this and previous chapters, denoting opposition to transgender candidates, Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018, p. 258) hypothesized that:

“Respondents will express less support for transgender candidates than cisgender candidates” (Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman, 2018, p. 257).

The results of the authors study demonstrate that not all of their hypothesis were correct. About the supports for transgender right, they demonstrated that as expected from previous research findings, individuals who upheld egalitarian values tended to be supportive of transgender rights, while those with strong moral traditionalism and religiosity were less likely to support such policies. Party affiliation and political ideology also played crucial roles, with Republicans and conservatives expressing lower levels of support for policies protecting transgender individuals compared to Democrats and liberals, respectively. Strong Democrats were more supportive than strong Republicans, and very liberal individuals showed greater support compared to very conservative ones. Psychological characteristics were relevant as well, with individuals scoring lower on the NFCC scale being more likely to support transgender rights. Attitudes toward transgender people also significantly influenced support for their rights. Surprisingly, media consumption habits, including television viewing, were not associated with increased favourability toward transgender rights. Likewise, various forms of media consumption did not seem to impact these opinions.

Interestingly, personal contact with someone identifying as transgender did not predict support for policies benefiting this group. Instead, factors such as moral traditionalism,

egalitarianism, party affiliation, political ideology, religiosity, and the need for cognitive closure were significant predictors of support. Additionally, perceptions of transgender individuals strongly influenced one's stance on affording them rights (Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman, 2018, p. 260).

All this was linked to the question about the support for transgender candidate if he or she is in responded supported party, question that showed that when confronted with a scenario involving a transgender candidate from their own political party and a cisgender candidate from the opposing party, respondents exhibited distinct voting preferences. Notably, support for their own party candidate witnessed a substantial drop, plummeting from 68 percent to 37 percent (*Figure 2.2*).

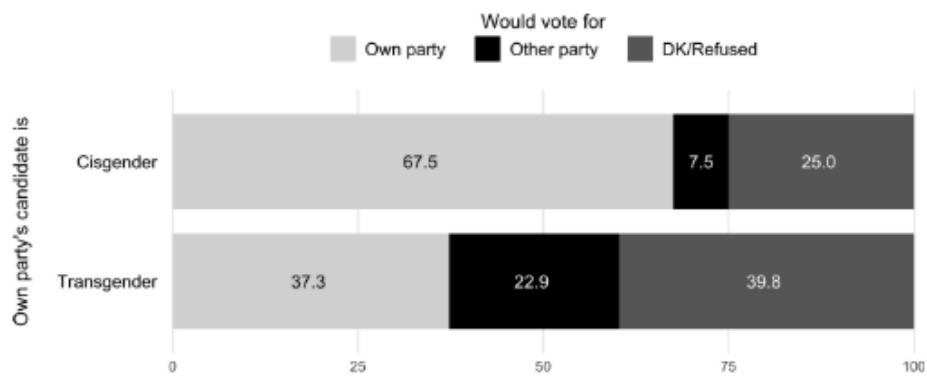


Figure 1.2: Reported vote choice

In contrast, backing for the candidate from the opposing party surged to nearly a quarter of the respondents. This marked a significant reluctance among voters to support transgender candidates, akin to the resistance observed towards candidates belonging to marginalized groups, a trend previously identified in prior research.

Interestingly, when voters were presented with a transgender candidate from their own political party, a notable proportion exhibited a tendency to either switch their allegiance to the opposing side or refrain from responding to the question altogether, rather than endorsing their usual party preference. Negative reactions to transgender candidates were prevalent across the political spectrum, spanning both Democratic and Republican voters. Irrespective of their political affiliation, respondents displayed a reduced likelihood of endorsing their own party's candidate when that candidate happened to be transgender.

Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018, p. 263-265) also affirm that across the entire spectrum of values for other moderating variables, respondents exhibited adverse

reactions when it came to supporting a transgender nominee from their own party in comparison to a cisgender nominee. In contrast to the initial hypotheses, individuals with egalitarian or non-egalitarian beliefs, those embracing traditional moral values or not, liberals and conservatives, those with a high or low need for closure, avid TV viewers and those who watched none - all displayed diminished support for a transgender candidate compared to a cisgender candidate.

In certain instances, values did seem to have a moderating effect on the resistance to transgender candidates as Jones and colleagues affirm. Respondents who identified as not religious at all were not notably less inclined to support a transgender nominee than those who were highly religious, although the highly religious were significantly less supportive. Thus, it can be concluded that religiosity did contribute to heightened opposition to transgender candidates. Additionally, individuals who had personal knowledge of a transgender person and those who held the most favourable views of transgender individuals were not notably less likely to endorse a transgender nominee when compared to a cisgender one. This hints at the possibility that the least religious, those with direct contact with transgender individuals, and those with positive perceptions of transgender people did not exhibit discrimination against transgender candidates. However, the expected moderating effects of other variables did not materialize as hypothesized.

So, Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018, p. 264) concludes their study explaining that the visibility of transgender individuals in the media and political discourse has significantly expanded in recent years. However, this heightened visibility hasn't uniformly translated into positive attitudes toward transgender individuals, their rights, or their candidacy in political positions. Their data indicate that a substantial portion of the public holds unfavourable views of transgender people, perceiving them as less trustworthy, happy, and morally upright compared to cisgender individuals. While there is majority support for transgender workplace protections, military service, and student safeguards, their results unveil a more divided public opinion regarding gender-neutral bathrooms. This divergence might be expected given the lower level of support for policies centred around physical attributes.

Furthermore, Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe, and Hoffman (2018, p. 270) experiment reveals a stronger opposition to transgender candidates than what is suggested by individuals' self-reported willingness to support such candidates. Broadly held values significantly contribute to explaining attitudes concerning specific groups and issues. Particularly, moral traditionalism is linked to negative perceptions of transgender individuals and opposition to

transgender rights, aligning with earlier studies that linked moral traditionalism with attitudes toward LGB rights. The other examined values (egalitarianism, religiosity, ideology, and party affiliation) exhibited expected relationships with support for transgender rights (though not necessarily with views of transgender individuals). As predicted, respondents who held more egalitarian, liberal, less religious, and more Democratic beliefs tended to express greater support for transgender rights.

Additionally, their findings support theories connecting the need for cognitive closure to political attitudes. Respondents with a high need for closure were less supportive of transgender rights, underscoring the political implications of seemingly non-political psychological traits. Conversely, there was no substantial evidence backing the interpersonal contact theory. Consistent with Flores (2015, p. 414-4-15), respondents who personally knew a transgender person did not display significantly more positive perceptions of transgender individuals or increased support for their rights. On the other hand, the authors results support parasocial contact theory. In line with the idea that favourable media portrayals can foster more positive attitudes toward marginalized groups, they observed a positive association media and views of transgender individuals. In essence, opinions regarding transgender individuals as a collective group are pivotal in understanding attitudes toward transgender rights. The more favourable a person's views of transgender individuals, the more likely they were to support protective policies for them. This aligns with research on support for LGB rights, suggesting that increasingly positive perceptions of transgender people could lead to greater support for transgender issues, particularly as media attention to transgender individuals continues to grow in a mostly sympathetic light.

Jones et al. (2018, p. 271-273) affirm that the notable resistance to transgender candidates, even among individuals who might be inclined to support them (such as Democrats, advocates of egalitarianism, and those with low levels of moral traditionalism), implies a potential disparity between public and private opinions regarding these issues. While values and psychological traits contributed to the understanding of attitudes concerning transgender individuals and rights, they proved to be less informative in explaining attitudes toward transgender candidates. The robust opposition to transgender politicians, as revealed in the authors' study, was often not mitigated by factors that we would anticipate having a moderating influence. There were indications that individuals with the lowest levels of religiosity, those who personally knew a transgender individual, and those with positive views of transgender people displayed less negative predisposition toward a transgender candidate. Nevertheless, what stands out is the lack of systematic variation in opposition

based on factors like egalitarianism, moral traditionalism, ideology, need for cognitive closure (NFCC), or media consumption. This suggests a profound resistance even among groups that one might assume would be more favourably disposed, underscoring the substantial challenges faced by transgender candidates in their pursuit of political positions.

Jones et al. (2018, p. 273) concluded explaining that the prevailing resistance to transgender candidates revealed by these findings indicates that any significant policy change in the near future is more likely to occur through the advocacy and support of sympathetic allies, rather than solely relying on the election of transgender politicians.

2.5 To Sum Up

In conclusion, from the studies analysed in this chapter, the media appear to be unethical in the portrayal of transgender people and collaborate in building a stereotypical and bias-filled view of these individuals, who if seemingly supported in their rights are inevitably less accepted even as political candidates (Jones et al., 2018, p. 273).

In the first research called “*Media’s Influence on Perceptions of Trans Women*”, of Solomon & Kurtz-Costes (2017) it has been highlighted how the media, through negative representations of transgender people affect the public's perception of observers or readers. Only prolonged exposure to news, articles, films etc. that are positive toward transgender people brings a significant increase in their positive perception, while short-term exposure does not greatly affect their perception. From this, we can infer that prolonged exposure to negative articles that propagate misinformation, discrimination, and stereotypes only serves to increase the negative sentiments that the population may harbour toward, in this case, transgender individuals. These negative perceptions, which are easily influenced and formed, require a substantial media effort consisting of positive elements to turn them into positive perceptions. From this derives that people are more susceptible to being influenced by negative news rather than positive news. Negative news tends to have a more significant impact on public memory and perception compared to positive news.

In the second study “*Writing in the Margins: Mainstream News Media Representations of Transgenderism*” by Thomas J. Billard (2016) it has been highlighted how, especially in newspaper articles from older time periods, there were phenomena of delegitimization through transgender language, and that this delegitimization seems to diminish with the passage of time and obviously with the greater attention that today's public pays to

transgender rights. These findings are relevant for the analysis of Italian newspaper articles in Chapter 4, as they foreshadow similar phenomena to those examined by Billard (2016). Furthermore, it will be interesting to understand the underlying factors contributing to this progressive improvement in language and semantics concerning transgender individuals, who are increasingly subject to less misinformation and discrimination in articles. However, as will be seen, their representation is not yet perfect.

In the last research “*Explaining public opinion toward transgender people, rights, and candidates*” by Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe and Hoffman (2018), resistance to and non-acceptance of transgender political candidates has been demonstrated not only in the more predictable individuals and political groups, such as conservatives, religious people etc., but also in individuals who are more inclined to the protection of transgender rights, demonstrating the difficulty of transgender people in successfully approaching a political career. This analysis is essential to highlight how preconceptions and stereotypes about transgender individuals, in this case focusing on newspapers, are rooted in cultural, political, religious, and value-based influences. It will be evident how the writing of a newspaper article, particularly the information upon which it relies, is influenced by the journalist's professional and experiential cultural background, as well as the political influences that underlie the journalistic outlets themselves.

In conclusion, media often exploit transgender individuals for sensationalism and higher ratings, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and diminishing the genuine struggles faced by the transgender community. These stereotypes are presented as valid judgments of individuals, contributing to the misinformed perceptions of what it means to be transgender. Until the public demands more responsible and truthful portrayals of transgender characters, the media are unlikely to change their practices. Ultimately, viewers and readers also bear a responsibility for the information they choose to absorb from various forms of media. There exists a valuable opportunity for self-directed learning and critical thinking. Embracing stereotypes and biases depicted in media should not be tolerated when we consider their impact on society. Combatting prejudice with knowledge represents the initial step toward creating a more inclusive and accepting world for all groups (Jobe, 2013, p.28-29).

Chapter 3: Analytical framework and methodology

The media convey and influence the information that people take in and often give rise to stereotypes or misinformation that taints the image, in this case, of transgender as individual and as candidates.

In the following sections, we will focus on the essential terminology needed to comprehend the analysis of newspaper articles, mainly provided to us by the Style Guide (2023), GLAAD and Billard (2016). The Style Guide (2023) of the Trans Journalists Association is a document that clearly lists the recommendations journalists should follow when writing about transgender individuals. I chose this document because it encapsulates, in an illustrative and clear manner, the useful and central recommendations that I use in the analysis conducted in this thesis. I selected GLAAD because it provides a comprehensive webpage titled “Glossary of Terms: LGBTQ”, in which terms and definitions are very completed and were collaboratively compiled with other LGBTQ community organizations and leaders based in the U.S. Lastly, I have chosen “*Writing in the Margins: Mainstream News Media Representations of Transgenderism*” by Thomas J. Billard (2016) because it provides a comprehensive list of various examples of discrimination and delegitimizing to be identified and analysed in newspaper articles. Based on these documents and this study, I defined an analytical framework for my analysis, which I then applied to sample news stories from a selected news agency in order to answer the questions below. All of this was also used to develop and produce a subsequent analytical framework that encompasses the key recommendations, addressed to the “*Ordine dei Giornalisti*”, the FNSI, and other organizations of Italian journalists, for the accurate representation and reporting of transgender individuals. This framework also serves as a starting point to extend the analyses conducted in this research beyond Italian borders.

Moreover, this section delves into the world of Italian journalism to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of discrimination against transgender individuals in politics and how this has evolved over time. The investigation begins with an analysis of the “*Testo Unico dei Doveri del Giornalista*”, an ethical code outlining the rules that journalists should adhere to in the course of their work. It continues with the analysis of how journalists discover information sources and evaluate source credibility and with the analysis of the connection and influence of politics on newspapers, specifically those under analysis.

Therefore, to investigate how the media produce discrimination and influence the public's perception of transgender people, major Italian newspapers will be analysed and the

following research questions will be asked: *How do newsmade report transgender politicians? Are newspapers vehicles of discrimination against transgender political candidates? How are they discriminated? Has the amount of discriminatory or stereotypical representations increased or decreased over time?*

3.1. Terminological warning: Dos/Dont

Guidelines have been produced by professional associations and NGOs offering guidance on how to refer to and report on transgender individuals. Amongst these, the Style Guide of the Trans Journalists Association⁶ (2023) explains that in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the visibility of transgender individuals and related issues in the media (Jones et al., 2018). While several outlets have produced well-researched and insightful stories, a considerable portion of this coverage has fallen short in serving both their audiences and the transgender communities. The Style Guide by the Trans Journalists Association serves as a valuable resource for reporters, editors, and media creators seeking to enhance their coverage of transgender topics. However, due to the diversity of these communities, some individuals within the transgender community may use language or descriptions that differ from or even conflict with certain aspects of the next explanation. For this reason, reporting effectively on transgender communities necessitates a nuanced and considerate approach.

Another important association is GLAAD, that is a non-profit LGBTQ activism organization dedicated to promoting and ensuring accurate representation of LGBTQ+ individuals with the aim of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

As the Style Guide (2023) and GLAAD explain is better to use the terms "assigned male at birth" (AMAB) or "assigned female at birth" (AFAB) instead of "born male" or "born female. In suitable contexts, journalists can alternatively use "raised as a boy" or "raised as a girl." However, they have to exercise discretion when employing this language and assess whether it is essential to highlight someone's assigned sex or the gender they were brought up as.

⁶ The Trans Journalists Association is a professional membership organization founded in 2020 that promotes more accurate, nuanced coverage of trans issues and communities in the media and supports gender-expansive journalists in their workplaces and careers.

The term “deadname” refers to a transgender individual's birth name or former name, which they no longer use, is commonly known as their "given name" or "legal name." It is crucial to emphasize that there is never a valid reason to include someone's deadname in a story. Billard (2016, p.5) refers to it as the indicator of legitimacy of *naming*.

“Misgender” refers to the act of using gender-specific language or pronouns that are inappropriate or do not align with the individual's actual gender identity, Billard (2016, p.5) explained that as *characterizations of transgenderism*.

“Transition” refers to the process of aligning one's life with their gender involves various social, legal, and sometimes medical steps. This may encompass actions such as changing one's name and pronouns, adjusting clothing, speech, and behaviour, updating official documents and legal records, and, in some cases, pursuing medical treatments to modify physical characteristics.

The term “transsexual” denotes an individual who has undergone or is interested in gender-affirming medical treatment. While it was previously the primary word used to describe someone seeking treatment for gender dysphoria, it has evolved into a more specialized term within the transgender community. Some individuals find it outdated or offensive. Therefore, it is appropriate to use this term only when an individual or a specific group of people use it to self-identify. Also, it is not correct to write about a transgender as transsexual, because “transgender” is employed to describe an individual whose gender identity does not align (solely) with the one they were assigned at birth. It's important to note that "transgender" is an adjective and should not be used as a noun (Billard, 2016, p. 5).

The Style Guide of the Trans Journalists Association (2023) also explain what is better to avoid while writing of transgender, for example, a journalist has to maintain a respectful and formal tone in interactions, for example they have to avoid the use of a transgender individual's deadname and refrain from inquiring about it (Billard, 2016, p.5). When referencing a person in the past, it is respectful and appropriate to use their current name and pronouns, unless they have explicitly communicated a different preference to you. If a journalist is working on a story unrelated to transgender issues and a person, he/she/they is quoting happens to be transgender, there is typically no need to highlight their transgender identity. A journalist has to include this information only if it is essential to provide context for a quote or to clarify why that source is included in the story (Billard, 2016, p.5).

Another suggestion is not to place emphasis on the pronoun used by a person or its gender. Furthermore, there's a common practice among reporters to include a description of a non-binary source's gender when introducing them. However, not only are these descriptions

frequently inaccurate, but they are also unnecessary and can inadvertently marginalize transgender individuals. The general public is now well aware of the existence of non-binary people, making such detailed explanations obsolete. When a more in-depth explanation of someone's gender is relevant to the story, it may be appropriate to provide one. In these cases, journalists should exercise caution and rely solely on the terminology and words the individual uses to describe their gender. Additionally, it is advisable for reporters to refrain from mentioning a transgender person's assigned sex at birth unless it is pivotal to the story's understanding. This level of detail is particularly unnecessary when discussing a trans man or trans woman. Journalists should only reference the assigned sex of a non-binary individual when it is essential for contextualizing the narrative (Billard, 2016, p.5). In addition, Journalists should not employ descriptions that draw attention to the sex assigned to trans individuals at birth. This includes avoiding descriptions such as tall trans women, high-pitched voices in trans men, or large hands in trans women.

The Style Guide (2023) and the GLAAD also suggest to avoid conflating gender and anatomy in the coverage, especially when discussing topics related to "men's health" and "women's health." Reporter has to take into consideration whether such framing is inclusive of transgender individuals. When a journalist uses the term "women," consider whether it encompasses trans women and applies to non-binary individuals and trans men as well. Much of the reporting on health based on gender overlooks the transgender community and inaccurately associates gender with anatomy. Instead of simply using "men" or "women," they have to think about who is affected by the issue you are addressing; for example, individuals with ovaries, individuals with prostates, or those who can become pregnant. Billard (2016, p.5) also explain that writers and producers have to exercise sensitivity and refrain from posing offensive or inappropriate questions. Avoid inquiring about someone's genitals, hormone usage, or medical treatments.

The solutions listed above indicate what are the best attitudes to hold when talking or writing about transgender people. The Style Guide (2023) also provides the ideal directions that writers and producers should follow so as to avoid the creation of stereotypes and discrimination. First among them, as Billard (2016, p.5) also explains, journalists and producers have to refrain from overly fixating on transgender individuals' bodies and their medical history in your reporting, as this can often lead to sensationalism and objectification. When writing about transgender people, they have to carefully consider whether it is necessary or appropriate to delve into their medical background. Similarly, they have to avoid an excessive emphasis on the physical appearance of trans individuals and treat the portrayal

of transgender individuals' appearance with the same level of discretion as they would with cisgender individuals in their reporting. Also, avoid focusing on details like clothing choices, makeup, or nail appearance when discussing a trans woman. Instead, prioritize respectful and balanced reporting that centres on substantive aspects of their lives and experiences (Billard, 2016, p.5). Journalists don't have to put emphasis on the transition, they should refrain from using descriptive language that suggests a superficial understanding of a trans person's gender identity or implies that they are reinforcing gender stereotypes.

As the Style Guide (2023), Journalist have to broaden the scope of their coverage to include narratives beyond the challenges and struggles faced by transgender individuals. The media frequently focuses on stories of trans trauma, contributing to a culture that can discourage trans people from coming out and envisioning a fulfilling life. This approach can also exacerbate the anxieties experienced by parents and families when their children come out as transgender. It is crucial to highlight stories of trans individuals leading happy and successful lives, in addition to reporting on vital issues such as trans civil rights and homelessness. Also, it is important to avoid perpetuating the tired and clichéd narrative of cisgender individuals feeling like they have lost their trans relatives, partners, or friends. While it is understandable that loved ones may need time to process the news of a loved one's gender identity, emphasizing their grief is both unoriginal and excessive. Such stories tend to centre cisgender individuals in narratives about transgender people. Journalist and producer have to refrain from using gender-stereotyped imagery when depicting trans stories, for example, avoiding showcasing a trans woman applying makeup or wearing heels, or a trans man working out at the gym. Such imagery can reinforce the harmful notion that a person's gender identity is solely based on superficial aspects and may perpetuate the misconception that trans existence reinforces gender stereotypes. They have to seek alternative ways to illustrate a story. Furthermore, they do not have to employ "before" and "after" images of someone's transition. These visuals rarely contribute meaningful value to a story and often serve to satisfy invasive curiosity about trans individuals (Jones, 2013, p. 6).

3.2 Italian news making and deontological commitments

In this section, the ethical and deontological code of Italian journalists is analysed to better understand the rules that journalists refer to when writing an article. It will also be shown how politics is inextricably intertwined with the media, in this case newspapers.

3.2.1 "Testo Unico Dei Doveri Del Giornalista" or The Unified

Text of Journalists' Duties

In the Italian news media industry, the obligation of impartiality and objectivity is governed by the "Testo Unico dei Doveri del Giornalista" (Unified Code of Journalistic Ethics), an ethical code proposed by The National Italian Council of Journalists that is a general introduction to the principles of journalism ethics in force since January 1, 2021. The "Testo Unico Dei Doveri Del Giornalista" was created to harmonize previous ethical documents, to ensure greater clarity of interpretation and facilitate the application of all rules, the violation of which can lead to disciplinary responsibility for members of the Order. It incorporates the content of the following documents: Journalists' Code of Duties, Code of Duties for Press Office Journalists, Code of Duties for Economic Information, Florence Charter, Milan Charter, Perugia Charter, Rome Charter, Treviso Charter, Information and Advertising Charter, Information and Surveys Charter, Deontology Code for Journalistic Activities, Code on the Representation of Judicial Events in Radio and Television Programs, and the Decalogue of Sports Journalism. In this chapter, we will discuss the articles of this ethical code related to the topic covered in this thesis.

The standards that are most relevant to the issues that will be addressed in the following chapters concern the TITLE II of the "Testo Unico Dei Doveri Del Giornalista" concerning duties towards individuals. The Article 3 on Personal Identity and the Right to Be Forgotten of the TITLE II states:

a) Respects the right to personal identity and avoids referencing specific details from the past, unless they are essential for the completeness of the information.

The ethical code related to the processing of personal data in journalistic activities (Art. 25 Law no. 675/96) is contained within Article 4 of the "Testo Unico", which states that the journalist, concerning individuals, applies the "Deontological Rules on the Processing of Personal Data in Journalistic Activities published, as per Article 20, paragraph 4, of Legislative Decree August 10, 2018, no. 101 (Resolution no. 491)," as provided by Legislative Decree 196/2003 and the Supervisory Authority on the protection of personal data. These rules are an integral part of the Single Text and include: the Article 5 on the right to information and personal data. This article states, in the first point, that when collecting personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, religious, philosophical, or other beliefs, political opinions, affiliations with political parties, trade unions, religious, philosophical,

political, or trade union organizations, as well as genetic and biometric data for uniquely identifying a natural person and data revealing health conditions and sexual orientation, the journalist ensures the right to information on matters of public interest while respecting the essentiality of the information, avoiding references to relatives or other parties not involved in the events. The Article 6 on the Essentiality of Information states that the disclosure of news of significant public or social interest does not contradict the respect for privacy when the information, even in detail, is indispensable due to the originality of the fact or the particular manner in which it occurred, as well as the qualification of the individuals involved. It adds that in the private lives of public figures or those holding public positions should be respected if the news or data is irrelevant to their role or public life. Also, Comments and opinions of the journalist are part of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of information, speech, and thought for all.

The Article 8 on the Protection of Human Dignity adds that except for the essentiality of the information, the journalist does not provide news or publish images or photographs of individuals involved in events harmful to a person's dignity, nor does he dwell on details of violence unless there is social relevance to the news or image. Also, Article 9 on the Right to Non-Discrimination states that in exercising the right and duty to report, the journalist is required to respect a person's right to non-discrimination based on race, religion, political opinions, sex, personal, physical, or mental conditions.

Returning to the content of TITLE II, Article 5-bis on the Respect for Gender Differences explains that in cases of femicide, violence, harassment, discrimination, and news events related to sexual orientation and gender identity, the journalist have to pay attention to avoiding gender stereotypes, expressions, and images that harm a person's dignity and have to adheres to respectful, correct, and aware language, focuses on the essentiality of the news, and exercises restraint. The journalists have to ensures, after considering the public interest in the news, a respectful narrative even with respect to the family members of those involved.

Speaking of the newspapers analysed in greater depth, as Padovani et al. (2021, p. 356) explain, while Italian legislation does not explicitly mandate self-regulatory measures, many newsrooms have independently adopted their internal codes of ethics. For instance, the daily newspaper *La Repubblica* has implemented a code of ethics that journalists are expected to adhere to, with the aim of "performing their profession correctly and transparently." This document outlines a set of core values, including accuracy, completeness, honesty, independence, impartiality, transparency, ethical use of social media, responsibility, respect, quality, and verification, serving as the foundation of the readers' agreement.

In addition, *Il Corriere della Sera* has also implemented a code of ethics with the same aim as *La Repubblica* “performing their profession correctly and transparently”, but also in their “Dichiarazione d’indipendenza del Corriere della Sera” they highlight some core values such as accountability, impartiality, completeness, accuracy, fairness, comprehensibility of facts integrity and independence. It also adheres to the rules of the Trust project⁷, that are authority, authenticity, transparency, inclusivity, fairness, reliability.

La Stampa also adhere to the Trust Project and has implemented a code of ethics that states that they are oriented towards transparency towards the public, in the utmost respect for the law and in the utmost cooperation with the public administration and authorities, and also all this is endowed with the GEDI Group Code of Ethics. Their core values are based on ethics of diversity, centrality of the person, impartiality and equal opportunities, commitment to accuracy and corrections and dialogue with the public.

La Repubblica, *Il Corriere della Sera* and *La Stampa* add on their Code of Ethics that they also adhere to the "Testo Unico dei Doveri del Giornalista".

Il Sole 24 Ore has an extremely detailed code of ethics that sets out such core values: compliance with the law and regulations, Honesty, fairness and transparency, avoidance of conflicts of interest, protection of human rights and children, protection of health and safety, protection of people, clarity and transparency of corporate communications and information. In addition to these, there are forms of internal self-regulation, of journalists and editors, but also with respect to the environment. This newspaper also adheres to the Trust Project.

So, from all this emerges that these principles do not include a section specifically devoted to minorities anyway, nor in this case to gender differences. In fact, they are mostly general norms, which do not address the issues that have recently emerged regarding transgender or other individuals in the LGBTQI community, so they do not contemplate gender discrimination, but sex or personal rights discrimination, which then they apply to this community. Even in *La Repubblica's* code, that is comprehensive and well-structured, lacks of any reference to gender (in)equality issues, such as fair representation, voice and the diversity of sources, or the utilization of gender-inclusive language. This is the same for all the others newspapers’ code of ethics analysed in this thesis.

However, it cannot be excluded that the presence of the “Testo Unico dei Doveri del Giornalista” and also the presence in newspapers of internal ethical codes (as in *La*

⁷ a complex international consortium involving some 120 news organizations working for greater transparency and accountability in the news industry.

Repubblica) may be one of the explanations behind the improvement in the language of journalists toward transgender people, with articles that are increasingly attentive to compliance with the norms contained in deontological code, as well as increasingly aware of the changing world that is increasingly concerned with the LGBTQI' issues and rights.

3.2.2 Political Influence in the Media

Another thing to consider is that the Italian media, in this case newspapers, are strongly connected to Italian politics. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004), Italy is regarded as an example of a "polarized pluralist" model. This model is characterized by a high degree of politicization or "political parallelism," a significant state influence on the media, and a limited level of professional autonomy. Italy, in particular, has a long history of strong connections between politics (including powerful social and interest groups) and journalism. The roots of the politicization of the Italian press can be traced back to the pre-fascist era, although it was during Mussolini's dictatorship that the political and consensus-driven role of journalism became more pronounced. After World War II, the initial newspaper licenses were granted to anti-fascist political forces, further reinforcing a politically oriented form of journalism, which persisted even with the emergence of market-oriented media in the 1970s. Partisanship and polarization experienced a resurgence with the entry of media entrepreneur Silvio Berlusconi into politics in the early 1990s. The breakdown of the Italian party system in the early 1990s did not alter these fundamental characteristics of the system, where political affiliations still maintain significance. Also, the Italian State has wielded significant influence as an owner of media enterprises, encompassing not only broadcasting but also commercial media and print press. Notably, Italy is marked by a scarcity of "pure publishers," signifying entrepreneurs exclusively engaged in the publishing sector.

Padovani et al. (2021, p. 317) explain that according to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019, following the 2018 general election, minor changes occurred in the Italian media landscape to reflect the new power dynamics within Italian politics, while the print sector continued to decline. The press sector has always had close ties to political and cultural elites, and its widespread influence has somewhat been preceded by that of television, which has been the primary medium for Italian media consumption for many years. For certain social groups, it has become the sole medium of culture.

The current ownership structure of major print publications, as well as radio and television companies, reflects the historical absence of "pure publishers" (entrepreneurs solely involved in publishing) and the features of more recent editorial consolidation. The most widely read newspapers include *Corriere della Sera* (published by RCS MediaGroup S.p.A., a company in which entrepreneur Urbano Cairo holds a 60% stake), *la Repubblica*, and *La Stampa* (both owned by Gedi, which also controls three major national radio stations - Radio DeeJay, Radio Capital, and Radio m2o - and whose majority shareholder, CIR, is a holding company involved in the automotive and health sectors).

The ownership structure of the media system underlies the issue of "conflict of interests," a problem that gained global attention during the political success of Silvio Berlusconi between 1994 and the first decade of the 2000s. In 1997, the *Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni* (Agcom) was established. Among its responsibilities are monitoring radio and television broadcasts, safeguarding political and social diversity, and ensuring compliance with the principle of "par condicio" for all political parties and movements in accessing the media. The Reuters Institute Digital News Report offers a general overview of current and recent developments in the media landscape. Padovani et al. (2021, p. 319) also explain that while revenues for broadcasters remained relatively stable between 2013 and 2017, newspapers and magazines saw a 21% reduction during the same period. One of the major broadcasters is Cairo Communication, which holds a 4% stake in *Corriere della Sera*, and Gedi, the publisher of *la Repubblica*, *La Stampa*, and several other local newspapers and radio stations, with a 3% ownership. The online platforms of *Il Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica* are the most widely accessed newspaper websites.

Padovani et al. (2021, p. 333) explain also that the Department of Information and Publishing within the Italian Prime Minister's Office provides direct financial support to newspapers and periodicals. Political influence continues to be the predominant external factor shaping the quality of journalistic output. Furthermore, Italian news outlets rely heavily on a small number of major advertisers or sponsors. Although legal safeguards are in effect to safeguard editorial independence, the lines between news content and advertising frequently become indistinct. The Department of Information and Publishing, under the auspices of the Italian Prime Minister's Office, provides direct financial support to newspapers and periodicals. This support aligns with the principle of ensuring information pluralism, with particular emphasis on local publishers and the digital transformation of the publishing industry. Up until 2017, the same department also provided direct funding for publications associated with political parties, political movements, and trade unions. However, this practice was discontinued

following the enactment of legislative decree 70/2017. It's important to note that politics remains the primary external factor influencing the quality of journalistic content, a trend that is not unique to Italy but is prevalent across Europe (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Mediaact, 2014). In certain instances, political influence takes a more direct form by exerting pressure on internal corporate entities. As an example, the previous government explicitly attempted to dissuade advertisers from placing advertisements in newspapers.

Table 3.1: Newspapers and Owners

Corriere della Sera	RCS MediaGroup, as seen on TgLa7, is minimally represented by a small hyperlink on the newspaper's website. No information about the newsroom is provided.
la Repubblica	Gedi Gruppo Editoriale S.p.A. is an Italian media conglomerate, and it is part of the Exor group. Gedi is the publisher of several prominent newspapers, including la Repubblica, La Stampa, Il Secolo XIX, and various local newspapers. Additionally, it operates three national radio stations and publishes magazines, including the weekly publication L'Espresso. The majority of Gedi's shares are owned by the Agnelli family, known for their association with FIAT. On the newspaper's website, there is a small link to the Gedi website, which provides information about Gedi's board of directors and details about the newsroom.
La Stampa	Gedi Gruppo Editoriale S.p.A. is an Italian media conglomerate, and it is a subsidiary of the Exor group. This conglomerate serves as the publisher for various newspapers, including la Repubblica, La Stampa, Il Secolo XIX, and multiple local newspapers. It also operates three national radio stations and publishes a selection of magazines, among them the weekly L'Espresso. The majority of the shares in Gedi are owned by the Agnelli family, known for their association with FIAT. On the newspaper's website, there is a small hyperlink to the Gedi website, which includes information about Gedi's board of directors and details about the newsroom.
Il Sole 24 Ore	Il Sole 24 ORE S.p.A is an Italian publishing group that owns the newspaper Il Sole 24 Ore and holds a 15% stake in Sole 24 ORE

Formazione, while Multiversity owns the remaining 85%. It has been listed on the Italian Stock Exchange since December 6, 2007, and is part of the FTSE Italia Small Cap index. It also operates in different national radio stations. On the newspaper's website, there is a small hyperlink to the Il Sole 24 ORE S.p.A, which includes information about Il Sole 24 ORE S.p.A's management, but no details about the newsroom.

3.2.3 Patterns of news media use and data source

Another factor to consider is patterns of news media use (consumption of news) in Italy (Padovani et al. 2021, p. 325).

The majority of the Italian population relies on media for information, with over 80% of citizens regularly seeking news. A mere 5% of Italians remain entirely uninformed. This trend is more noticeable among older individuals, who typically stick to a single news source, while younger generations tend to diversify their information sources across different media platforms.

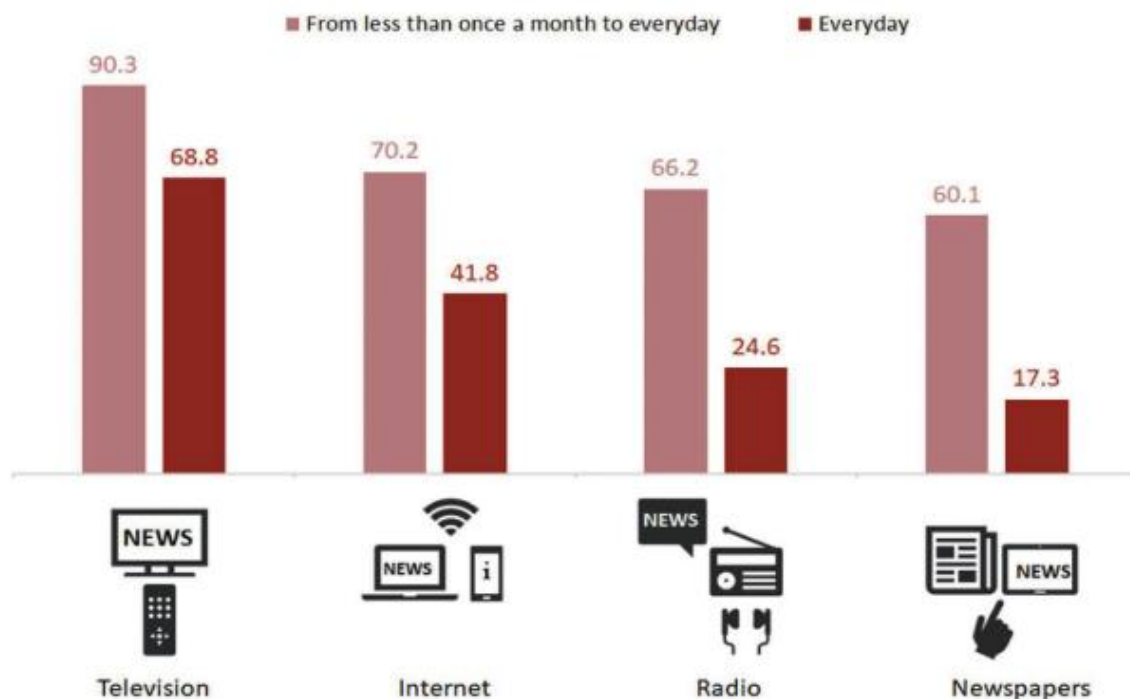


Figure 3.2.2: Media Usage to acquire information, 2017 (per cent population) by Padovani et Al. (2021, p. 326)

According to Agcom's 2018 data, virtually the entire population turns to media for information, with over 80% accessing news on a daily basis. Only 5% of Italians are entirely uninformed, at least not through mainstream media.

Various factors contribute to the categorization of the population into different information access groups, posing the risk of media exclusion or the marginalization of specific segments of society. Notably, lower levels of education and unfavourable economic conditions appear to delineate the boundaries of social groups at risk of marginalization within the information landscape. Italians tend to have a varied information consumption pattern, with more than three-quarters of the population engaging in cross-media consumption.

According to Audipress (2020), during the last quarter of 2019, there were approximately 15.759 million individuals reading newspapers on an average day. Sports newspapers accounted for one-fifth of the total readership. Notably, the four leading quality newspapers, namely *Corriere della Sera*, *la Repubblica*, *La Stampa*, and *QN-Il Resto del Carlino*, collectively garnered over a million readers on an average day. This represents nearly one-third of the total readership for quality newspapers (Padovani et al. 2021, p. 327).

Talking about the data source, Agcom regularly collects data from journalists, revealing that personal contacts continue to be the most common source of information. This practice, as described by Cornia (2014, 54), contributes to the highly opinionated nature of journalism in Italy, as it often conveys the viewpoints of political figures. The utilization of personal contacts as primary sources is a practice that strongly reflects political parallelism, as noted by Mancini (1999). According to Esser and Umbricht (2013), the significance of personal contacts in Italian journalism is also influenced by the polarized multi-party system, which allows for access to a wide spectrum of voices in the political discourse. Furthermore, Agcom's data indicates that the use of news agencies is predominantly associated with well-funded newsrooms, typically digital media entities affiliated with traditional media outlets. Italy is home to a significant and deeply entrenched national news agency, Ansa, which is expanding its reach in the digital sphere. The dynamics surrounding press releases are somewhat different. While there is limited research on the use of press releases by Italian journalists, Agcom's data suggests that nearly two-thirds of journalists consider press releases as one of their primary sources for news production (Padovani et al. 2021, p. 328).

3.2.4 Breaching the Code and Misinformation

Italian journalism lacks formal procedures for news selection and media accountability mechanisms. While there is a surplus of codes of ethics, they are not mandatory, not widely adhered to, and violations are not met with stringent penalties. The Worlds of Journalism Study reveals that Italian journalists often feel they have limited autonomy when it comes to choosing their news topics and determining how to present them. Transparency in Italian journalism remains limited (Mazzoleni & Splendore, p. 2011; Splendore, p. 2017). There are few established procedures for news selection or accountability measures. The introduction of press councils or newspaper ombudspersons has not been a priority for domestic media entities, and only two ombudsperson initiatives have been attempted. For example, Rome's prominent daily newspaper, *Il Messaggero*, initiated the first in 1986, and *la Repubblica* appointed a distinguished journalist, Piero Ottone, a former editor of *Corriere della Sera*, as an ombudsman. Both efforts, inspired by foreign experiences, had limited longevity due to the lack of contributions from readers and the perception of the ombudsperson as an unusual institution in the Italian political and cultural context (Mazzoleni & Splendore, 2011, p. 91).

While numerous codes of ethics exist in Italy, covering areas such as minors and immigration, they are not obligatory or widely followed (Brinkmann et al., p. 2017). Furthermore, there are no strict sanctions for journalists who violate these codes. This lack of transparency regarding the use of codes of ethics makes it challenging to assess the extent of internal debates within newsrooms. Research focused on traditional news outlets (Splendore, 2013, 2017a; Splendore & Rega, 2017) and interviews with journalists reveal that well-established newsrooms, in particular, do not facilitate extensive internal debate. This perception aligns with the findings from the Worlds of Journalism Study, where Italian journalists report having limited independence in choosing news topics and framing their stories. These insights are further substantiated by interviews with members of newsroom staff.

Another major problem in Italian journalism is misinformation (Padovani et al. 2021, p. 342). Leading Italian news media have not established dedicated expertise and protocols to detect and prevent the spread of misinformation or fake news. Among the newsrooms under examination, the prevalent practice is to address this issue at the individual journalist level. Consequently, non-systematic approaches are observed among Italian journalists, shaped by their practical experiences. There is a lack of standardized editorial guidelines for handling misinformation, and journalists often rely on their common sense. Furthermore, there are no

specific training programs focusing on the use of automated tools for information verification. Practices related to source reliability are typically left to the discretion of individual journalists, as one journalist from *La Repubblica* explained, "We are there to provide news, verify it with sources, more than one, cross-check two or three sources, validate the news, and at that point, the news is considered reliable and, therefore, publishable. The assessment is a matter of personal discretion." Another editor-in-chief from *La Repubblica* emphasized the complexity of implementing real-time anti-fake news algorithms, stating, "Having anti-fake news algorithms in real-time is very complicated; the work must be manual." There are two main problems highlighted by journalists in relation to misinformation: the problem of skills and experience of individual journalists and the problem of timing, because often problems related to misinformation relate to the hurry to publish a piece in the news. Finally, there is also a problem linked to the professional culture, which functions as an element of resistance to change and which is more visible among senior journalists, in fact the practice of automated verification of sources through fact-checking tools or services, internal or external to the editorial staff is unusual in the Italian journalistic culture compared to foreign models.

3.2.5 To Sum Up

In the first section, we saw how Italian journalism is regulated through the Unified Code of Journalistic Ethics, which aims to encompass the rules that journalists should adhere to when writing articles. However, at the same time, through an analysis of this text, it is evident that in the case of gender discrimination, there are no specific rules addressing such issues. Furthermore, it was possible to deduce that an improvement in the treatment of transgender individuals in political journalism may have also been achievable with the advent and enforcement of ethical codes that have increasingly guided journalism towards greater transparency and inclusion.

In the second section, the political influence in various Italian news newspapers was analysed, revealing a continuous interplay between these two dimensions. Understanding this aspect of the Italian journalistic system is crucial because it may also be one of the reasons for a higher prevalence of discrimination in one newspaper compared to others. Furthermore, when discussing two transgender political candidates, it is interesting to observe how different newspapers portray Luxuria and Romano based on their political affiliations.

In the third section, it was intriguing to demonstrate how Italians today receive information through the media and how newspapers can indeed influence readers' perceptions on specific topics. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to observe that the primary sources of information for journalists are personal contacts, including political sources, and so on.

In the fourth and final section, I illustrated how, despite the existence of numerous ethical and professional codes, these rules are not always adhered to in practice. This is partly because there are no internal structures within newspapers specifically tasked with enforcing them, although there are structures aimed at combating misinformation. Misinformation is another significant issue in Italian journalism, challenging to combat because the accuracy of information relies on the individual judgment of journalists, influenced by various factors such as time constraints, cultural background, and experience.

As the next chapters will show, although the existence of newspapers' own codes of ethics, many times journalists have violated them. Therefore, in articles dating back to 2006-2008 regarding Vladimir Luxuria, it is evident how everything discussed so far forms the basis for the presence of a surplus of discrimination and stereotyping of her transgender identity, compounded by the political context of the time and the journalistic professional culture surrounding it. If we observe a marked improvement today in how these political figures are treated, it is primarily due to the establishment of ethical codes and the increasing adherence of journalists to these codes. This shift is also driven by a growing awareness of a society that is becoming more attuned to the norms imposed on individuals by the present-day social landscape.

3.3 Proposal for an analytical framework

Based on all the previous research and work developed in the Public Values & ICT Lab 2023, I have outlined a proposal for an analytical framework with which to analyse newspaper articles about Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano in the next chapters. So, for my analysis, I will consider the following linguistic and semantic issues (*Table 3.2*):

Table 3.2: Analytical Framework for the analysis

Linguistic and semantic issues	Questions
<p>The presence of misgendering: for example, the use of incorrect pronouns or words with the wrong gender in relation to the person they are talking about.</p>	<p>Does the analysed text present instances of misgendering?</p> <p>Do journalists use gender-correct pronouns or words?</p>
<p>The presence of misrepresentation of transgender identity: the identification of the "wrong body discourse," or the critique of transgender identity as "born in the wrong body," limits the scope of the term "transgender" to a singular understanding of transsexuality, primarily post-operatively (Barker-Plummer, 2013). Moreover, this approach tends to link the transgender individual to his or her assigned female or male sex by emphasizing the surgeries to which he or she has undergone.</p>	<p>Is there any reference in the text that tends to focus on a binary conception of gender, emphasizing postoperative aspects and linking transgender identity primarily to medical interventions?</p>
<p>The perception of transgender as deceiving: in this case, we will analyse the words or phrases that allude to the idea that transgender women claim to be women, with the intention of reasserting transgender individuals into the binary gender system, recognizing them as either male or female.</p>	<p>In the text, the journalist states that transgender people claim to be women or men?</p> <p>Does the journalist make the transgender individual perceived as deceiving?</p>
<p>The sexualization of transgenders' body: the objectification of the body of a trans woman or trans man, the description of their clothing, hair, makeup, accessories, and physique.</p>	<p>Does the journalist or writer in the text refer to and focus on the way the transgender individual dresses, wears makeup, or physical appearance without any relevance to the story being told?</p>
<p>The use of transgenders' deadname instead of the use of their chosen name.</p>	<p>Does the text refer to the deadname of the transgender individual?</p>
<p>The categorization of a person's identity based on assumptions or stereotypes: such as equating transgender people with cross-dressers, making assumptions about their lifestyle, choices, health etc.</p>	<p>Does the text refer to transgender individuals as cross-dressers?</p> <p>Does the journalist make critical assertions about the lifestyle or choices of the transgender individual?</p> <p>Are there evident references in the text that constitute a stereotype towards transgender individuals?</p>
<p>Reference to transgender person's past, without understanding their journey</p>	<p>Does the text reference the past of the transgender individual without paying attention to the sensitivity of the subject or</p>

	asking inappropriate questions about it?
Absence of differences between different terms such as transgender, transsexual, non-binary etc. and using them correctly to refer to the subject.	<p>Is the text confusing the terms transsexual and transgender, failing to provide the audience with accurate definitions?</p> <p>Are the definitions of transgender, transsexual, non-binary, etc., misrepresented in the text?</p> <p>Are these terms used correctly in reference to the transgender individual being discussed?</p>
Use of a transgender person's identity as a 'shock tactic' to attempt to surprise or grab the audience's attention.	<p>Is the journalist referring to the use of the term transgender in the article without it being necessary for the context of the story being told?</p> <p>Is the term transgender associated with the individual being discussed without it being essential to the narrative being presented?</p>
Not understanding that a transgender identity is not always equated to a surgical transition, and respecting different individual identities and journeys.	<p>Is the journalist referring to the surgical transition of the transgender individual, focusing on it rather than understanding that it is not necessarily linked to the transgender person's identity?</p> <p>Is the journalist spreading misinformation on this issue?</p> <p>Does the journalist respect the gender identity of the transgender individual?</p>
Mentioning a transgender person's assigned sex at birth when it is not pivotal to the story's understanding.	<p>Is the text mentioning the assigned sex of a transgender person at birth when it is not essential for the understanding of the story?</p>
Mentioning that an individual is transgender when it is not necessary for the context of the story being told.	<p>Is it necessary to mention in this text that the main subject of this article is transgender?</p> <p>Does the fact that the individual is transgender influence the meaning of the story being told?</p>
Avoid hyper-focus on the transition: the intense and disproportionate emphasis on the process of transitioning in the context of discussions about transgender individuals. This hyperfocus often centres on the physical aspects of transitioning, such as medical procedures like hormone therapy or surgery. It may also involve an excessive focus on the before-	<p>Is the journalist focusing on the surgical interventions or hormone therapy that the transgender individual has undergone?</p> <p>Is the journalist placing a significant emphasis on the before-and-after aspects of the surgical procedures?</p>

and-after aspects of an individual's gender presentation.	
Avoid victimization of transgender individual: preventing the portrayal or treatment of transgender individuals in a way that makes them appear as victims solely due to their gender identity. This concept advocates for respectful and fair representation, recognizing the diverse experiences, strengths, and resilience of transgender individuals.	<p>Is the transgender individual described in the text solely as a victim because of their gender identity?</p> <p>Is there a greater emphasis on portraying the transgender individual as a victim rather than highlighting their strength or relevant activities?</p>
Mocking transgender identities: involves the act of ridiculing, belittling, or making fun of individuals based on their gender identity. This type of mockery can take different forms, such as derogatory jokes, disrespectful comments, or dismissive attitudes, all of which undermine the authenticity of transgender experiences.	<p>Is there any form of mockery, derogatory comments, or dismissive attitudes towards transgender individuals evident or perceivable in the text?</p>

Based on the information provided in *Table 3.2*, I'm going to begin my analysis of the newspaper articles by reading them thoroughly multiple times and asking myself the questions listed above, trying to understand if these issues are evident in the text.

Firstly, I'm going to focus primarily on linguistic delegitimization, as it is the most evident and easily identifiable issue even upon an initial reading of the text. This includes instances such as misgendering, sexualization, and objectification of the transgender individual etc. Secondly, I'm going to directed my attention to semantic issues, examining the meanings that journalists sought to convey through their writing. Therefore, I'm going to determine whether the journalist portrayed the transgender individual as a victim, attempted to discredit them, or displayed insensitivity and inappropriateness in describing the transgender identity etc.

3.4 Method

To address the initial questions posed in this chapter, quality research of printed and online news articles, inspired on the previous researches showed in this thesis, was conducted. In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how transgender individuals are represented across the entire country, a diverse set of newspapers was selected from various

regions as sample, thanks to the list provided by *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa*⁸ and also by Padovani et al. (2021, p. 318). In addition, it was considered that, as per the data provided by *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa*, the availability of major national newspapers varies significantly from region to region. While Lazio and Lombardia boast over 50 national or multi-regional newspapers in circulation, Molise has just 19 newspapers available, and none of the southern regions offers more than 24 newspapers. Several of these publications have either closed down or been acquired by other publishers, resulting in a reduction in the number of local news media outlets available in certain regions. In Valle d'Aosta and Calabria, for example, there are no local newspapers available.

Additionally, I specifically chose to focus on widely circulated mainstream newspapers in Italy. This choice was made because mainstream newspapers have a broader readership and their representations of transgender and political issue have the potential to exert a significant influence on a larger segment of the population, thereby shaping prevailing belief systems, as noted by Schilt and Westbrook's (2009, p. 445) study, where they state that "mainstream news media both reflect and shape dominant belief systems".

To construct the newspaper sample, the ten most widely circulated daily newspapers were identified. From this list, less than half of them were selected, which rounded up to four newspapers: *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica*, *La Stampa* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*. Only these four papers were selected because according to what has been learned from Padovani et al. (2021) and from *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa*, these newspapers have the most influence at the social level, being the most widely circulated and read across all regions of the Italian peninsula. Therefore, I considered these newspapers more suitable for my research, as they can provide me with more information regarding what I am analysing in this thesis.

In this thesis all the articles analysed will be reported. I searched and analysed, in the case of Vladimir Luxuria, 27 articles in total (*Table 3.3*), pertaining to both the period of her candidacy in politics, that is, from 2006 to 2009, and recent period, dating back to 2021-2023. I chose these articles because they serve as a clear example for my research, and following a thorough analysis using the analytical framework presented earlier, they appear to contain numerous instances of delegitimization. Therefore, they deserve to be considered and

⁸ ADS Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa is the company whose purpose is the certification and dissemination of data on the circulation and circulation and/or distribution of daily and periodical press of any species published in Italy. It certifies and publishes circulation data for the Italian daily and periodical press in print and digital formats. Since 1975, they have been the point of reference for the certification of Italian publishing data.

included in the study conducted in this thesis. All this was also done to see if indeed the language employed by newspapers, as a vehicle for discrimination, has improved over time.

Table 3.3: List of all the articles about Vladimir Luxuria

Title	Date	Newspaper	Autor
Luxuria: sarò metà uomo e metà donna	27 January 2006	Corriere della Sera	/
Luxuria: <<Mi hanno lanciato i finocchi>>	30 March 2006	Corriere della Sera	/
Luxuria Addio, alla camera è Guadagno	29 April 2006	Corriere della Sera	/
Luxuria in mini, <<che belle gambe>>	31 may 2006	Corriere della Sera	/
La Gardini: <<Luxuria esca dal bagno>>	28 October 2006	Corriere della Sera	/
Luxuria si è rifatta il naso e il seno	22 April 2007	Corriere della Sera	/
Vladimir Luxuria: <<Droghe mai, per un breve periodo mi sono prostituita. Fidanzati? L'amore l'ho solo sognato>>	12 November 2021	Corriere della Sera	Alessandra Arachi
Vladimir Luxuria: <<Mio padre era di destra, missino e non approvava fossi trans. Poi mi ha prestato il camion per il gay pride>>	25 September 2023	Corriere della Sera	Chiara Maffioletti
La guerra dei tre sessi	28 October 2006	La Stampa	/
Lo sfogo di Luxuria: "Mi vietano"	07 November 2007	La Stampa	/
Sex- Workers in crisi: Trans e prostitute	14 December 2008	La Stampa	Flavia Amabile
"La vera trasgressione"	26 January 2009	La Stampa	/
"il" o "la" trans	22 November 2009	La Stampa	/
Vladimir Luxuria: giù le mani dai nostri figli	17 March 2023	La Stampa	Tiziana Platzer
Vladimir Luxuria, direttrice del Festival Lovers: "Torino all'avanguardia dell'inclusività"	16 April 2023	La Stampa	Fabrizio Accatino
L'Udeur dice sì all'unione "Ma no ai candidati – Hamas"	29 January 2006	La Repubblica	/
Mussolini a Vladimir Luxuria "Meglio Fascista che frocio"	9 March 2006	La Repubblica	/
Luxuria aggredita a Guidona, Insulti e lancio di Finocchi	30 March 2006	La Repubblica	/
Fondatore dell'Arcigay offeso in aula della Lega	13 October 2006	La Repubblica	/

La provocazione di Feltri “Luxuria uomo dell’anno”	25 November 2006	La Repubblica	/
Gay Pride, Vladimir Luxuria non cede a Rocca: “Sceneggiata della destra, alzano la posta per reprimere la sfilata”	7 June 2023	La Repubblica	Stefano Baldolini
Repubblica delle idee, l’Officina chiude con Vladimir Luxuria: “Dopo le famiglie arcobaleno il prossimo obiettivo saremo noi trans”	11 June 2023	La Repubblica	Marcello Radighieri
Per la pensione il transessuale ha gli stessi diritti delle donne	27 April 2006	Il Sole 24 Ore	Nicoletta Cottone
Incidenti a Mosca al Gay Pride: aggredditi Cappato e Luxuria	28 May 2007	Il Sole 24 Ore	/
Era il 1999 quando Fulvio Abbate ha lanciato in politica Vladimir Luxuria	11 January 2008	Il Sole 24 Ore	Fulvio Abbate
Vladimir Luxuria: ddl Zan serve ad evitare omofobi di domani	21 April 2021	Il Sole 24 Ore	/
Sindacati in piazza, Luxuria: oggi troviamo vaccino al fascismo	16 October 2021	Il sole 24 Ore	/

In listing the articles, it was not possible to identify a lot of authors of the older articles dated 2006-2009, as they were not disclosed by the newspapers themselves anymore. While as for the absence of authors in the most recent articles, the reason is because no specific author is given, but it leads back to the editorial staff in general.

In the case of Monica Romano, I found 15 articles all dating back to her candidacy as a councilwoman in Milan in 2021 and until 2023 (*Table 3.4*). Unfortunately, in the case of *Il Sole 24 ore* the search proved fruitless, as not once was there any mention of her as Councillor or the pro-trans initiatives she implemented. In fact, the articles of *Il Sole 24 Ore* that reference or discuss transgender individuals mostly focus on acts of violence against transsexuals and transgender people, reporting news of crimes against them. Additionally, when *Il Sole 24 Ore* addresses laws in favour of transgender rights or activism supporting the LGBTQI+ community, it predominantly mentions Vladimir Luxuria. I have found and analysed 15 articles about Monica Romano, that I chose because they serve as a clear example for my research, as they demonstrate part of the assertions previously outlined and reflect well the social and cultural change that has occurred globally and is mirrored in the language and semantics within the articles.

Table 3.4: List of all the articles about Monica Romano

Title	Date	Newspaper	Autor
Monica Romano, prima transgender eletta a Milano: <<Mi ha chiamato Zan, lotto per le donne uccise dall'odio>>	10 October 2021	Corriere della Sera	Fabrizio Guglielmini
Tra gogna e vergogna	14 March 2023	Corriere della Sera	Massimo Gramellini
Milano, il video delle borseggiatrici in metro. La consigliera comunale Romano: <<È violenza>>. Polemica sui social	14 March 2023	Corriere della Sera	Chiara Baldi
Chi è Monica Romano, dal cambio di sesso alla politica (e alla sfida sulle borseggiatrici): <<Sogni la fine delle discriminazioni>>	15 March 2023	Corriere della Sera	Chiara Baldi
Monica Romano e i video alle borseggiatrici in metrò: <<Denunciate alle autorità, non sui social. Azioni legali contro gli hater>>	15 March 2023	Corriere della Sera	Chiara Baldi
La consigliera transgender: "Spazzata via la destra, Milano è diventata davvero la capitale dei diritti"	10 October 2021	La Stampa	Chiara Baldi
Omontransfobia, a Milano ci sarà il primo Registro di Genere per e persone transgender: "Avranno il nome di elezione su badge e tessere"	17 May 2022	La Stampa	Chiara Baldi
La prima marcia transgender a Milano: "La nostra identità non è una moda"	20 November 2022	La Stampa	Simona Buscaglia
Bruna, la donna trans pestata dai vigili: "Potevano ammazzarmi, ho paura ma li denuncerò"	25 April 2023	La Stampa	Pasquale Quaranta
Pestaggio a Milano, la consigliere transgender Monica Romano: "Scossa e sgomenta. Meloni condanni la violenza sulle nostre vite, tornare indietro è facile"	24 May 2023	La Stampa	Pasquale Quaranta
La candidata Monica Romano: "Io, prima transgender in Consiglio Comunale, è arrivata l'ora di riuscirci"	23 July 2021	La Repubblica	Giuseppina Piano

Il Consigliere comunale dei diritti di Milano: da Monica Romano, la prima transgender a Palazzo Marini, a Mazzei animatore di Massa Marocchi	12 October 2021	La Repubblica	Alessia Gallione
Governo Meloni, la consigliera transgender Monica Romano: “Una marcia per i nostri diritti, saremo i primi bersagli”	05 November 2022	La Repubblica	Giuseppina Piano
Polemica sui video delle borseggiatrici in metrò a Milano, la consigliera Romano: “Sono una violenza, non siamo nel far west”	13 March 2023	La Repubblica	/ (Redazione Milano)
Monica Romano (Pd): “Mio post frainteso, ma i video delle borseggiatrici messi sui social incoraggiano la giustizia privata”	14 Marzo 2023	La Repubblica	Miriam Romano

Once I identified the articles, I analysed text by text, title by title, for the presence of the "dout" and "dos" explained in the previous chapter, trying to detect the presence of stereotyping of the female candidates, both as women and as politicians. Thanks to the knowledge gained through the in-depth research in Chapter 2 and the knowledge learned from GLAAD, the Style Guide (2023), and the Public Values & ICT (2023) lab project, I apply the analytical framework presented above to analyse the articles I chose. One of the aims of this analysis is to provide an analytical framework containing the criteria that should be used to conduct the same analysis at a European level by other scholars. The analysis conducted was correlated with the code of ethics put forth by the CNOG (*Consiglio Nazionale dell'Ordine dei Giornalisti*). This effort aimed to formulate a set of recommendations on how journalists can promote inclusivity when reporting on transgender politicians in the media.

Chapter 4: Reporting Transgender Politicians in Italy: Analysis of Newspapers

In this chapter, the two main subjects of analysis in this thesis, Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano, are examined. Firstly, by delving into their biographies to understand the roles of these two figures in contemporary Italian society. Secondly, through the analysis of articles from the four major newspapers previously outlined, focusing on the mentioned political figures. All of this is done to uncover and analyse the presence of discrimination and stereotypes over time, seeking to understand if this phenomenon is still present, has decreased, or remained unchanged.

4.1 Vladimir Luxuria

4.1.1 Biography

As Romanelli (2002) explain, Vladimir Luxuria was born in Foggia, Italy in 1965. Today she is a figure in show business but has also been a figure in Italian politics, elected to Parliament in the Chamber of Deputies in the 2006 general elections (XV Legislature), a member of the *Rifondazione Comunista* party.

Her artistic activity began in her hometown where she organized parties at the "Dirty Dixy Club," the first (but also the only) transgressive disco in the city. She holds her first shows starting in 1982, including at the "Taverna del Gufo" - where fellow citizen Renzo Arbore took his first steps.

She moved to Rome in 1985 to study Foreign Languages and Literature at the university, in 1988 she came out as transgender. In the capital she began her career as an actress, using her sexual ambiguity as her own characteristic value. During this period, she took an active part in the gay rights movement. In 1994 she is among the organizers of the first Italian "Gay pride" (in Rome, July 2, 1994): about ten thousand people participate in the event.

In the 2006 political elections Vladimir Luxuria, running as an independent in the lists of Rifondazione Comunista, was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in the Lazio 1 constituency. Since June 6, 2006, she has been a member of the 7th Parliamentary Commission (Culture, Science and Education). She was the first transgender woman to become a parliamentarian in Europe. During her term of office, she was the first signatory of two bills: bill No. 1387, presented on July 14, 2006 and announced on July 17, 2006 bearing

Provisions on cinematography; and bill No. 2733, presented on June 5, 2007 and announced on June 6, 2007, bearing Provisions on the rights and freedoms of transgender people.

As Romanelli (2002) explain, after the cessation of her parliamentary term, due to the end of the 15th legislature of the Italian Republic triggered by the crisis of the second Prodi government, she again ran for the Chamber of Deputies in constituency Sicily 1, in the list La Sinistra l'Arcobaleno, a political force that brought together Rifondazione Comunista (PRC), Partito dei Comunisti Italiani (PdCI), Federazione dei Verdi (Greens) and Sinistra Democratica (SD). But in the 2008 parliamentary elections, the fledgling political entity failed to gain seats, having failed to reach the threshold, and Vladimir Luxuria's parliamentary experience was interrupted. In 2010, false news was spread that she would have been a possible candidate for the 2010 regional elections in the ranks of the People of Freedom, after a joke by her saying that she did not rule out the possibility and the desire to "infect" the centre-right on certain issues. Vladimir Luxuria, who has never been a member of any party, has repeatedly said that she still wants to remain outside political parties while not abandoning her commitment to the civil rights front (Romanelli, 2002).

Today she is an activist for the LGBTQI communities and continues to advocate for transgender rights.

4.1.2 Analyses: Newspapers Discrimination towards Vladimir Luxuria

The analysis on Vladimir Luxuria as candidates starts with the *Corriere della Sera*, the most widely read newspaper in Italy, according to *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa*. The first articles analysed refer to the year 2006, the year in which she entered politics. Also, recent articles about her will be analysed, from 2021-2023.

In order, after *Corriere della Sera*, the following articles analysed will be from *La Stampa*, *La Repubblica*, *Il Sole 24 ore*.

4.1.2.1 Il Corriere della Sera

Scambio di battute in Parlamento

Luxuria in mini, «che belle gambe»

Santanché di An si complimenta con il deputato transgender del Prc



Il deputato transgender del Prc Vladimir Luxuria (da internet)

ROMA - Battaglia di gambe ieri in Parlamento. Giacca turchese, capelli sciolti sulle spalle e una minigonna nera mozzafiato, Vladimir Luxuria, deputata «transgender» del Prc, si è presentata in Transatlantico decisa a rispondere a un «apprezzamento» di Daniela Santanchè. La parlamentare di An, in un'intervista alle Iene, aveva insinuato: «Luxuria si veste troppo da suorina e poi non si mette mai la gonna perché non ha belle gambe...». Così Luxuria ha smesso i castigati tailleur neri sfoggiati finora e ha

lanciato la sua sfida. «Mi sono seduta nel cortile di Montecitorio - racconta - e ho chiamato Daniela. "Vieni un attimo in cortile". Quando lei è arrivata, le ho chiesto: "E allora? Che ne dici?"». L'onorevole di An non solo ha dovuto ricredersi, ma ha fatto i complimenti alla collega: «Siamo le due cosce più lunghe del Parlamento...».

31 maggio 2006

Figure 4.1: from Corriere della Sera

From this first article (Figure 4.1), already from the title, it is perfectly visible how there is a hyper sexualization of Vladimir's body, in fact the journalist focuses on her legs saying that are beautiful and talking of a “war of legs” in the Parliament, as this is the most important thing to talk about women and transgender candidates. Therefore, the journalist places undue emphasis on Luxuria's physical appearance and do not treat the depiction of her appearance with the same level of discretion as they would with cisgender people in their reports. It also uses descriptive language that suggests a superficial understanding of Luxuria's gender identity, implying the reinforcement of gender stereotypes. In fact, it focuses on details such as clothing choices (“breathtaking miniskirt”), makeup, and legs when talking about her. In the subtitle, however, the presence of misgendering is evident, as seen in “il deputato” (Billard, 2016, p.5). Also, the journalist highlights her transgender identity.

«Nonostante le novità, il mio look resterà lo stesso: discreto e sobrio»

Luxuria si è rifatta il naso e il seno

La deputata transgender di Rifondazione Comunista ha scelto di operarsi per sentirsi più a suo agio nei propri panni

ROMA - Un nuovo look, con cui stare più in sintonia con se stessa. Una rinoplastica per respirare meglio e una mastoplastica aggiuntiva per sentirsi più a suo agio nei propri panni. Tre settimane fa Vladimir Luxuria ha deciso: interventi per il corpo e per la mente. Per questo, l'operazione in una clinica di Roma. «Per quanto riguarda il naso - dice la deputata di Rifondazione comunista - avevo un problema di respirazione che mi faceva svegliare con la bocca asciutta e mi costringeva a girare spesso con un fazzoletto. Ora mi hanno limato quella gobbetta che creava l'inconveniente. Ma insomma, non l'ho fatto per una questione estetica: il mio naso mi piaceva anche prima...».

■ **Prima e dopo: guarda**

SENO NUOVO - E Luxuria non considera chirurgia estetica nemmeno l'intervento per il seno nuovo. E spiega chiaramente perché: «Si tratta di un adeguamento di genere. Adeguo la mia exteriorità alla



Figure 4.2: from Corriere della Sera

In this second article (Figure 4.2), it is also visible a hyper focus on Luxuria's physique, they talk about the congresswoman's breast and nose surgery, and what is described in the article is not her political engagement, but her look as a political candidate. As Billard (2016, p. 5) also explains, the journalist was overly fixating on Luxuria's body and her medical history in this article, leading to sensationalism and objectification.

In the third article (Figure 4.3), the journalist used Vladimir Luxuria's deadname, both in the title and in the body of the text. It also visible misgendering.

Luxuria addio, alla Camera è Guadagno

Niente nome d'arte per il deputato transgender: per l'anagrafe di Montecitorio resta Wladimiro Guadagno



Vladimir Luxuria al momento del voto per la presidenza della Camera (Afp)

ROMA - Niente modifica al regolamento della Camera per Vladimir Luxuria, almeno per il primo giorno di lavori. Per l'anagrafe di Montecitorio resta Wladimiro Guadagno.

La neodeputata del Prc aveva annunciato di voler chiedere una deroga per poter essere inserita negli elenchi della Camera con il nome d'arte. Ma, al momento della «chiama» per il voto al presidente di Montecitorio, Luxuria è finita sotto la "g" di Guadagno. Unica concessione alla neo parlamentare, sul sito della Camera al nome di nascita è stato aggiunto "detto Vladimir Luxuria". Per la cronaca, sempre nel sito la professione di Guadagno-Luxuria è di «artista-attore».

29 aprile 2006

Figure 2.3: from Corriere della Sera

«Debutto» alla Camera

Luxuria: sarò metà uomo e metà donna

Tra i candidati del Partito di rifondazione comunista anche Caruso e Heidi Giuliani

ROMA — La campanella non è ancora suonata, ma è un po' come fosse il primo giorno di scuola. Vladimir Luxuria, icona del mondo omosessuale, e Francesco Caruso, leader napoletano dei no global, fanno ingresso a Montecitorio. Vabbé, è l'entrata laterale che porta alla sala stampa e per ora sono solo aspiranti deputati, ma sotto i flash dei fotografi il momento ha comunque una certa solennità. Loro sono due dei 13 candidati «esterni» che Rifondazione schiera come teste di lista alle Politiche, nell'ambito del progetto della sezione italiana della Sinistra europea (che il 18 e 19 marzo terrà un convegno programmatico). Ci sono, tra gli altri, Heidi Giuliani, la mamma di Carlo ucciso al G8 di Genova; la femminista Maria Luisa Boccia; il segretario della delegazione palestinese in Italia, Ali Rashid; gli ex diesse Pietro Folena e Antonello Falomi e l'ex verde Francesco Martone. «Sono componenti essenziali nel processo di costruzione di una sinistra alternativa, radicale e anticapitalista», spiega Fausto Bertinotti. Luxuria e Caruso ascoltano attenti ma pure un po' preoccupati per quella che il leader no global, citando il rivoluzionario messicano Emiliano Zapata, chiama «la maledizione della sedia presidenziale», cioè l'attaccamento alla poltrona «che ti fa dimenticare chi sei e da dove vieni».

Casomai fossero eletti, non vogliono correre rischi e si attrezzano sin d'ora: così, se Vladimir Luxuria in Parlamento sarà costretta ad abbandonare il nome d'arte per ritrovare quello anagrafico (Vladimiro Guadagno), non rinuncerà invece ad essere un «deputato transgender, a metà tra il genere femminile e quello maschile». Esempio plastico l'abbigliamento sfoggiato ieri alla presentazione della candidatura: niente cravatta ma foulard annodato come se lo fosse, via le paillettes però largo ai tacchi alti e al rossetto color fuoco. Caruso invece si sottomette alla giacca blu d'ordinanza (che però resta sepolta sotto il piumino, malgrado il caldo in sala stampa), ma canticchiando quel brano dei 99 Posse che dice «non mi avrete mai come volete voi». E ai compagni no global come Luca Casarini che, racconta, l'hanno criticato per la sua decisione, garantisce: «Continuerò a disobbedire alle leggi ingiuste dello Stato».

Livia Michilli

27 gennaio 2006

Figure 3.4: from Corriere della Sera

In this article from *Corriere della Sera* (Figure 4.4), there is a direct reference to Vladimir's sexuality, which is extremely inappropriate - "half man and half woman," a simplistic, inaccurate, and inadequate way to talk about Vladimir's gender. Vladimir is defined as an "icon of the homosexual world," which not only misrepresents Vladimir's transgender identity but also equates it with being homosexual, perhaps due to the phenomenon that Billard (2016, p. 5) explains as the "trickster" trope. Furthermore, the deadname is mentioned, referring to the deputy's past identity rather than the one they identify with in the present. Finally, the article provides a detailed description of how they dress and apply makeup. This article encompasses almost more than half of the discriminations listed in my analytical framework.

30 marzo 2006

La candidata di Prc ha denunciato l'aggressione in Tv

Luxuria: «Mi hanno lanciato finocchi»

Durante un comizio a Guidonia esponenti di An hanno mostrato uno striscione offensivo. «La polizia è intervenuta in ritardo»

ROMA - Vladimir Luxuria, candidata del Prc alle politiche, ospite a «Era la Rai 21.15» ha denunciato un'aggressione: «Era già successo ad Ardea, ma a Guidonia si è trattato di una cosa più grave. Sono arrivata dove dovevo tenere il comizio e c'erano una quindicina di uomini, tra cui Cipriani e Lombardo, ex consiglieri di Alleanza Nazionale - ha detto Luxuria -. Hanno srotolato uno striscione con la scritta «Ieri falce e martello, oggi falce e pisello e poi avevano dei finocchi che hanno lanciato come se fossero dei sassi. Io ho schivato per un pelo uno di questi finocchi volanti e non c'era la polizia. Le forze dell'ordine sono intervenute dopo 45 minuti».

Figure 4.5: from Il Corriere della Sera

In *Figure 4.5* no particular linguistic issues have been identified, unlike the articles analysed previously. However, I consider this article important because it provides an analysis of the social situation in Italy during that period. The act of throwing fennel represents an allegory of the Italian insult "finocchio," which is used in Italian to derogatorily refer to a homosexual individual. From this, it is also understood that the society of that time did not effectively distinguish between transgender and homosexual individuals, indicating, through the insult mentioned above, that Vladimir was targeted as homosexual.

The last article dating back to 2006 that was analysed (*Figure 4.6*), as the others identified within the *Corriere della Sera*, present the same discriminations already presented so far, concerns the "Bathroom Problem" noted in the first chapter of this thesis.

28 ottobre 2006

Polemiche sull'uso della toilette. Bertinotti: rispettare scelte individuali

La Gardini: «Luxuria esca dal bagno»

«Tu sei un uomo, non puoi stare qui: devi andare in quello degli uomini». L'esponente di Rifondazione: «Sono sotto choc»

ROMA - E' scontro alla Camera sull'uso del bagno delle donne. Ad attaccare la forzista Elisabetta Gardini, a difendersi Vladimir Guadagno Luxuria: «Sono davvero sotto choc, non mi aspettavo un'aggressione verbale di questo genere. E dopo sei mesi di legislatura. Forse all'inizio, ma ora...». Vladimir Luxuria, un po' pallida sotto il trucco, spiega l'incidente che le è capitato poco prima alla toilette di Montecitorio. «Come sempre sono andata nel bagno riservato alle donne. Uscendo mi sono trovata davanti Elisabetta Gardini, un po' agitata, che mi ha apostrofato: "tu sei un uomo, non puoi stare qui devi andare nel bagno degli uomini". All'inizio, per la verità pensavo che scherzasse, poi mi sono resa conto che non era così. Che faceva sul serio. E mi ha anche anticipato che si rivolgerà ai questori della Camera». «Ma io, che devo fare? Io vado nei bagni del sesso del quale mi sento. Se andassi in quello degli uomini, credo proprio che metterei in imbarazzo i colleghi maschi - si è giustificata Luxuria - Mai immaginata una aggressione con questi toni e con questa violenza. Spero che nei prossimi mesi non mi tocchi andare al bagno sentendomi una ladra...». «Spero - dice ancora - che la sua sia una posizione singola e non delle deputate di Forza Italia, e lei mi sembra una persona a volte un pò sopra le righe. Credo invece che essere veramente donna sia anche essere comprensiva...».

GARDINI: «REAZIONE DI PANCIA» - Spiega la Gardini: «La mia è stata una reazione fisica, di pancia. Proprio non mi aspettavo di trovare un uomo nei nostri bagni. Credevo che la questione fosse stata risolta da tempo e trovare Guadagno lì mi ha provocato un trauma. E spontaneamente gliel'ho detto. Adesso mi rivolgerò ai questori affinché trovino una soluzione. Tanto più che il mio disagio è quello avvertito da tante colleghe. Comunque trovo assolutamente eccessivo che la questione, di organizzazione interna, sia stata portata all'esterno. Mi vergogno che si dia una immagine così di basso profilo del Parlamento. Se avessi saputo, sarei stata zitta...».

Figure 4.4: from Il Corriere della Sera

In fact, in this article (*Figure 4.6*), the newspaper describes the discrimination that Vladimir Luxuria had to experience in Parliament when one of her colleagues banned her from entering the women's bathroom (Sandercock, 2015, p. 445).

The journalist also writes Luxuria's deadname, as if to underscore a justified gender distinction, thus making it permissible to exclude women from the bathroom.

Speaking of the 2023 articles, in all those analysed problems such as misgendering, use of deadname, hyperfocus on Vladimir Luxuria's body are no longer present (*Figure 4.7 and Figure 4.8*). The language used is correct and in line with the respect that is expected towards transgender people these days (Style Guide, 2023).

Vladimir Luxuria: «Mio padre era di destra, missino e non approvava fossi trans. Poi mi ha prestato il camion per il gay pride»

di Chiara Maffioletti

L'attivista e attrice condurrà «Il rosso e il nero» insieme a Francesco Storace su Radio2



Figure 4.7: from *Il Corriere della Sera*

A screenshot of a webpage from Il Corriere della Sera. The top part shows a video player with the text "CORRIERE TV" and a video thumbnail of a monkey. Below the video player is a promotional message: "Messaggio Promozionale - video disponibile in 08". The main text reads: "Fabio Fazio, l'esordio da imitatore «Pronto Raffaella»". Below this is an advertisement for "RASOIGOODFELLAS" with the tagline "SHAVE LIKE A MAN" and "Ecommerce leader per la cura dell'uomo". The ad features five yellow stars and the text "Style like a man".

Vladimir Luxuria: «Droghe mai, per un breve periodo mi sono prostituita. Fidanzati? L'amore l'ho solo sognato»

di Alessandra Arachi

L'attivista: «Usavo i vestiti di mia sorella, a Foggia sono stata bullizzata: mi tiravano di tutto, mi facevano la pipì nelle scarpe quando le cambiavo per fare ginnastica. Papà fece fatica ad accettarmi, ora è un militante. Il Parlamento è tornato indietro di anni»



Autobus investe un pedone a Milano: i rilievi della polizia municipale

Figure 4.8: from *Il Corriere della Sera*

It is also true that Luxuria is no longer in politics, but is involved in activism, so perhaps the absence of the political environment and inter-party competition has also reduced the escalation of tones towards the former deputy. Moreover, all of this can also be attributed to the new Code of Ethics for Italian journalists that came into effect in 2021.

However, from the analysed articles, a slight victimization of Vladimir due to her gender identity emerges.

4.1.2.2 La Stampa

The next newspaper that was analysed was *La Stampa*, in particular three articles showed a lot of discriminatory and stereotyping behaviour.



Figure 4.5: from *La Stampa*

In these two articles from *La Stampa*, *Figures 4.9*, *Figures 4.10*, in addition to sensationalist and discriminatory headlines "the real transgression" (*Figures 4.9*) and "il o la trans" (*Figures 4.10*) there is also a hyperfocus on transition: it is written "a man in a woman's body" (*Figure 4.9*) or "man's genitals, woman's brain" (*Figure 4.10*), reinforcing the stereotypical ideas of the binary nature of sex systems, failing to understand that there are nuances and it cannot all be reconnected to simplistic man and woman (Johnson, 2016, p. 468). In *Figure 4.11*, the journalist writes about "the war of sexes" to refer to transgender people, not truly understanding what it means to be transgender, not addressing gender identity but instead framing it as a struggle between only the two existing sexes. Furthermore, all of this contributes to the perpetuation of a sort of stereotyping that affects transgender individuals. In other analysed articles, also misgendering is present.

'Il' o 'la' trans?

Per il «Devoto-Oli», la parola si declina come si vuole

22 Novembre 2009 Modificato il: 22 Novembre 2009 3 minuti di lettura



ROMA
Dicono e scrivono Brenda al femminile o al maschile, per come gli esce sul momento dalla bocca o dalla penna. Tutto buono: lo spiega anche il dizionario Devoto-Oli, «transessuale», aggettivo e sostantivo, maschile e femminile, da declinare a seconda della massima confusione. Il guazzabuglio lessicale riflette il guazzabuglio quotidiano e infatti, ecco, ci sono questi ragazzi che si rifugiano dietro al nickname e preoccupati chiedono all'esperto, o agli interlocutori telematici, se essere andati con i trans significhi essere omosessuali, e le risposte sono spettacolari: dipende da che cosa ci hai fatto, dipende se eri passivo o attivo, dipende da che cosa precisamente ti attraeva.

Qualche anno fa, ai preamboli di un'intervista, Vladimir Luxuria (genitali da uomo, cervello da donna) disse che preferiva essere interpellata al femminile, ma

Figure 4.10: from La Stampa

La guerra dei tre sessi

Gardini caccia Luxuria dal bagno delle donne

28 Ottobre 2006 Modificato il: 28 Ottobre 2006 2 minuti di lettura

Vladimir Luxuria: «Io mi riconosco nel genere femminile, mai avuto problemi con le altre

colleghe». ROMA. «Se Luxuria si sottoponesse ai dovuti interventi e diventasse una donna a tutti gli effetti nessuno avrebbe più nulla da ridire, e sia io che Elisabetta l'accetteremmo di buon grado alla toilette delle signore». L'incredibile proposta arriva dalla deputata di Fi Mara Carfagna, dopo che ieri, a dispetto di spionaggi e Finanziaria, Montecitorio è stato monopolizzato dalle necessità fisiologiche di Vladimir Luxuria. Tutto è iniziato quando la portavoce forzista Elisabetta Gardini ha incontrato il deputato transgender nel bagno delle donne. «Allora è vero che usi i nostri bagni! - l'ha aggredito - Vai fuori, tu sei un uomo. Qui non ci puoi stare». Poi, dopo aver redarguito le addette alle pulizie per averlo fatto entrare, è corsa a lamentarsi coi questori della Camera. Che però hanno dato ragione all'esponente di Rifondazione sottolineando che «le scelte relative alla propria identità sessuale appartengono alla sfera personale di ciascuno e come tali vanno rispettate, specie quando sono note e oggetto di pubblico riconoscimento all'atto dell'elezione a deputato».

Figure 4.11: from La Stampa

MENU CERCA **LA STAMPA** IL QUOTIDIANO ABBONATI ACCEDI

Lo sfogo di Luxuria: "Mi vietano"

La denuncia del deputato del Prc:
07 Novembre 2007 | Modificato il: 07 Novembre 2007 | 1 minuti di lettura



ROMA
Se sei trans non puoi fare da testimone di nozze a un parente. La denuncia arriva dal deputato transgender del Prc, Vladimir Luxuria al quale è stato impedito dal vescovo di partecipare come testimone al matrimonio della cugina al Santuario dell'Incoronata a Foggia. «È un fatto gravissimo - accusa Luxuria - che dimostra ancora una volta la lontananza dei vertici ecclesiastici dalla comunità cattolica, sempre più aperta e tollerante».

«Per quanto mi riguarda - racconta il parlamentare di Rifondazione - ho accettato la richiesta di mia cugina e del futuro marito senza opporre alcun problema riguardo alla scelta di sposarsi con rito cattolico. Sono una persona educata rispetto dei valori altrui e quindi mi sarei aspettata un atteggiamento altrettanto tollerante da parte del vescovo». «Credo che



Figure 4.12: from La Stampa

Figure 4.12 represents another example of misgendering; in fact, all the verbs and pronouns directed towards Vladimir Luxuria are in the masculine form, thus not respecting the gender identification chosen by the Italian politician.

However, in the articles of 2023 of *La Stampa*, as in the case of the *Corriere della Sera*, these delegitimization of transgender people are no longer present (Figure 4.13, Figure 4.14) and term “transgender” is not even inappropriately used to draw the attention of the audience. Although in a deeper analysis I found an article related to Luxuria's life, in which they correlated to trans sex-workers and prostitutes, conveying a wrong image of trans people in the readers' minds and spreading stereotype (Figure 4.15).

Vladimir Luxuria, direttrice del Festival Lovers: “Torino all'avanguardia dell'inclusività”

“Su questo tema la città è sempre stata avanti”

FABRIZIO ACCATINO
16 Aprile 2023 alle 10:32 | 2 minuti di lettura




Figure 4.13: from La Stampa

MENU CERCA **LA STAMPA** IL QUOTIDIANO ABBONATI ACCEDI

Rubriche Obiettivo su Pop&Jazz Teatro Musica classica Cinema&TV In famiglia Appuntamenti Edicola

Sel qui: Home > **Torinosette** f X

VLADIMIR LUXURIA: GIÙ LE MANI DAI NOSTRI FIGLI

TIZIANA PLATZER
17 Marzo 2023 alle 08:11 | 2 minuti di lettura



È arrabbiata. E pronta ad alzare la voce, che non è una novità. Scoraggiata per niente, figurarsi. "Siamo tornati a essere l'oggetto da sventolare per distrarre". Immagine brutalmente antica. Vladimir Luxuria è salda davanti alle discriminazioni quotidiane, oltraggio a quei diritti che pur in modo narrante, sonoro e da spettacolo metteremo al centro della pista del Le Roi venerdì 17 marzo. Con il suo intervento, nella collaborazione con il Lovers Film Festival.

Prime battute per le famiglie arcobaleno?
«C'è talmente tanta carne al fuoco. Il manifesto che ci ha disegnato Vauro per Lovers, un aquilone che si spezza e vola via, oggi, in senso vero, pare un sogno. Sembriamo di nuovo ancorati a una realtà retrograda».



Figure 4.14: from La Stampa

Sex-workers in crisi

DI FLAVIA AMABILE



Trans e prostitute

Figure 4.15: from La Stampa

4.1.2.3. La Repubblica

The newspaper that has most made a broad representation of discrimination (in 2006) against transgender people is *La Repubblica* with the following examples:

04/01/2011 11:42 Repubblica.it > politica > L'Udeur dice sì all'Unione "Ma no ai candidati-Hamas"

A Napoli si è concluso il congresso straordinario del Campanile e Mastella attacca Rifondazione e gli "Hamas all'italiana"

L'Udeur dice sì all'Unione "Ma no ai candidati-Hamas"

Preoccupazione per candidati come il no global Caruso e **la performer transessuale Vladimir Luxuria**



NAPOLI - Sì all'alleanza con il centrosinistra, no agli "Hamas all'italiana". A Napoli il congresso dell'Udeur si è concluso con l'approvazione della mozione finale che ribadisce la collocazione del partito nello schieramento guidato da Romano Prodi, "pur in presenza di divergenze molto forti in punti programmatici", ha sottolineato Clemente Mastella.

Il documento prevede una clausola qualora "gli alleati dell'Unione dovessero venire meno alle intese sottoscritte alla vigilia del congresso". Affidando al segretario Mastella, nel caso questo scenario negativo dovesse concretizzarsi, un "ampio mandato per assumere ogni scelta politica che egli riterrà necessaria".

Dunque Mastella dovrà vigilare affinché alle prossime politiche venga concretizzato "l'inserimento dei 5 candidati iscritti e di area Udeur nelle liste dell'Ulivo a parziale compensazione dei parlamentari eletti dalla coalizione grazie al contributo determinante del partito".

Il segretario dell'Udeur concludendo il congresso straordinario del suo partito, ha voluto riprendere le polemiche con Rifondazione comunista, sottolineando quanto siano pericolose per il centrosinistra le presenze di candidati come il no global Francesco Caruso e **il performer Vladimir Luxuria, rappresentante del mondo gay**.

Figure 4.16: from *La Repubblica*

A 'Porta a porta' l'europarlamentare insulta **il candidato di Rifondazione**
La replica: "Una caduta di stile che rivela la loro vera identità"

Mussolini a Vladimir Luxuria "Meglio fascista che frocio"



ROMA - Un durissimo scambio di battute, condito da una battuta finale che farà polemica: "Meglio fascista che frocio". La frase è stata rivolta da Alessandra Mussolini a Vladimir Luxuria, nel corso della trasmissione Porta a porta, ospiti anche il ministro della Giustizia Roberto Castelli e il leader dell'Italia dei valori, Antonio Di Pietro.

È la prima volta che il candidato di Rifondazione entra nel salotto di Bruno Vespa. Alessandra Mussolini è arrivata in ritardo rispetto all'inizio della registrazione, e con l'umore pessimo per via dell'inchiesta sulle intercettazioni. Ma a quindici minuti dall'inizio della trasmissione, il primo a rivolgersi direttamente a Luxuria è stato il Guardasigilli. Che **lo chiama ripetutamente "signor Guadagno"**, cioè con il vero cognome di Luxuria.

"Se mi chiama signor Guadagno per offendermi, non attacca", replica il candidato di Rifondazione. "Non voglio offendere il signore - incalza Castelli - ma mi dica come chiamarlo: lui, lei...". L'altro taglia corto, con una battuta: "Mi dia del loro".

Ma sono semplici schermaglie rispetto all'affondo finale della Mussolini. Partita già con il piede sbagliato, fin dal principio: "Mi scusi - dice - non voglio essere offensiva, ma che vuol dire transgender? Transgender, transgendermi, sembra Schwarzenegger... Usiamo termini italiani", chiede sorridendo a Luxuria.

Ma gli argomenti in scaletta non favoriscono l'incontro fra culture e storie diverse. Sul Paccs monta il conflitto, con Mussolini e Castelli da un lato, schierati per dimostrare che la legge dell'Unione toglierà i diritti ai bambini, e dall'altro Luxuria e Di Pietro decisi nel respingere il parallelo sostenendo che la legge sarà una conquista di civiltà per tutti.

"Non voglio essere dipinta come nemica dei bambini, non siamo gli Attila arrivati a distruggere", si difende Luxuria, mentre Di Pietro sottolinea: "Lei non mangia i bambini, il vostro è un falso problema".

Figure 4.17: from *La Repubblica*

Fondatore dell' Arcigay offeso in aula dalla Lega

ROMA - Sono le 12 e trenta a palazzo Madama quando, mentre va avanti stancamente la discussione sullo speech di papa Ratzinger a Ratisbona, improvvisamente la Lega aggredisce verbalmente Gianpaolo Silvestri, esponente del gruppo Verdi-Pdci, noto per essere stato tra i fondatori dell' ArciGay. Dai banchi del Caroccio parte un inequivocabile «Bravissima». E a pronunciare la frase sarebbe stato il senatore di Trento Sergio Divina. In aula scoppia subito il caso, si accapigliano sinistra e destra. Il presidente di palazzo Madama Franco Marini cerca di raffreddare gli animi e interviene per difendere Silvestri: «Stigmatizzo con tutta la mia forza qualsiasi offesa, qualsiasi atto irrispettoso nei confronti di chiunque». Il senatore finto nel mirino della Lega cerca di buttarla sullo sportivo - «Ho creduto che volessero dire "brava persona" - e glissa, ma a proteggerlo ci pensano i capogruppo del Verdi-Pdci Emanuela Palmeri e quello di Rifondazione Giovanni Russo Spena. «Me ne sono accorta in tempo e ho richiamato immediatamente l' attenzione di Marini. Quello che è accaduto è un fatto gravissimo che ha rischiato per giunta di passare sotto gamba» dichiara la Palmeri. E Russo Spena rincara la dose: «Ho sentito distintamente la parola "bravissima" diretta contro Silvestri che stava intervenendo e ho chiesto all' ufficio di presidenza del Senato di condannare subito e senza tentennamenti questa vergognosa espressione di intolleranza». La Lega non è nuova a simili manifestazioni. Più d' uno al Senato ha rammentato ieri lo scontro che prima delle elezioni si è svolto a Porta a porta tra l' ex ministro della Giustizia Roberto Castelli, oggi capogruppo della Lega al Senato, e l' allora candidato di Rifondazione Vladimir Luxuria. Castelli incontrava Luxuria per la prima volta e per tutta la trasmissione si ostinò a chiamarlo provocatoriamente "signor Guadagno" spiegando che il vero nome di quello che è poi diventato un deputato di Rifondazione è Wladimiro Guadagno. Luxuria reagì con assoluto fair play. A difesa di Silvestri, e contro la Lega, si schiera l' Arcigay. Il

Figure 4.18: from La Repubblica

Tra i contestatori un gruppo di ex esponenti di Alleanza Nazionale "Vogliono turbare la campagna elettorale"

Luxuria aggredita a Guidonia Insulti e lancio di finocchi

ROMA - Finocchi lanciati come sassi, striscioni più che allusivi. Vladimir Luxuria, il transgender candidato di Rifondazione comunista alla Camera, racconta l'aggressione di Guidonia, un comune vicino Roma. "Era già un successo ad Ardea, ma a Guidonia è stato più grave. Sono arrivata e c'erano una quindicina di uomini, tra cui Cipriani e Lombardo, ex consiglieri di Alleanza Nazionale. Hanno srotolato uno striscione con la scritta "Ieri falce e martello, oggi falce e pisello". E non solo. "Avevano dei finocchi che ci hanno lanciato addosso. Io ho schivato per un pelo uno di questi finocchi volanti e non c'era la polizia. Le forze dell'ordine sono intervenute dopo 45 minuti".

Il successo nel pomeriggio. La sera, fortunatamente, Luxuria era già a ricostruire il fatto negli studi di Canale Italia, alla trasmissione di Pierluigi Diaco. Doveva esserci un comizio a Guidonia. Comizio di Rifondazione con i due candidati del Lazio, Salvatore Bonadonna per il Senato e Luxuria per la Camera. Loro arrivano, ma una quindicina di contestatori presidia la strada. Per Bonadonna è andata così: "L'accesso è stato bloccato da squadre di fascisti, tra questi c'era anche l'ex assessore all'urbanistica Lombardo e il consigliere comunale Cipriani, tutt'e due di Alleanza Nazionale". Le forze dell'ordine ci sono, ma in quel momento non possono fermare la contestazione: sul posto infatti "si vede solo una macchina con due carabinieri", racconta gli esponenti di Prc. Bonadonna e Luxuria si attaccano al telefono, vogliono fare il loro comizio. Chiamano tre volte la Prefettura, chiedono rinforzi, per così dire. Luxuria comunque non si spaventa. I due candidati di Rifondazione scelgono di non rispondere alla provocazione. E più tardi Luxuria parla con il questore di Roma strappandogli la garanzia di una presenza delle polizia alle sue prossime iniziative.

Resta il fatto di ieri. "Vogliono turbare la campagna elettorale - contrattacca Vladimir -. E solo dopo quarantacinque minuti è arrivata la polizia. Da parte nostra abbiamo scelto di non creare disordini cercando un facile scontro. Ma è necessario garantire l'ordine pubblico". Dalle parole di Luxuria si capisce che il suo tour è segnato da piccoli e grandi episodi di questo genere. Ma questa è la prima volta che arriva la denuncia pubblica di un atto di intimidazione. Finora sul transgender sono piovute polemiche verbali: prima inserito nella categoria degli "impresentabili", poi utilizzato dal centrodestra per mettere in discussione la credibilità del centrosinistra. Ma a sorpresa era arrivato il pieno riconoscimento politico di un dirigente di An, Maurizio Gasparri. A Guidonia evidentemente non la pensano come l'ex ministro.
(g. d. m.)

(30 marzo 2006)



Figure 4.19: from La Repubblica

In these examples we see how there are instances of misgendering (*Figure 4.16, Figure 4.17, Figure 4.19*), use of deadname of Luxuria (*Figure 4.17, 4.18*) and also, they use the term transexual when Luxuria is a transgender, they don't know the difference between these two terms, spreading disinformation among people (*Figure 4.16*). In *Figure 4.16* referring to the same issue, they not only label Vladimir Luxuria as transexual but also as a representative of the gay world. This denotes a clear lack of understanding of the LGBTQI+ community.

In addition, in *Figure 4.16* and *Figure 4.19*, the journalists use the term "transgender" when it is not relevant to the story being told.

The most extreme and stereotyping article of *La Repubblica* concerns the headline reported by *Libero*, followed by discrediting image, which says "Luxuria man of the year" (*Figure 4.20*). All of this was done in a mocking sense towards the deputy, referencing the gender with which she does not identify, almost using it to imply that she presumes to be a trans woman.



Figure 4.20: from *La Repubblica*

In recent articles (*Figure 4.21, Figure 4.22*), as in the cases of the previously analysed newspapers, these issues have almost completely disappeared.

Repubblica delle Idee, l'Officina chiude con Vladimir Luxuria: "Dopo le famiglie arcobaleno il prossimo obiettivo saremo noi trans"

di Marcello Radighieri



▲ Carlotta Vagnoli, Vladimir Luxuria e Matteo Macor sul palco di Officina Repubblica

L'attivista: "Cercheranno di delegittimarci. Stiamo in allerta". All'ultima serata dello spazio off del festival, condotto da Matteo Macor, anche Carlotta Vagnoli, Pietro Turano, Luce Sant'Ambrogio, Elena Andrea Pucci, Giacomo Mazzariol e Rachele Scarpa

11 GIUGNO 2023 ALLE 23:45

2 MINUTI DI LETTURA

f L'applausometro esplode quando sul palco salgono Vladimir Luxuria e Carlotta Vagnoli. «Io voglio capire perché c'è gente che deve decidere sul corpo degli altri - scandisce l'attivista ed ex parlamentare - Il punto non è l'utero in affitto o l'adozione. La verità è che pensano che, se tu sei gay o trans, allora non puoi essere un buon genitore. Dopo le famiglie arcobaleno, il prossimo obiettivo saremo noi trans. *Concludono di delegittimarci. Dobbiamo stare in allerta*

VIDEO DEL GIORNO



Figure 4.21: from La Repubblica

Gay Pride, Vladimir Luxuria non cede a Rocca: "Sceneggiata della destra, alzano la posta per reprimere la sfilata"

di Stefano Baldolini



L'ex parlamentare contro la scelta del governatore del Lazio di ritirare il patrocinio alla manifestazione: "Tirano fuori la questione dell'utero in affitto per nascondere ciò che realmente pensano: 'Solo se sei etero hai il diritto di procreare'"

07 GIUGNO 2023 ALLE 09:41

3 MINUTI DI LETTURA



"Attenzione, se la si dà vinta adesso, alzeranno la posta e vorranno reprimere il Pride".

[Leggi anche](#)

Figure 4.22: from La Repubblica

4.1.2.4. Il Sole 24 Ore

The last newspaper analysed is *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

27 aprile 2006

Per la pensione il transessuale ha gli stessi diritti delle donne

di Nicoletta Cottone

Un transessuale operato, passato dal sesso maschile a quello femminile, ha diritto a ricevere parità di trattamento in materia di sicurezza sociale e, dunque, può ottenere la pensione all'età prevista per una donna.

È il succo della sentenza emessa dalla Corte di giustizia europea in relazione alla richiesta di una transessuale inglese, classe 1942, che nel 2001 si è sottoposta a un'operazione chirurgica di mutamento del sesso e nel febbraio 2002 ha presentato la domanda per beneficiare di una pensione di vecchiaia a partire dal sessantesimo anno di età. Domanda respinta dal Secretary of State for work and pensions in quanto presentata prima del compimento dei 65 anni di età. La signora ha impugnato la decisione presso il Social security appeal tribunal che ha investito della controversia la Corte di giustizia europea.

Nella sentenza la Corte ha ricordato come il diritto a non essere discriminati costituisca uno dei diritti fondamentali della persona umana. Inoltre l'ambito di applicazione della direttiva europea 79/77/Cee sulla graduale attuazione del principio di parità tra uomini e donne in materia di sicurezza sociale non può ridursi alle discriminazioni sull'appartenenza all'uno o all'altro sesso, ma deve estendersi anche a chi cambia sesso. In seguito alla conversione sessuale della signora è derivata una disparità di trattamento che costituisce una discriminazione vietata dalla direttiva.

La Corte ha anche respinto l'argomentazione proposta dal Regno Unito secondo la quale la situazione rientra nella deroga che autorizza uno Stato membro a stabilire una diversa età pensionabile per gli uomini e per le donne.

In Italia, segnala l'Inps, non sono ancora state segnalate situazioni analoghe, probabilmente perché sono soprattutto i giovani ad affrontare l'iter dell'operazione per il cambio di sesso. L'Istituto di previdenza segnala, comunque, che la pensione sarà assegnata in base alla condizione anagrafica del richiedente: dunque, per le donne a 60 anni, per gli uomini a 65 anni. Quindi, per la pensione in Italia conta il sesso all'anagrafe del richiedente.

Intanto, però, il transgender Wladimir Luxuria, neo-eletto nelle file di Rifondazione comunista alla Camera fa sapere di avere già nel cassetto una proposta di legge. «Il punto di partenza - dice Luxuria - potrebbe essere la cosiddetta piccola soluzione, simile a quella tedesca, che permettem anche senza che sia intervenuto il bisturi, di cambiare sui documenti d'identità l'indicazione del nome, rispettando così anche burocraticamente, l'identità di genere».








Figure 4.23: from Il Sole 24 Ore

In this article (*Figure 4.23*) misgendering is present and also, they use the word transgender out of context. In the first line of this article the journalist used the term transsexual as well as bringing a reductive explanation, i.e., describing the case of transfeminine, he described the transition in a disrespectful manner, without using the terms recommended by the Style Guide (2023). The very existence of this article is a demonstration of how society at the time did not understand the very existence of transgender people; it is a representation of real discrimination. In all the other article referring to 2006, the same issues were found and also misgendering was present (*Figure 4.24*). In *Figure 4.25*, the journalist refers to Vladimir Luxuria using the term transexual, ignoring the semantic difference between transexual and transgender.

Incidenti a Mosca al Gay pride. Aggrediti Cappato e Luxuria

N.Co.

28 MAGGIO 2007

Condividi su:   | vota su   |   

Gravi incidenti a Mosca nel corso del «Gay pride». Un centinaio di manifestanti che si erano riuniti davanti all'ufficio del sindaco di Mosca Yuriy Luzhkov per consegnare un appello al primo cittadino sono stati attaccati con calci e pugni da ultranazionalisti e ortodossi armati di uova, crocifissi e icone benedette. I manifestanti, fra i quali c'erano Vladimir Luxuria, **deputato** di Rifondazione comunista e Marco Cappato, eurodeputato radicale, sono stati presi a spintoni, picchiati e, in alcuni casi, anche fermati dalla Polizia che ha spalleggiato gli ultras ortodossi e i skin heads presenti. Marco Cappato, che aveva protestato perché la polizia picchiava i manifestanti, è stato caricato su un cellulare e portato al commissariato per alcune ore, insieme ad altri manifestanti. Due responsabili di associazioni gay russe sono stati arrestati per «violazioni delle leggi sul traffico». Trentuno in tutto i fermati dalla Polizia, fra i quali, oltre Cappato, altri parlamentari europei. «Uno tirava i calci a Ottavio Marzocchi», racconta Cappato riferendosi all'assistente parlamentare con lui trasferito nel posto di polizia. «Allora mi sono messo a urlare agli agenti: "Come mai non ci proteggete?"». Si è recato in commissariato per assistere Cappato il console Stefano Verrecchia, che già era intervenuto durante il fermo all'aeroporto della deputata italiana **transgender** Vladimir Luxuria.

Figure 4.24: from *Il Sole 24 Ore*

11/01/2008

Era il 1999 quando Fulvio Abbate ha lanciato in politica Vladimir Luxuria

Era il maggio del 1999 quando dagli schermi di teledurruti lanciavi la candidatura di Vladimir Luxuria alla presidenza della Repubblica. La parola d'ordine era chiara ed essenziale: "Un transessuale al Quirinale". L'autoriconoscimento in certi casi è d'obbligo.

di fulvio abbate

Figure 4.25: from *Il Sole 24 Ore*

In the most recent *Il Sole 24 ore*'s articles these delegitimization are no longer present, Vladimir Luxuria is no longer associated with the term transgender arbitrarily meaningless to the story told (*Figure 4.26 and Figure 4.27*). However, as in the case of *Il Corriere della Sera*, when the articles are about Vladimir Luxuria, she is sometimes portrayed as the victim of events contrary to her gender identity.



Figure 4.26: from Il Sole 24 Ore



Figure 4.27: from Il Sole 24 Ore

In conclusion, from all articles analysed about Vladimir Luxuria, we can see how indeed newspapers, especially in the articles dated between 2006-2009, played a role in conveying a stereotypical and discriminatory perception of the former congresswoman, who appears ridiculed, sexualized, sometimes still categorized as a man or homosexual, rather than

transgender. Around her being both a politician and transgender, a sort of media spectacle is created, with wordplay on her gender identity.

What emerges from this analysis is the prevalence of the misgendering issue; journalists, in fact, do not respect the gender chosen by Vladimir Luxuria. Furthermore, journalists place disproportionate emphasis on Luxuria's physical appearance, failing to treat the portrayal of her looks as tactfully as they would when reporting on cisgender individuals. They employ descriptive language that implies a superficial comprehension of Luxuria's gender identity, thus perpetuating gender stereotypes. Specifically, the focus is directed towards aspects such as clothing choices, hair, and physical attributes, including her legs. Furthermore, as noted by Billard (2016, p.5), the journalist excessively fixated on Luxuria's body and medical history in this article, resulting in sensationalism and objectification: the journalists place emphasis on transition in a clear and explicit way, sometimes speaking precisely of "male genitalia and a woman's brain" (Billard, 2016, p.5).

However, what emerges from this analysis is that the 2006 articles were the example of articles from a time when society seemed not yet ready to have a transgender deputy in government, in fact, discrimination and misinformation were much greater than in the current articles. This is evidence of a society that is increasingly LGBTQI-conscious, more informed, and less likely to discriminate. Although, there are still articles' headlines that highlight the term transgender. This type of title is the so-called emphasizing headlines and are employed to draw the public's attention to the news. Also, as a final consideration, Vladimir Luxuria is currently no longer in politics, this too may have served to decrease sarcastic comments about her person or defamatory comments.

4.2 Monica J. Romano

4.2.1 Biography

As her webpage said, Monica J. Romano was born in 1979 and is an Italian activist, writer and politician. She is the first transgender person elected to the Milan City Council in the city's history (monicaromani.it).

In 1998 she rejected the male gender and began living socially as a girl, choosing the name Monica. Her activism began in the same year at the Milan Arcitrans "Phoenix" club. From 2003 to 2007 she was coordinator of the Milan office and adviser of the national board of the association *Crisalide AzioneTrans* ONLUS.

In 2006 the Italian state, through a court ruling, recognized her name Monica as her legal name. Of the male name she was given at birth, she informally retains only the initial, "J.," "on the one hand to pay tribute to memory, affection and testimony to the first nineteen years of my life, but also to give representation of the nonbinary that I have always felt belonged to me" (monicaromano.it). Today she calls herself a transgender and nonbinary woman.

In 2007 she was appointed a delegate to the council for Cig Arcigay Milano. In 2008 she founded the association "*La Fenice*," of which she was president until March 2009. Her best-known battle is for the right of transgender people to work.

In July 2021 she ran in the municipal elections in Milan with the Democratic Party in support of Mayor Giuseppe Sala, gaining 938 preferences and becoming the first transgender person elected in Milan. She was later elected vice president of the Equal Opportunities and Civil Rights Commission. On May 16, 2022, The City Council approved a motion she proposed establishing the first "Gender Registry" dedicated to transgender citizens in Italy. Together with trans associations in the area, she conceived and organized the "Trans Lives Matter," the first march for transgender rights in Milan.

4.2.2 Analyses: Newspapers Discrimination towards Monica Romano

In this chapter we will analyse newspaper articles from *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa* and *La Repubblica*. Unfortunately, no articles pertaining to Monica Romano were published in *Il Sole 24 ore*, so the search for the councillor will be limited to three newspapers.

4.2.2.1 Il Corriere della Sera

The first articles that were analysed come from *Il Corriere della Sera*.

As we can see in this article (*Figure 4.28*) there are no particular uses of incorrect and disrespectful language, the only notable thing is the remark that she was "the first transgender elected in Palazzo Marino". In this case this information could have been omitted, as it is not essential to the content of the article. Obviously, this is intended to attract the attention of the reading public.

Monica Romano e i video alle borseggiatrici in metrò: «Denunciate alle autorità, non sui social. Azioni legali contro gli hater»

di Chiara Baldi

La consigliera comunale del Pd: «Io vittima di omotransfobia per colpa della mia opinione. Non dobbiamo far passare l'idea che ci si possa fare giustizia da soli»



Ascolta l'articolo 4 min **NEW**

Monica Romano è la consigliera del Pd di Milano - **la prima transgender** eletta a Palazzo Marino - che ha sollevato il tema della legittimità di **video alle borseggiatrici** postati sui social, in particolare dalla pagina Instagram

CORRIERE TV

La guerriglia tra ultrà allo stadio di Parabiago, gli scontri e poi la fuga
Partita di Terza categoria tra il San Lorenzo e il Sant'Ilario di Nerviano

CORRIERE DELLA SERA TI PROPONE



Figure 4.28: from *Il Corriere della Sera*

Correlated to this article (*Figure 4.28a*), is also this tweet used to promote its publication. As evident from the Tweet, the councillor is prominently highlighted as transgender, even though, in fact, the mention is unnecessary for the purpose of the story. All of this is aimed at capturing the audience's attention.



Figure 4.28a: from *Il Corriere della Sera*

In *Figure 4.29*, it is visible the same mistake showed above.



Figure 4.29: from Il Corriere della Sera

In *Figure 4.30*, the fact that Monica Romano is a transgender candidate and LGBTQ activist is extremely emphasized and repeated several times. However, it is partly relevant to the content of the article itself.

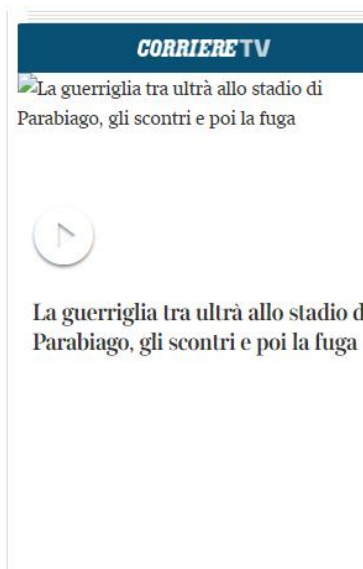
Monica Romano, prima transgender eletta a Milano: «Mi ha chiamato Zan, lotto per le donne uccise dall'odio»

di Fabrizio Guglielmini

La 42enne attivista Lgbt entra in Consiglio comunale con 938 preferenze. Nel 1998 rifiutò il genere maschile e cominciò a vivere socialmente come ragazza, scegliendo il nome di Monica



Figure 4.30: from Il Corriere della Sera



From a general analysis of the other articles (*Figure 4.31*, *Figure 4.32*), apart from the usual emphasis on her being transgender when it's not relevant to the story being told, no other form of discrimination or stereotyping emerges. However, in *Figure 4.31*, the journalist uses

the term sex change in the title. According to the recommendations of the Style Guide (2023), this is outdated and sometimes offensive terminology, which would be better replaced with "transition, gender-affirming care, or transition-related care."

Chi è Monica Romano, dal cambio di sesso alla politica (e alla sfida sulle borseggiatrici): «Sogno la fine delle discriminazioni»

di Chiara Baldi

Classe 1979, Romano è la consigliera pd che ha sollevato il caso dei video social. «Nel 1998 ho rifiutato il genere maschile e comincio a vivere come una ragazza». Il lavoro nelle risorse umane, i romanzi, la seconda laurea



Ascolta l'articolo 4 min

È la prima donna transgender eletta a Palazzo Marino alle elezioni comunali di ottobre 2021: Monica J. Romano, classe 1979, è la consigliera del Pd che in

CORRIERE TV

La guerriglia tra ultrà allo stadio di Parabiago, gli scontri e poi la fuga
Partita di Terza categoria tra il San Lorenzo e il Sant'Illario di Nerviano

CORRIERE DELLA SERA TI PROPONE

Figure 4.31: from *Il Corriere della Sera*

Tra gogna e vergogna

Massimo Gramellini | 14 marzo 2023

Ascolta l'articolo 2 min

La consigliera del Pd milanese [Monica Romano](#) ha scritto che chi riprende le **borseggiatrici** sulla **metropolitana** e ne diffonde in rete le immagini non dà prova di senso civico, ma incita alla **violenza**. Il tribunale dell'internet, subito riunitosi in seduta plenaria, l'ha ovviamente **condannata** ai lavori forzati. Invece secondo me la Romano non ha del tutto **torto**, anche se ha **ragione** soltanto a metà. Ha ragione quando dice che mettere le ladruncole alla gogna non contribuisce a farle **arrestare**, ma a titillare i peggiori **impulsi** dei potenziali giustizieri. Però ha torto quando si dimentica di **aggiungere** che i cittadini fanno benissimo a **riprendere** chi ruba sui mezzi pubblici. Purché le immagini vengano consegnate alle **forze dell'ordine**, anziché essere date in pasto ai **social**.

Questo concetto Monica Romano lo ha precisato in seguito

Una tazza sul Corriere
"Il caffè pausa, il luogo di si scher, consola

Figure 4.32: from *Il Corriere della Sera*

4.2.2.2 La Stampa

The next newspaper analysed is *La Stampa*.

CONTENUTO PER GLI ABBONATI PREMIUM

Pestaggio a Milano, la consigliera transgender Monica Romano: “Scossa e sgomenta. Meloni condanni la violenza sulle nostre vite, tornare indietro è facile”

La vicepresidente della commissione Pari Opportunità e diritti civili di Palazzo Marino: «Nella comunità lgbtq+ siamo le identità più esposte. Sicuri che gli agenti avrebbero reagito così di fronte a un uomo bianco, eterosessuale e cisgender?»

PASQUALE QUARANTA
24 Maggio 2023 | Aggiornato 25 Maggio 2023 alle 01:06 | 2 minuti di lettura



Figure 4.33: from *La Stampa*

MENU CERCA LA STAMPA IL QUOTIDIANO ABBONATI ACCEDI

Sel qui: Home > Premium > Articolli

CONTENUTO PER GLI ABBONATI PREMIUM

La consigliera transgender: “Spazzata via la destra, Milano è diventata davvero la capitale dei diritti”

Parla Monica Romano eletta con 938 preferenze: «La città lo dimostra con i fatti. Adesso apriamo un rainbow center»

CHIARA BALDI
10 Ottobre 2021 | Modificato il: 10 Ottobre 2021 | 1 minuti di lettura



Figure 4.34: from *La Stampa*

MENU CERCA LA STAMPA IL QUOTIDIANO ABBONATI ACCEDI

Omotransfobia, a Milano ci sarà il primo Registro di Genere per le persone transgender: “Avranno il nome di elezione su badge e tessere”

L'iniziativa della consigliera dem Monica Romano, la prima donna transgender eletta a Palazzo Marino

CHIARA BALDI
17 Maggio 2022 alle 08:02 | 1 minuti di lettura



Dare modo alle **persone transgender** di essere riconosciute anche da un punto di vista burocratico-amministrativo dal momento che in Italia «vivono in un limbo giuridico con documenti che sono del tutto incongruenti con l'aspetto esteriore e l'identità sociale, mantenendo il nome anagrafico e il sesso di origine su tutti i documenti di riconoscimento». Nasce quindi da questo presupposto il primo Registro italiano per il riconoscimento del genere di elezione dedicato proprio alle persone la cui identità di genere non corrisponde al genere e/o al sesso che è stato determinato loro alla nascita. Un numero che in Italia è stimato essere intorno alle 400 mila.

L'iniziativa politica, che alla vigilia della **Giornata mondiale contro l'omotransfobia** è stata approvata in Consiglio Comunale a Milano, è partita dalla **prima consigliera transgender** di Milano **Monica Romano**: «Oggi le persone transgender devono affrontare percorsi che

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Figure 4.35: from *La Stampa*

La prima marcia transgender a Milano: “La nostra identità non è una moda”

Presenti Monica Romano, prima consigliera transgender eletta a Milano e Vladimir Luxuria, prima parlamentare trans eletta in Europa

SIMONA BUSCAGLIA

20 Novembre 2022 | Aggiornato alle 21:00 | 2 minuti di lettura



Figure 4.36: from La Stampa

In *Figure 4.33*, *Figure 4.34*, *Figure 4.35* and *Figure 4.36*, the term "transgender" is used very often in relation to the councillor. However, these are always articles regarding LGBTQ rights, hence relevant to the context. Nevertheless, it would be better to avoid the constant repetition of the fact that Monica Romano is the first transgender councillor elected in Milan, as this also appears as a tactic to attract public attention. In addition, there are no visible cases of misgendering or incorrect use of pronouns, etc.

Bruna, la donna trans pestata dai vigili: "Potevano ammazzarmi, ho paura ma li denuncerò"

Bruna, la donna trans presa a manganellate dalla polizia municipale a Milano, parla dell'aggressione: "Non sono stata aggressiva" racconta. L'intervista di Monica Serra. Monica Romano, consigliera transgender al Comune di Milano: "Scossa e sgomenta. Meloni condanni la violenza sulle nostre vite, tornare indietro è facile" di Pasquale Quaranta, Diversity Editor de La Stampa

25/05/2023 | 02:05

Figure 4.37: from La Stampa

As seen in this article (*Figure 4.37*) discussing a trans woman being assaulted by *vigili*, the journalist references to Monica Romano as transgender councillor. In this case the use of this term is not necessary to story being told.

From all the analysed articles, the same recurring theme found in *Corriere della Sera* emerges, namely the unjustified emphasis on Romano's transgender identity. Furthermore, it is also possible to understand that, from the articles analysed so far, interest in the LGBTQI

world has grown exponentially, in fact I have noticed an exponential increase in articles on LGBTQI rights (Billard, 2016, p. 7).

4.2.2.3 La Repubblica

The last newspaper analysed is *La Repubblica*.



Figure 4.38: from *La Repubblica*

From the analysis of the articles from *La Repubblica* (Figure 4.38, Figure 4.39, Figure 4.40, Figure 4.41 and Figure 4.42), it has emerged that, unlike the previous two newspapers, they do not mention Monica Romano's transgender identity when it is unnecessary for the story. They especially avoid using sensationalized headlines on the transgender topic. Here we can see an important improvement compared to the articles of *La Repubblica* in which Vladimir Luxuria was the protagonist. *La Repubblica*, as a newspaper, has managed to adapt well to the changing world, a world that is increasingly opening up with more respect for transgender individuals and the LGBTQI community. However, in some of the text of the articles, as evidenced in Figure 4.39, I identified misuse of the word transgender when unnecessary. These cases are very few.

Polemica sui video delle borseggiatrici in metrò a Milano, la consigliera Romano: "Sono una violenza, non siamo nel far west"

a cura della redazione Milano



(fotogramma)

La consigliera dem pubblica sui social una riflessione su chi filma e chi diffonde i video dei borseggi, arrivano insulti e attacchi: "La violenza è di chi ogni giorno va in metropolitana a rubare"

13 MARZO 2023 AGGIORNATO ALLE 14:30

3 MINUTI DI LETTURA

in

p

Il riferimento diretto è alle quotidiane denunce di borseggi in vagoni e mezzanini della metropolitana, spesso a opera di donne più o meno giovani che, a ogni denuncia, tornano a rubare. E' su Twitter che Rocco Tanica, tra i fondatori di Elio e le storie tese, va giù diretto: "Sì, basta con questa violenza del filmare le rom borseggiatrici, cittadine europee che chiedono solo rispetto e tranquillità. Grazie Monica Romano, vicepresidente della Commissione Pari Opportunità e Diritti Civili presso il Comune di Milano per questa grandiosa stronzata". Ma le parole di Tanica sono solo un prologo. Perché per ore Romano, **che è la prima consigliera transgender** del Comune di Milano, riceve attacchi da molte parti. Insulti sessisti pesanti, offese.

Figure 4.39: from La Repubblica

CONTENUTO PER GLI ABBONATI PREMIUM

f X e in p

La candidata Monica Romano: "Io, prima donna transgender in Consiglio comunale, è arrivata l'ora di riuscirci"



Monica Romano

di Giuseppina Piano

"La mia elezione sarebbe il riconoscimento del nostro attivismo. Pregiudizi? Me li aspetto da chi ne fa una bandiera politica. Sulla legge Zan siamo preoccupati per Italia Viva. A Renzi ho detto che cancellare l'identità di genere significa non tutelare le persone dall'odio"

23 LUGLIO 2021 ALLE 08:00

3 MINUTI DI LETTURA

Figure 4.40: from La Repubblica

MENU | CERCA | NOTIFICHE

la Repubblica

ABBONATI | GEDI SMILE | ACCEDI

CONTENUTO PER GLI ABBONATI PREMIUM

f X in

Il Consiglio comunale dei diritti di Milano: da Monica Romano, la prima transgender a Palazzo Marino, a Mazzei animatore di Massa Marmocchi

di Alessia Gallione



A. Lisa Noja, Monica Romano e Michele Albiani

Con le nomine della giunta Sala entrano in Consiglio i primi non eletti dei partiti di maggioranza: dall'ex vicepresidente della Comunità ebraica Nahum alla parlamentare Lisa Noja, già delegata per le politiche sulla disabilità. Insieme per costruire una Milano contro tutte le discriminazioni

12 OTTOBRE 2021 AGGIORNATO ALLE 15:57

3 MINUTI DI LETTURA

Figure 4.41: from La Repubblica

MENU | CERCA | NOTIFICHE

la Repubblica

ABBONATI | GEDI SMILE | ACCEDI

CONTENUTO PER GLI ABBONATI PREMIUM

f X in

Governo Meloni, la consigliera transgender Monica Romano: "Una marcia per i nostri diritti, saremo i primi bersagli"

di Giuseppina Piano



A. (fotogramma)

La prima consigliera transgender di Milano: "Il 20 novembre porteremo in piazza le foto delle vittime di omotransfobia"

05 NOVEMBRE 2022 AGGIORNATO ALLE 11:49

2 MINUTI DI LETTURA

f X in

La prima marcia a Milano organizzata dalle associazioni transgender, l'Associazione per la cultura e l'etica transgenere e Sportello trans di Ala Milano, è fissata il 20 novembre. Perché il momento è adesso: "Vediamo una stagione politica non favorevole alle battaglie per i diritti civili. E abbiamo motivo di ritenere che le persone transgender saranno i primi bersagli delle azioni del nuovo governo."



actu

Sp...
Celebriamo i progressi delle nostre aziende

secondo m...

Figure 4.42: from La Repubblica

As previously announced, although Il Sole 24 Ore had numerous articles about Vladimir Luxuria, they have not written any about Monica Romano. Therefore, the search did not yield any satisfactory results.

4.4 Findings

From the sample of these 42 articles, it emerged that, concerning Vladimir Luxuria during her candidacy in 2006, discriminatory, sexist, stereotypical, and incorrectly written articles about transgender individuals were practically the majority. All the newspapers analysed presented

cases of misgendering, incorrect use of pronouns not in line with Luxuria's recognized gender, mocking of her person, use of the deadname, sensationalist headlines to attract the public's attention, references to her being transgender when irrelevant to the story, hyper-focus on her transition, and hyper sexualization of Vladimir's body, as well as a detailed and inappropriate description of it (Billard, 2016, p. 5). Furthermore, the images used in the articles emphasized the newspapers' constant discrimination against Luxuria. I believe this is the evidence of how the newspapers at the time were vehicles for such defamation against Vladimir Luxuria as a political candidate, discrediting her commitment and her transgender identity, as well as serving as means of disinformation for the population that read those newspapers and formed opinions. Moreover, the newspapers of that time may have reflected a society not ready to accept Vladimir Luxuria in politics. Current newspapers, on the other hand, no longer make the same mistakes of the past, especially given that the former deputy is no longer in politics. They are careful not to engage in misgendering and understand the differences between transsexual and transgender individuals, evidence of a more informed public and journalists, the result of years in which the topic has become an integral part of modern society, gaining more attention and interest (Jobes, 2013, p. 6). From this, it is interesting to note how over time, discrimination has decreased in favour of the inclusion of an audience that is increasingly attentive to LGBTQI community issues. Furthermore, there has been an increase in articles concerning not only the transgender individual per se but also activism for the LGBTQI community, struggles against discrimination, and so on.

All of this is true, with the exception of *Il Sole 24 Ore*, a newspaper that, instead of increasing the number of articles on this topic, has remained significantly lower in number compared to general news. In the case of Vladimir Luxuria, we saw how articles about her were written as a politician and concerning the laws she proposed, of course, with cases of misgendering and improper use of the term "transgender." In the case of Monica Romano, however, it was not possible to find a single article about the councillor, not even about her election.

Regarding Monica Romano, we have seen articles related to her candidacy and her actions as a politician in *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, and *La Repubblica*. In all of these articles, there were no instances of misgendering or inappropriate use of pronouns. Additionally, in many articles, the councillor was not referred to as transgender but solely as a politician. However, especially in *Il Corriere della Sera* and *La Stampa*, the use of emphatic headlines or the term "transgender" without relevance to the story being told is more frequent, driven

by journalists' interest in capturing the public's attention on a trending and increasingly important topic in today's society.

Chapter 5: Unmasking Prejudices

The study of this thesis indicates that an evolution in Italian media's treatment of transgender individuals has occurred. If, in the analysed articles dated 2006-2009, the presence of significant discrimination and stereotyping against Vladimir Luxuria is evident, characterized by almost all forms of delegitimization listed in the analytical framework developed in this thesis, in the articles from 2021-2023 (both about Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano), a change from both a linguistic and semantic perspective is witnessed. In fact, Journalists write about transgender individuals carefully, respecting their gender identity in the selection of pronouns and gendered language. There are no longer hyper focalizations on appearance or transition of the transgender individuals, and it seems that journalists are informed about the meaning of transgender; in fact, they no longer confuse it with other terms within the LGBTQI+ community. Therefore, the media are no longer conveying delegitimization and misinformation about the two political candidates analysed. However, despite this positive evolution in the representation of transgender individuals, it is clear that a representation free of discrimination has not yet been achieved. Therefore, even though the role of the media as a vehicle for discrimination against Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano has almost become negligible, there are still some aspects that need improvement, especially the tendency to victimize transgender individuals because of their gender identity, the emphasis on the term "transgender" to attract public attention and increase article readership, and consequently, the inappropriate use of the term "transgender" when unnecessary. Therefore, the analysis highlights how the media served and serves as a mean to disseminate discriminating idea, shaping or influencing readers or viewers' perceptions, who are often led to read the story based on the journalist's chosen connotations (Jobes, 2013, p. 6; Padovani et al., 2021, 342). What also emerges is a particular sharpening of considerations when a transgender person becomes a politician, as they become the attentional focus of newspaper articles that are quick to discriminate and belittle them as not conforming to the binary system imposed by society (Butler, 1999, p. 10) or making them an enticing focal point to attract readers, emphasizing their transgender identity when it's not necessary for the context of the story.; in fact, Jones et al. (2018, p. 273) talked and demonstrated the prevailing resistance to transgender candidates. So, the present study assessed how the media have been instrumental in delegitimizing and discriminating against transgender individuals, especially over the course of nearly 20 years. Nevertheless, during these 20 years, newspapers have transformed their writing and approach to transgender individuals to adapt to an increasingly open society

towards these issues. On the bases of Clark's (1969, p.18-22) four stages in the representation of minority groups in media, it is possible to affirm that Vladimir Luxuria in 2006 was in the ridicule stage, she was portrayed in manners that provoke mockery and derision from audiences. Nowadays Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano are depicted by the newspapers in ways that conform to majority "norms" of respect for and protection of the representation of gender identity, because we are in the regulation stage. Media have, of course, ridden the wave of the central role that the LGBTQI community has gained in recent years, almost commercializing their articles by incorporating the term "transgender" even when not necessary. This can be linked to what Fleras (2014, p. 3-36) has discussed, explaining that traditional media are influenced by the media gaze and in its crucial role in shaping what is considered standard, licit or attractive. This gaze creates a meaningful interaction between those being written about and readers. Fleras argues that the "gaze" includes deliberate observation, the attribution of meaning to the object of examination, and the establishment of an asymmetrical power relationship between the observer and the observed. As we have also seen in this study, and as consistently emphasized by Fleras, representation influences the preconceptions of the audience receiving the information. So, in the case of the newspapers in 2006, their aim was to discredit a figure like Vladimir Luxuria to attract the attention of the readers and conform to the discriminatory society of that period, while currently, the focus is more on attracting the audience towards them, satisfying, at the same time, the growing focus on transgender individuals in both popular culture and political discourse (Jones et al., 2018, p. 273).

Furthermore, in this case, as explained by Richardson (2016, p.10), culture has played a dominant role in shaping the representations of both Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romani, who are also scrutinized through a political lens. Additionally, as also elucidated by McInroy and Craig (2017, p. 34), in articles depicting Vladimir Luxuria, she appears as both a victim and the object of ridicule, as seen in the "Bathroom Problem" and in the article where it is mentioned that fennels were thrown at her in protest against her political position.

McLaren (2018, p. 17-20) explains that when transgender people are featured in newspaper articles or films, they often conform to stereotypes that have already been used in previous films or television programs. Here in the case of Vladimir Luxuria, the newspapers focus on her physical appearance, describe it, talk about the surgeries she has undergone, so as to be able to re-categorize her within the binary system of the sexes, so as to reduce the impact of a policy that differs from what Italy was used to and that talks about rights that Italy at the time still could not understand (Sandercock, 2015, p.175). Furthermore, journalists perpetuate the

stereotypes to which the social, political, and cultural context has accustomed them. Linked to this is Johnson's (2016, p. 468) study in which he discusses the "born-in-the-wrong-body" discourse, explaining how it is influenced by the medical model, which sees transgender people as needing medical or surgical intervention to correct an "error of nature." This model perpetuates the idea that transgender people are born in the wrong body and discourages alternative narratives that see gender identity as fluid, emergent, process-driven or shaped by social norms and influences. Therefore, journalists try to fix Luxuria's being transgender in order to reinforce the assumption of gender binary, as said above. In addition, in line with Siebler (2012, p. 76), the stereotypical portrayals of transgender individuals who undergo surgery and hormone therapy can foster the belief that these actions are obligatory to "conform to the image of a satisfied transqueer". This suggests adhering to the expectations of either becoming an extremely masculine male or an exceedingly feminine female.

Furthermore, we can say that Vladimir broke what is commonly referred to as the "Glass Ceiling," as discussed by Krijnen and Van Bauwel (2015, p. 105-120). The consequence of this sudden breakthrough was, in turn, the sexualization of the deputy, as observed in many articles, ultimately leading to symbolic annihilation, which is the stereotyping of her identity.

Another phenomenon that was observed is the "Bathroom Problem." Articles describing the incident, victimizing and segregating Vladimir Luxuria, were almost a manifestation of how the society of that time (2006-2009) sought to bring back into line a situation that did not conform to the traditional binary system. However, this issue is only evident in articles dating back 20 years, as there is now more awareness and knowledge among the population regarding both transgender individuals and the LGBTQI+ community. Consequently, his problem occurs less and less frequently. In fact, there is no trace of it in the recent articles analysed.

For Monica Romano, the situation is different since she was elected in 2021, riding the wave of the increasingly relevant LGBTQI movement in society (Jobe, 2013, p. 6). She has experienced fewer injustices and discriminations compared to Vladimir Luxuria. Indeed, among the analysed articles, there were no references to her physical appearance, transition, misgendering etc. However, the general trend in the newspapers I examined still portrays the councillor as a victim rather than a prominent figure actively fighting for transgender rights. The headlines describing her and her actions often reference violence endured, continually depicting her as a victim in the eyes of the readers (McInroy and Craig, 2017, p. 34). Nevertheless, it can be concluded that, in general, aside from the previously identified

phenomena, there has been significant improvement in the representation of transgender individuals as a whole.

The question to be asked in this is whether Monica Romano, in *Il Sole 24 ore*, is subjected to what Gerbner and Gross (1976, p. 182) refer to as "symbolic annihilation," which is a phenomenon that involves the deliberate omission of individuals or issues on the margins of political hierarchies and social acceptance. Billard (2016, p. 3) adds that it is one of the ways in which groups and issues are marginalized, rendering them invisible, as the media may choose not to cover them. However, the studies presented in chapter two and the one conducted in this thesis, demonstrated that the "symbolic annihilation" of transgender people is gradually diminishing.

On the bases of Clark's (1969, p.18-22) four stages in the representation of minority groups in media, for the future, it is hoped that the media will reach the final stage of respecting minorities, representing them fully and fairly, on par with majority figures. In addition, it is possible to affirm that language plays a central role in message production and the transmission of cultural values (Hall S., Evans J., Nixon S., 2013, p. 581-92).

The last issue to focus on is the causes of this improvement in the representation of transgender politicians. As seen in the previous chapters, the world of journalism is constantly influenced by the political realm, which sometimes becomes the primary source of information (Padovani et al., 2021, 317-319). Therefore, it can be asserted that any article concerning Vladimir Luxuria or Monica Romano is written under the weight of this perspective. Furthermore, it is influenced by the various codes of ethics and professional standards of the newspapers analyzed. While the "Testo Unico dei Doveri del Giornalista" came into effect with its latest version on January 1, 2021, the internal codes of ethics of the various newspapers, namely *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, *La Repubblica*, and *Il Sole 24 Ore*, were written long before. With that said, an increase in coverage of these two politicians can be observed only in recent times, while in the past, for example, in the case of *Il Corriere della Sera* - a newspaper where the code of ethics was put into effect in 2004 - Vladimir Luxuria faced significant discrimination and stereotyping. It's important to note that both current and past codes of ethics, if they do not advocate for the rights of individuals in general, do not include "rules" aimed at safeguarding the language used concerning the LGBTQ community or their identity; in fact, they are hardly ever mentioned. Therefore, as explained by Padovani et al. (2021, 342), these codes of ethics are not always adhered to and, in most cases, especially in the articles dated 2006-2009, they are completely ignored. Naturally, in my opinion, the present-day improvement in the way journalists write about

transgender individuals has been greatly influenced by the "Testo Unico dei Doveri del Giornalista," which has contributed to establishing unified standards for Italian journalists to follow.

Nevertheless, I believe that in addition to the issues mentioned above, one of the major drivers of change for journalists can be found in the significant cultural shift in today's society. As explained by Jobes (2013, p. 5), Billard (2016, p. 2), and Jones et al. (2018, p. 253), there has been a progressive increase in attention to the rights and issues of the LGBTQI community, followed by a growing interest in these individuals. This has led to greater public awareness about the language and behaviours to use when addressing them. This change has been partly driven by the wave of "politically correct" and is, in part, one of the main reasons for the significantly improved treatment of transgender individuals, even in the political sphere, where some articles are still considered unethical and highly defamatory. Padovani (2021, p. 327) further explains that since the credibility of information sources is primarily based on the experience and professional culture of journalists, it is logical that a societal change not only affects people in general but also impacts journalists who find themselves following this informational wave and adapting to it.

Nonetheless, this societal change has inadvertently or deliberately led to the use of the term "transgender" to capture the reader's attention. As a result, this phenomenon has simultaneously given rise to a different form of discrimination. While in the past, transgender individuals were "despised" and "ridiculed," they are now often publicly highlighted for being transgender, used to grab the audience's attention, even when the context of the article does not necessitate its use.

Therefore, in conclusion, society and journalism, although evolved, still have significant strides to make in order to write about or treat transgender and LGBTQI communities without a shadow of discrimination.

Conclusions

Through the qualitative research conducted, I have been able to demonstrate that media discrimination against transgender individuals, both in politics and otherwise, still exists, but it has improved over time. It is no longer as explicit, defamatory, and disrespectful but takes milder forms, albeit still present.

Anyway, first, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of my research. The texts on which I based my study - “*Media’s Influence on Perceptions of Trans Women*”, of Haley E. Solomon & Beth Kurtz-Costes (2017), “*Writing in the Margins: Mainstream News Media Representations of Transgenderism*”, by Thomas J. Billard (2016) and “*Explaining public opinion toward transgender people, rights, and candidates*” by Jones, Brewer, Young, Lambe and Hoffman (2018) - are surveys conducted in the United States, specifically surveys carried out on the American population. I used these studies to develop an analytical framework for analysing the articles I selected. I turned to American studies due to the absence of in-depth research on this topic in the Italian context. However, for the purpose of my research, these studies proved to be extremely useful and necessary to better understand the issues at hand. Furthermore, essentially the research conducted by me has shown that there is indeed a sort of parallelism with American studies, in fact, the same phenomena have been observed, especially by Billard (2016).

Specifically, this thesis focused on analysing media discrimination, through the analysis of newspaper articles from the four most widely circulated newspapers in Italy, according to *Accertamenti Diffusione Stampa*, namely, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, *La Repubblica*, and *Il Sole 24 Ore*. The two political figures analysed through these articles were Vladimir Luxuria and Monica Romano; the former was a parliamentary deputy for the political party *Rifondazione Comunista*, who is no longer in politics, and the latter is a councillor in the municipality of Milan. Both have been and are subject to media discrimination.

The in-depth research conducted in this thesis revealed that, in the case of Vladimir Luxuria, the newspapers from the period 2006-2009 exhibited marked instances of discrimination, such as misgendering, the use of pronouns that did not correspond to Vladimir Luxuria's chosen gender, the use of the deadname, clear mockery and ridicule of the candidate, confusion between the terms transgender and transsexual, as well as associations of Vladimir with homosexuality, hyper-focus and sexualization of her body and clothing, references to the surgical operations she underwent and hyper-focusing on her transition, references to Vladimir's previous gender, categorizing her as a man at times, describing her as "half man

and half woman". In articles from 2021-2023 about Vladimir, none of these elements are present anymore. The former deputy is not even associated with the term transgender unless necessary for the context of the story.

Similarly, in articles between 2021 and 2023, Monica Romano does not face any language discrimination or mockery. The only inappropriate use in the articles concerning her is precisely the use of the term transgender when it is not necessary for the story being told, the use of emphatic titles with the term transgender to attract the reader's attention and also the victimization of her as transgender.

The following analytical framework (*Table 5.1*) have been building on the Trans Journalist Association Style Guide (2023), GLAAD, and Billard's (2016) suggestions.

Table 5.1: Analytical Framework on discrimination against Luxuria and Romano over time

Delegitimizations	Vladimir Luxuria		Monica Romano
	2006-2009	2021-2023	
Misgendering	X		
The presence of misrepresentation of transgender identity	X		
The perception of transgender as deceiving	X		
The sexualization of transgenders' body	X		
The use of transgenders' deadname instead of the use of their chosen name.	X		
The categorization of a person's identity based on assumptions or stereotypes	X		
Reference to transgender person's past, without understanding their journey	X		
Absence of differentiation between different terms such as transgender, transsexual, non-binary...etc. and using them correctly to refer to the subject.	X		
Hyperfocus of the transition	X		

Use of a transgender person's identity as a 'shock tactic' to attempt to surprise or grab the audience's attention.	X		X
Not understanding that a transgender identity is not always equated to a surgical transition, and respecting different individual identities and journeys.	X		
Mentioning a transgender person's assigned sex at birth when it is not pivotal to the story's understanding.	X		
Mentioning that an individual is transgender when it is not necessary for the context of the story being told.	X		X
Victimization of transgender		X	X
Mocking of Transgender Identities	X		

From this table, what emerges overall is an improvement in the treatment of Vladimir Luxuria. In all the recent articles analysed, none of the issues found in past articles is present. From a linguistic and semantic perspective, there has been a significant improvement in the way she is portrayed. The only thing that is still noticeable is that in many articles, Vladimir is portrayed as a victim due to her transgender identity. At the same time, Monica Romano does not experience discrimination through incorrect gender language or semantically. However, it is evident that she is often portrayed as a victim based on her gender identity, and the term "transgender" is used when not necessary for the story being told, aiming to attract the attention of the reading public.

The *Table 5.1* shows an overall improvement, as discussed earlier in this thesis, that is primarily due to three factors. The first factor is the increasing global interest in the LGBTQI community and its rights, which has led to greater awareness among the public and journalists regarding these issues. People are paying much more attention to how to talk or write about this community. In fact, the studies by Solomon and Kurtz-Costes (2017) demonstrate that media influence on the perception of transgender individuals is significant in shaping public opinion. As evidence, articles from 2006-2009, written in a society influenced by numerous films, stories, and popular beliefs based on stereotypes and misinformation, are emblematic of strong media discrimination and a reflection of the mindset of that era. Nowadays, we are exposed to greater accessibility to information and, therefore, we are

responsible for our own education, which is also reflected in recent newspaper articles. In fact, journalists are more aware and respectful, influenced by the wave of "political correctness."

The second factor, which is important and worth mentioning, is the enforcement and adoption of the "Testo Unico dei Doveri del Giornalista" (The Unified Text of Journalists' Duties) by all the newspapers analysed. Although this code lacks any reference to gender (in)equality issues, such as fair representation, voice, and the diversity of sources, or the utilization of gender-inclusive language, it provides basic guidelines for the treatment of human rights.

Furthermore, as third factor, I have noticed a considerable increase in the intensity of opinions or a greater use of the term "transgender" when not necessary in political articles. In the articles about Vladimir Luxuria from the past, discrimination was numerous, but in the present, it is truly minimal. This is probably due to the fact that Vladimir Luxuria is no longer in politics. On the other hand, it is evident that in the case of Monica Romano, her political position is almost always associated with the term "transgender," even when it is not relevant to the story, as if journalists want to emphasize this "peculiarity" and thus attract the reader's attention. So, I have noticed that articles discussing political contexts are the ones that demonstrate a pronounced tendency towards discrimination, as evident both in Billard (2016) and in Jones et al. (2018).

After what has been exposed so far, I can affirm that the purpose of this thesis is also to encourage and suggest to the Italian National Council of the Order of Journalists to update its code of ethics, incorporating these themes and making it more inclusive. This could lead to achieving the ideal form of representation for transgender individuals and the LGBTQI community, bringing them to the final stage of respecting minorities, fully and fairly representing them, on par with majority figures, as discussed by Clark (1969, p.18-22).

Moreover, it would be interesting and possible to apply this research to European studies with the intention of expanding the research on discrimination against transgender individuals in politics through newspapers to other countries. This would help determine if the ethical codes of newspapers in European nations influence the way they write about their political candidates, or if cultural and social influences are so strong that they impact how the media portrays these figures. It would be interesting to examine the degree of discrimination present in different European countries against transgender political candidates. This would help determine if they are as likely as Americans to vote for a transgender candidate from their political party, or if they are more inclined to vote for a cisgender candidate from the

opposing party, simply to avoid voting for a transgender candidate from their own party (Jones et Al., 2018).

To achieve this, part of the purpose of my thesis is to propose an analytical framework that identifies what to consider in the analysis of newspaper articles to avoid discrimination. This manifesto was created thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Public Values & ICT 2022/23 laboratory and contains recommendations for Italian and European journalists regarding the accurate representation of transgender individuals. It can also be considered a guide for media analysis to identify the presence of stereotypes or discrimination by journalists and producers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE REPORTING ON TRANSGENDER WOMEN IN POLITICS

Maintain a respectful and formal tone in interaction	Avoid using transgender deadname and don't ask about it or refer to it
Use the current name or transgender's chosen name	Avoid misgendering
Use the correct pronouns (in case of uncertainty, always ask the person their pronouns to avoid any harm)	Avoid putting emphasis on the pronoun used by a person or its gender
Use appropriate terms to refer to transgender medical background, only when it's necessary	Avoid mentioning a transgender person's assigned sex at birth unless it is pivotal to the story's understanding
Prioritize respectful and balanced reporting that centres on substantive aspects of their lives and experiences	Avoid confusing gender and anatomy
Highlight stories of trans individuals leading happy and successful lives and not only stories of trans trauma	Avoid posing offensive or inappropriate questions
Be aware of the differences between different terms such as transgender, transsexual, non-binary etc. and using them correctly to refer to the subject.	Avoid inquiring about someone's genitals, hormone usage, or medical treatments

Use the term transgender or highlight the transgender identity only when necessary to the story or when it's related to transgender issues	Avoid discussing the genitalia, body parts, or surgical status of a transgender person, unless it is relevant.
Avoid victimizing transgender people in stories	Avoid hyper focusing on transgender bodies or the way they dress
Understanding that a transgender identity is not always equated to a surgical transition, and respecting different individual identities and journeys.	Avoid categorizing a person's identity based on assumptions or stereotypes (such as equating transgender people with cross-dressers, making assumptions about their lifestyle, choices, health etc.)
Mistakes can happen, in that case, taking accountability and rectifying any mistakes would be the correct thing to do.	Avoid using stereotyping description of transgender, for example "tall trans women, high-pitched voices in trans men, or large hands in trans women"
Avoid slurs or the use of adjectives related to sexual perversion, addiction, etc.	Avoid hyper focusing on the transition
Avoid any descriptive word that might delegitimize a transgender person's experience.	Avoids using sensationalist headlines and transgender identity as a "shock tactic" to try to surprise or capture the attention of the audience's attention.
Avoid using descriptive language that suggests a superficial understanding of a trans person's gender identity or implies that they are reinforcing gender stereotypes	Avoids mocking transgender identity
Reporting facts only and avoiding defamation about a transgender person's criminal or amoral background without a source of evidence.	Avoiding the sexualization of transgender.

This analytical framework is my contribution to Italian journalism in the hope of making it more inclusive. These recommendations have been formulated with the aspiration of one day achieving a level of complete respect for transgender individuals and the LGBTQI community.

It is also worth adding that progress in the representation of transgender individuals has been made possible thanks to the involvement of certain figures who have become common and constant presences in our daily lives through television and newspapers, inevitably becoming opinion leaders in a specific community. This is the case with Vladimir Luxuria, who transitioned from theatre and cabaret shows to running for the Chamber of Deputies in 2006, thereby shaping public opinion one way or another. Luxuria has encouraged discussions about the transgender through her political role. Before 2006, the transgender community was primarily associated with the common scenario of "viados" within the realms of prostitution and/or nightlife entertainment. From that moment, which we can define as a turning point between two eras, we have witnessed a change, albeit sometimes minimal, in the treatment of this subject matter by broadcasters. They have started to include not only news of criminal events but also events and testimonies from individuals who have managed to break through the "glass ceiling" that was obstructing them and have achieved social and professional recognition as a result.

Despite the situation in Italy and the world not being entirely positive for transgender individuals due to social prejudice, the example and representation of various aspects of the same issue have led to a better understanding and more open treatment of the subject matter with less scepticism and preconceptions. This is the greatest and most challenging responsibility of broadcasters and, consequently, of journalists – to provide a complex view of the world that goes beyond favouring the prevailing thoughts of the dominant elite, but rather to mobilize the masses and display a cross-section of the reality that surrounds us without bias or influence. This thesis stands as a reflection on these issues in the hope that many changes will continue to take place both in society and at the level of transgender representation, including in politics.

Acknowledgements

And here comes the conclusion of my thesis, marking the end of a two-year journey through my Master's degree and the beginning of what will be a new life. Over these years, I've learned many things in the field of communication and met many colleagues who have become friends, enriching my life significantly.

I want to express my gratitude to my family, the cornerstone and pillar of my life. With love and patience, they have always supported me during these years. Without them, I could not have reached this milestone; they are the dearest to me.

I thank Alberto, my partner of nine years, who is my support and strength when I feel most vulnerable. He makes me believe that I can overcome and achieve anything in life. Thank you for comforting me, supporting me, and showing me every day that together we are stronger.

I am immensely thankful for my university colleagues, friends without whom I would not have faced these two years with the same happiness, joy, and carefreeness. Thank you for sharing anxieties, ideas, and projects, and for building the beautiful friendship that binds us now. Thanks for helping, reassuring, and guiding me; you have given me so much and improved me as a person.

Finally, I want to thank the University of Padua for these challenging years, which I will hold dear in my heart and memory for the rest of my life.

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