

# CHANGING MASCULINITIES? DADFLUENCING IN ROMANIA: BETWEEN FEMINISM, CONSERVATISM AND CAPITALISM

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## Abstract

*Despite all controversies, men and women are also social concepts that changed over time as well as the power relation between men and women changed over time. Different forces have impacted this change and some cannot be omitted when talking about how masculinities are reshaped nowadays and here we think at the feminist movement and in counterpart - the conservative one, but also the neoliberalism and its principles and values (mainly the pressure of extending markets and selling goods). In this broader context, in this paper we first look closer at the concept of care and how men can be and become over time caregivers, especially as fathers, why this is important, what are the figures regarding sharing care responsibilities between men and women. Second, we discuss the way in which connecting men with care is represented in a broader arena that we call the popular culture, and here we focus especially on a relatively new phenomenon called “dadfluencing” – as men that are fathers, that are communicating about this experience especially on social media and that are trying to have an influence on their audience/public. Last but not least, in this paper we will present the findings of a small qualitative research that we have done on two Romanian “dadfluencers”, namely on their Facebook pages, field research that we conducted in order to give a possible answer to the following research questions: What kind of masculinities are promoted by the two influencers? Can the content promoted be connected to any kind of feminist discourse that engages critical changings in traditional gender roles or it remains mainly a conservative one? Or in fact we are facing a new way of selling goods in a neoliberal world of markets and consumers that uses the image of the caring father in order to increase profit?*

**Keywords:** *masculinity, care, influencing, dadfluencing, feminism, Romania.*

## 1. Introduction

Our aim in this paper is to discuss some aspects regarding the reconstruction of masculinity by including care and caring as defining elements. Therefore, our first intention was to investigate the mainstream-dictionary definitions of care, which have a high degree of social acceptability, and to see if we can find there those elements that reflect what we, as gender studies researchers, recognize from various scientific investigations and statistical data to be gender inequalities, power imbalances, discriminations, stereotypical representations and prejudice<sup>1</sup>. As a result, we found that care implies altruism, solidarity, empathy, loyalty, which are general human attributes, used without any gender bias.

Nevertheless, if we were to associate gender or sex with care, and particularly gender roles, then the result is dramatically different – the researcher is suddenly sent to a different conceptual field, one of stark dichotomies, stereotypes, prejudices and, last but not least, of inequalities. From this standpoint, Otilia Dragomir and Mihaela Miroiu (2002) approach care and caring by exploring the power relations between men and women and the way in which they are shaping

women’s preeminent role as main carriers of children, seniors, men, sick, homes, streets and so forth, and how this specific state of affairs tends to perpetuate. Laura Grünberg offers a broader perspective, based on the dynamics of gender roles in Romania as it was presented by the last Gender Barometer (2018), compared with the one released in 2000: “71% of the responders considered in 2000, that both parents should take part in childcare (and 28% were pointing out the mothers as the main caretakers), whilst in 2018 the ratio grew significantly, to 80.3%” (Grünberg, 2018, p. 19). Grünberg continues by stating that there can be identified a permanence in regard to the perception of the complementary and unbalanced distribution of the household chores. In the year 2000, at least 80% of the respondents considered that cooking, house cleaning, clothing and dishwashing and so forth are mainly feminine activities, while home repairs are seen to be men’s responsibilities. With little fluctuations, these numbers are the same in 2018” (Grünberg, 2018, p. 18). The same 2018 Gender Barometer shows that there is a long way from wishing to practice in regard to gender roles distribution in family care. Thus, the respondents considered that “both parents should be involved in childcare, but also that men are unable to provide equally good care as women – 80.3% (80.7% women

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<sup>1</sup> “The provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something; Protective custody or guardianship provided by a local authority for children whose parents are dead or unable to look after them properly; Serious attention or consideration applied to doing something correctly or to avoid damage or risk; Feel concern or interest; attach importance to something” Lexico, UK Dictionary, accesat în 08.04.2020, la <https://www.lexico.com/definition/care>.

and 79.7% men). At the same time, 48.9% of women and 49.2% of men think that men are unable to raise children as well as women can (compared to 31.9% of women and 33.8% of men that said the contrary) (Grünberg, 2018, p. 20).

Therefore, care and caring are essential components in the perpetuation of gender inequalities and therefore we think that is important to have a critical discussion about them. Esplen identifies the main issues that need to be approached:

- Offering care and caring produces a major impact in people's livelihoods, and this impact is more substantial in the case of people living in poverty;
- Many young girls drop out of school in order to be able to help with domestic chores in the household, particularly when their mothers are sick or are employed;
- When they are unable to pay for care work, women are forced to give up their jobs, their careers, and pushed towards low-paying inferior part time jobs, thus being deprived of various empowering instances
- Therefore, their capacity to save money for a later period when they themselves would be needing care and caring, or their ability to have a decent retirement fund drops dramatically, therefore increasing their long-term insecurity;
- The double day-work performed by women brings most women on the brink of burnout;
- The burden of caring and household chores limits dramatically the time and resources that women have for civic and political participation, thus depriving them of access to power and to enter mainstream debates regarding public policy;
- Even when they are paid, their work is usually under-evaluated, jobs in care and caring are feminized and underpaid;
- Most of the time the working conditions are precarious and the work tends to be informal, implying a lack of work protection (Esplen, 2009).

Also in 2019, Promundo released their third *State of the World's Fathers* report, discussing the way in which men getting involved into care work and fatherhood could impact the inequalities resulted from the disproportionate distribution of care work. Several of their findings are worth mentioning:

- In 2018, 606 million women worldwide declared that they are unable to enter the workforce due to their burden represented by care work. Also, in countries where women perform twice as much unpaid care work as men, their median income is approximately two thirds of their male counterparts (van der Gaag, Heilman, Gupta, Nembhard, Barker, 2019, 8)
- In medium and high-income countries, the difference between unpaid care work performed by women and that of men has dropped only by 7 minutes in the last 15 years (idem);
- Young girls spend 40% more time than boys on doing unpaid work (idem);
- On average, women spend approximately 4

hours per day performing unpaid care work, while men spend only 2.5 hours doing so (idem, p. 14);

- Globally, at least 16.4 billion hours per day are invested in care work, which is the equivalent for 2 billion people working 8 hours per day, producing 95 of the PGB for minimum wage (idem, p. 17);

- Actually, no country in the world has managed to reach an equilibrium between women and men regarding the levels of unpaid care work produced (idem);

- Globally, 18% of men benefitted from various forms of paid leave for childcare work, and it's relevant to stress out that here we also have arrangements involving 1-2 days per week, a week or a month, the tendency in the OECD countries being that men tend to take the minimum amount of paid leave (idem, p. 33-34);

- As a matter of consequence, the idea that women should have the responsibility for rising children still persists in both the ranks of men and women (idem, p. 45);

- At the same time, the Ipsos MORI research reveals that 75% of the respondents think that staying at home dads are somehow "less manly" compared to those holding a job (idem, p. 47);

- Similarly, the data collected through the Helping Dads Care Research Project shows that almost 85% of dads say that they would be interested in doing anything in order to be more involved in their child's first months after birth (idem);

The authors also offer a list of solutions aimed at reducing inequalities in this area, perhaps the most relevant being the "4RModel" (idem, p. 18):

- Recognition – increased attention towards the social value of care work;
- Reduction – investing in programs and policies that would reduce the difficulty and time spent on care work – water, sewage, transportation infrastructure, public care infrastructure;
- Redistribution – the state, boys and men all together should get involved more in taking over part of the burden of care work currently placed on women;
- Representation – supporting women in participating in decision making processes in trade unions and other relevant instances.

## 2. Men should care and do care

Veronika Wallroth (2016, pp. 33-56) considers that the involvement of men in care work should be based on the several aspects. 1. Intergenerational/biunivocal solidarity, that involves devotion, affection, intimacy, love, empathy and altruism and which should come from parents to children and the other way around. The intergenerational theories usually underscore the positive aspects of intergenerational links, such as solidarity and consensus, but are criticized for being too normative and for having the tendency to reflect family interactions in a very dichotomous manner, as being

either positive or negative (idem, p. 36). 2. Assuming the caring roles and their relation with various types of power is an element that brings out several aspects involving the way in which roles and statuses generated via identities such as cared/carer are producing and reproducing power structures for women, men, brothers and sisters (idem, p. 41). 3. Societal and cultural motivations, that usually refer to the pragmatic, demographic aspect of population ageing and bring into light religious aspects that involve personal sacrifice and family obligations and accentuate the dominant expectations regarding children that will eventually have to care for their parents (idem, p. 45). 4. The idea of exchange relates to the help and support between family members based on reciprocity and continuity, sustained by generational links. The exchange can be emotional, economical, continuous or intermittent, and implies a transfer of knowledge and wisdom (idem, p. 50). 6. The idea of choice/lack of choice. The role of caregiver can be the result of a multiplicity of factors that can manifest simultaneously or separately:

A. *The personal attachment to the act of caring* – caring is a choice;

B. *“legitimate excuses”* – the situation in which there are justified situational reasons for not offering care (work, distance etc);

C. *“Caring by default”*, when there is no one to do the care work, therefore it is attributed to the person performing the work without the possibility of choice (idem, p. 53).

Are these motivations manifesting themselves more intensely for women (who are, as we had shown above, the main caregivers)? Are these motivations disconnected from men and their experiences? How can we still integrate men in this discussion regarding care and caring? What role plays in this context the construction of masculinity, and also the need for a deconstruction of toxic, patriarchal masculinity that perhaps kept men for far too long away from their own children?

A short review of the main bodies of literature on masculinity presents the benefits of paternity for men, bringing forth several very interesting issues. First, the relationships men develop with their children are making them more mature, responsible and contributes significantly to their development – their thinking, feelings and general behavior can be characterized as long-term qualitative changes (Palkovitz, 2005, p. 59). Second, men that are actively involved in their children rising and care tend to have a better health and a higher life quality. Paternity contributes towards the strengthening men’s links with their families and communities (Eggebeen et al, 2013, p. 352). Third, reing a father leads to men attaining their highest psychological development stages, as Erik H Erikson’s model of psychosocial development shows – “the attainment of generativity” (Randon, 2015, p. 12). And those are only few of them.

Nevertheless, men continue to have very little involvement in the rising and caring of their children, to this respect Ranson’s explanation for men’s distancing from care being very interesting – conceptualizing care as being profoundly linked to the body and corporeality (the embodiment of care). Thus, a plausible explanation regarding men’s absence from practicing care work relates to “normative assumptions regarding gender, bodies, spatial distribution and regulation, and misery. *Masculine dignity* is much more dependent on phantasies about the body as closed and bounded, therefore men find care work as being mentally challenging and to be feared” (idem, p. 20).

Thus, we are referring to a traditional construction, mostly cultural, of the male body as being linked mostly to violence, physical force, war, sexuality, and this state of affairs is perhaps most visible in the case of male athletes or male bodies featured in various lifestyle magazines. Another very important distinction regards the capital brought by the (male or female) bodies in the relationship with children and particularly with the newly-born. From this perspective, we can identify a sort of biological advantage held by women, due to their specific maternal experiences of gestation and lactation (idem, p. 40), but this does not mean that we cannot identify similar advantages in men’s case. Moreover, in patriarchal cultures (or at least in the vast majority of them), this biologic capital was undoubtedly used to constraint and subdue women in their role of caregivers (which implies much more than giving birth and nurturing children).

Investigating how men’s bodies add value and benefits in their relationship with children and in care work, Ranson discusses several aspects which we find to be relevant for the aims and scopes of our paper (idem, p. 40-2):

– *Post-partum fitness* – by not giving birth, men have the distinctive advantage of being able to get involved in the caring relationship with an intact body, fully available. Thus, men have the advantage of not having to go through a complex and major process of recuperation (physical and psychical) when the children are the most vulnerable. In this sense, one of the participants in the study said ironically that “I had a baby five months ago, and I am in perfect physical shape”.

– *Size and shape* of the body also matters when it comes to childcare. In this respect, men have bigger bodies, bigger hands and a wider chest. These characteristics matter in care work and are perhaps most evident when it comes to washing the babies and putting them to sleep. The wider male chest is the perfect place to sleep for a toddler. Also, longer hands can prove to be helpful while multitasking, such holding the baby and cooking.

– *Strength* – children spend much of their time hugging their parents, thus they frequently need to be carried and usually not only them but also luggage, toys, food and so on. These things are made even more

difficult in countries with a poor transportation and urban infrastructure such is the case for Romania. In these particular contexts, physical force matters.

### 3. Masculinity, care, pop culture and dadfluencing

We undeniably live in a world in which patriarchal hegemonic conservative masculinities are being more and more examined and contested by various movements, of which the feminist one is the most vocal. Male parenthood is not spared of this critical scrutiny, their role within the family and in the wider social groups being continuously remodeled. Elizabeth Podnieks asks a very legitimate question: if the dad of today is no longer the income provider, and is also less emotionally involved as the mother, isn't there that he tends to be more disconnected and lightheaded, then who is he? (Podniek, 2016, p. 1). Of course, the authoress does not limit herself to simply asking the question, but she tries, along various other authors, to investigate contemporary representations of male parenthood in 21<sup>st</sup> century pop culture. In this context, a relatively recent phenomenon deserves our attention, from the standpoint of the construction and projection of masculinity in pop culture – dadfluencing. This phenomenon refers to dads who, using the information technologies available (such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram and so on), bring into the spotlight the much-needed changes in traditional gender roles, presenting themselves as involved dads, partners, dedicated to care and household work, thus challenging the dominant stereotypes and gender prejudices at the same time proposing new ways of masculinity construction, oriented towards care and caring. In an article published by wired.com in 2009, "In Praise of Dadfluencing", we can find some very interesting facts and numbers regarding the magnitude of the dadfluencing phenomenon: for example, on Instagram, there are over 3.700.000 posts with the hashtag #dadlife and over 2 million posts with the hashtag #fatherhood.

Romania is also part of this phenomenon and its analysis is the main objective of our paper. Our aim is to identify if and how men's visible involvement in rising and caring for the children is also considering contesting the traditional gender roles and producing a different discourse, aimed to combat gender inequalities.

### 4. Case study: the "dadfluencing" phenomenon in Romania

Starting from the theoretical framework presented above, we aim to present the findings of our qualitative research regarding the dadfluencing phenomenon in Romania. Our approach is centered around the need to redefine family gender roles on a

more partnerial basis, and the fact that social media instruments have proven to be highly relevant in terms of behavioral change. Dadfluencing is centered around the capacity to influence, through social media, vast numbers of people in order to change their opinions, attitudes and behavior. The Oxford English Dictionary defines influence as being "the ability to have an effect on someone's character, development or behavior"<sup>2</sup>. In relation to social media, influence usually refers to the way in which ordinary people can create content with notable impact on their followers, the basis of influence in this respect is the process of sharing content with a high personal character.

Our main research question is – what kind of content is promoted on two Facebook pages, *Taticool* and *Cel mai bun tata* (The best father), and how this content critically addresses traditional gender roles? Subsequently, we also devised several additional questions:

- Which are the main issues addressed by those two dadfluencers?
- What is the frequency with which specific issues are addressed?
- What are the gender roles promoted?
- What is the generated impact in relation with the addressed issues?

### 5. Methodology

The method used in our research is qualitative content analysis. This type of analysis, even if it brings up frequencies and absolute numbers (e.g. number of followers, number of likes or shares and so on), these are used only in order to give perspective in relation to the researched items, but not in a *stricto sensu* statistical representativity. We have analyzed the two abovementioned pages in terms of posts during January of 2021, but also the general information presented on them. The content analysis involves on one hand the text, and on the other the visual components. Also, we have used two scales with which we categorized the content:

1. The positive/negative/neutral scale with which we approached the content posts on the two pages;
2. The emotions scale – with which we observed the emotions triggered by the analyzed posts. We used the emotions categories already present on the platform: like, love, haha, wow, sad, angry and share.
3. Thematic analysis – we used a category set aimed to collect the most relevant data in relation to the research question(s):
  - Commercial content;
  - Men's expertise/authority;
  - Women's expertise/authority;
  - Critical content in relation to gender roles/inequalities;
  - Conservative content;
  - Neutral content.

<sup>2</sup> OED, accessed in 05.01.2021 at <https://www.lexico.com/definition/influence>.

## 6. Research findings

### 6.1. The best father (Cel mai bun tata)

*The best father* is a Facebook page assuming the identity of a personal blog and that, in its description, briefly states that its main focus is “stories about the most beautiful job in the world”. One can immediately notice that childcare is associated with a job, as an activity having social value, productive, signifying a masculinized symbolic dimension. The page has approximately 26.500 likes and 28.000 followers. From the description, the page seems to have been initiated in March of 2014, and its personal image is an impersonal design, resembling more a business logo. This is very interesting, because it appears to be in conflict with the classic communication style for influencer, who are putting a big accent on the personal information that could generate emotions and thus enhance the page’s impact. Moreover, we also noticed that the logo is shaped like a competition trophy, which again suggest traditional masculine attributes – competition, power, energy, hierarchies.

Our content analysis of the page’s covers produced the following data:

- 52 covers used throughout the time;
- 27 of those (approx. 50%) have a social theme: they illustrate the way in which the page’s main character got involved in various social causes (funding for a children’s hospital etc);
- 13 present various events that had invited Mr. Alexandru Zamfir (aka *The best dad*) to speak: events where he talks with other dads – 6; financial education – 3 events; couple relations – 2; digital children and the access to technology – 1; healthy lifestyles – 1;
- Covers with messages assumed by the author – 7: “Sooner or later we will all fail”; “I know that, if you are judging by the screaming it doesn’t seem so, but parents really love their children”; “Dad is like a mother that is unable to differentiate between body oil and hydrating cream. And he doesn’t want to, either.”;
- Commercial covers, promoting events or products – 3;
- Pictures of his own child – 1;
- And one image with his award received for best blogger.

So, what can we say about the way in which *Cel mai bun tata* manages its content in relation to the communication instrument, the Facebook cover? Firstly, that Alexandru Zamfir **communicates by underpinning his quality as an expert in parenting**, and as being an inspirational source for other dads. Secondly, he underscores his involvement in various social causes regarding children, fact that in our analysis reflects a reproduction of the classical traditional gender roles due to the fact that the accent is always put on the authority and visibility of the page’s owner.

The conservative-traditional trend present on this blog is further illustrated by the abovementioned cover stating that “Dad is like a mother that is unable to

differentiate between body oil and hydrating cream. And he doesn’t want to, either.” The covers transmit a lot of information about Alex Zamfir in his role as an expert dad and in couple relations, in a framework that preserve traditional gender roles, and the focus is mainly on authority, expertise, getting involved as a influencing factor and, last but not least, leadership, and not on care, partnerial relations or deconstructing gender roles.

#### *Content analysis of January 2021 posts*

During January of 2021 the page had 27 posts. Firstly, we investigated them by using the positive/negative/neutral scale and secondly, we also grouped the posts by following the second scale regarding issues. We need to mention here one particular aspect related to the posts we branded as negative – we did so due to a tendency of the main character, that manifested throughout his January postings, to complain about the roles generated by the status of involved father. Thus, the negative category mainly consists of postings that, although Alex Zamfir is trying to be ironical and jovial, he is complaining of being tired, overworked, of lack of intimacy, that his kid had a tantrum, that his kid sees him as an old man overwhelmed by various situations, that the child is giving him orders or is screaming at him and so forth. Overall, there are 9 posts of this sort, reflecting a 30% of the whole content posted during January.

Of these posts, the one that reached the biggest audience for its class (negative/complaining) is the following: “My child asked me who is getting vaccinated in this stage. I said that old people and the sick. He then asked if that means if I can therefore get a vaccine. I changed his wifi password”. This post clearly illustrates a conservative stance, based on authority, following the classical way of constructing gender roles and masculinity: the authoritative father deciding to refuse to answer questions because he can.

An analysis of postings placed in the *neutral* category (10 out of 27) brings to light classical themes of parenting, such as nutrition, children and pets, online schooling. The posts are short and present content without a visible emotional involvement of the author. Many of these are actually commercial messages, promoting games for example. The post in this category that received the most reactions (actually having most reactions of all January postings) deals with the discussion regarding the need for acceptance and the pressure that parents are frequently putting on their children to better perform in school. The post got 2400 reactions, of which the majority of them were Likes and Loves, thus confirming clearly the concept of dadfluencing - here we have the well-known recipe of personal stories turned into inspirational postings that aggregate emotional responses from the public. Also we have observed that this posting departs from the usual scheme adopted by the author, which involves irony, humor and short texts. We chose to place this post on the neutral category because the author does not

explicitly assume the need to produce value judgements or setting trends.

On the *Positive* category (8 out of 27) we find postings that reflect an optimistic attitude in relation to the issues discussed – here there are texts regarding couple relations, father qualities, how good it is to be a father, but also several commercial posts promoting products endorsed by the host.

The posting that had the most reaction in this category is one in which the author is praising his own

#### *Thematic analysis*

Commercial content	Men's expertise/authority	Women's expertise/authority	Critical to gender roles/inequalities	Conservative	Neutral
10	9	1	0	0	7

But perhaps the most interesting classification in our research is the issue based one, because it's designed to answer the research question "can we identify in the posted content of the two pages relevant a contestation of traditional gender roles and the promotion of more partnerial gender roles?". The issue-based analysis offers a blunt answer to our question – no, *Cel mai bun tata* page is not attempting to be critical towards gender roles and inequalities and is not trying to promote gender equality. Our main conclusions raised after the thematic analysis are the following:

- That, at least in January, most of the postings are commercial, the author promoting various products such as games, vitamins and so forth;

- That the second most important issue present in the postings is the men's expertise /authority, particularly that of the owner, who is The Best Dad. This is fully in accord with the observations made when analyzing the covers, where we noted the same thing happening;

- That there are 7 posts out of 27 that are mostly neutral.

- There is only one post promoting women's expertise and authority, but the author does not use it in order to provoke a discussion regarding gender inequalities. Alex Zamfir limits himself to noting that women have excelled too in several areas.

In conclusion, the analysis of the posts on the "*Cel mai bun tata*" page reveals that the best parent is the father due to his expertise and authority which are most of the time presented in a humorous/ironical manner that "sweetens" a bit the overall discourse. On the other hand, the owner is complaining a lot in relation to his lived experiences as a father and also we find that he is interested in selling his own products through the page.

## 6.2. Taticool - Dan Cruceru

*Taticool* is also a Facebook page assuming a personal blog identity, but also as a community. On contradistinction from the *Cel mai bun tata* page, here the influencing towards a less conservative approach to gender roles is more visible starting with the page's description. We have also noted in the description that

qualities as a father: "quality parenting is when the kid goes outside to play in the snow and you give him a shovel and tell him that you believe no one would be able to clean the snow from the yard in less than 30 minutes". From the gender roles perspective, we tend to put this one also in the conservative-traditional category – the men's expertise in determining children to do as they are told, but also the value as a lesson – how to teach your child to be more competitive.

the focus of the owner appears to be on breaking gender stereotypes and contesting traditional gender roles, bringing a new light to the way in which men should involve themselves in parenthood.

The page has over 50.500 likes and almost 60.000 followers. The first profile image was posted back in October 2015, therefore one can conclude that the page has approximately 5 years of activity. Comparing with *Cel mai bun tata*, where we have just one abstract profile image, *Taticool* chooses a different strategy to communicate with his followers: he appears in the profile pic almost exclusively with his children: out of 19 profile photos, 15 are with his girl, one with the whole family and 3 having no characters in them.

#### *Content analysis of the cover photos*

There are a number of 38 covers in total, of which:

- 8 with the *Taticool* logo;
- 11 with the family – 4 of which are with the spouse and the children, most of them illustrating family and household depictions;
- 9 with *Taticool* in his quality as an expert, invited at various events;
- 7 holyday messages;
- 1 with the hashtag #Colectiv
- One message with Safer Internet Day 2017;
- One with the message World Children's Day Unicef.

*Taticool* communicates differently than *Cel mai bun tata*, by being more personal and closer to his family, including his life partner. Also, the psotos featuring him on the page are predominantly with his children and not featuring him as an expert, leader, influencer. His cover photos do not appear to be biased towards promoting the traditional gender roles. Moreover, *Taticool* frequently appears in household depictions – playing with his children, thus breaking in a way the classical construction of rational, detached and problem-solving masculinity, again in contrast with the cover photos found on *Cel mai bun tata*.

#### *Content analysis of postings in January of 2021*

*Taticool* has 13 postings in January, of which 3 we placed in the *positive* category. One of these

postings refers to product characteristics, another features him as an avid reader and the last one promotes a vitamin brand, along an expert on parenting. This last post is also the one having most reactions on the *positive* category amassing 314 likes, not far from the second one regarding reading. These, as it's easy to note, are posts without critical content, aimed at keeping the public linked to the page's activity.

In the *negative* category we placed 5 of the 13 postings, these being more varied in content, some of them indicating revolt or others, just as in the case of *Cel mai bun tata*, where the owner complains about his status as a father, in a similar conservative and masculinist stance. Thus, we have postings regarding Disney's decision to remove several cartoons which were deemed racist and sexist, postings where the main character is depicted as a growing girl's father who needs the police to protect his daughter from boys, another post is criticizing the lack of sexual education in schools and, last but not least, the post where he complains about being his children's toy.

The posting who got the most reactions was the one where Dan Cruceru posed as the revolted father of a girl that needs defending. Reactions are divided between likes and haha's, a clear sign that the public is

*Thematic analysis*

Commercial content	Men's expertise/authority	Women's expertise/authority	Critical to gender roles/inequalities	Conservative	Neutral
3	1	0	1	2	6

Differently than *Cel mai bun tata*, which had most of his January postings dominated by commercial products, the thematic analysis shows that *Taticool* has mostly neutral posts in January. Commercial posts are fewer than on the other page (only 3 of 13, but in percent the difference is not that high – 23% commercial content for *Taticool* and 37% for *Cel mai bun tata*). The differences continue – we also have two posts we labeled as having conservative content, and one which we labeled into the *critical towards gender roles/inequalities*.

The conservative posts discuss two issues of which one – being a father of a growing girl – was already analyzed above. The second one is particularly relevant for our research question(s), because it addresses the issue of screening policies of several Disney animated movies, which were labeled by the company as having racist and/or sexist content. Here *Taticool* takes an explicit critical conservative position, not limiting himself to just having a short post, but writing an entire article. After apparently accepting and promoting the anti-racist and anti-sexist discourse, Dan Cruceru switches to conservative critique: “this is already getting to be absurd: for example, movies that depict specific instances of white history suddenly introduce a non-white which, simply put, has no way to be physically, temporally, logically, there”. These arguments further illustrate a superficial understanding of these issues and the reproduction of the mainstream

in consonance with the conservative position expressed by the author, him being either understood, either ironized with stereotypical messages regarding fathers of girls: “My 9 years old daughter: Daddy, don't you think that my eyebrows are a bit too thick? I am thinking to trim them a bit. Helloooo! Call the police, the army, Santa Claus, everybody! Stop the time, because I feel that I am going to do some damage soon at my door!”

There are also 5 neutral postings, being similarly varied, from images of children to new year's wishes or discussions regarding school/kindergarten. The post that generated most reactions is a self-ironic one, dealing with the fact that the father has to keep a cure to lose weight. We could consider this posting through the lens of the way in which the author assumes perhaps a less conservative stance – that of a man preoccupied of his own image – but we chose not to put it under the *critical towards gender roles and inequalities* category. Our argument is that a more suited variable to explain this redefining position in regard to men's image relates less to gender and more to class and social status, in the sense in which they are explored by Ietza Bojorquez and Claudia Unikel in *Body image and Social Class* (2012).

discourse which reflects racist and sexist stances which are strongly internalized.

Nevertheless, *Taticool* is the only of the two pages that has a posting which is critical towards gender inequalities, in a text discussing the need for sexual education. This is a long post, that appeal to aspects such as “My body, my rights!”, several NGO's active in the field (such as SECS, minor mothers and so forth). The author clearly assumes a position of support for the introduction of sexual education classes in schools, by both analyzing the issues faced by this project but also by trying to provide solutions.

To conclude, *Taticool's* relative low number of postings and their distribution in a much-varied categories brings up the need to further research this page in order to reach more solid results. This recommendation also comes after noticing that his posts (in the About section, but also in other posts, as shown above) tend to be more personal and focused on family, children, play, which are not at all conservatively biased and focused on male expertise and authority (as is the case for *Cel mai bun tata*). Also, we tend to find in his posts at least the intention to try to promote more gender equitable and partnerial models. Nevertheless, it is hard to affirm that the page is critical of traditional gender roles, due to the fact that we can clearly find conservative clichés and stereotypies. Also, when the author has to prove that he has a reasonable understanding of the way in which

gender and race inequalities are constructed, he proves time and again that he is unable to overcome his own internalized racism and sexism. Also is important to note that the commercial endorsements are usually linked to the *Taticool store* that sells children's products, therefore rising the question of if (like in the *Cel mai bun tata* case) the page is not simply a vehicle using the fatherhood image in order to promote his own business.

## 7. Instead of conclusion

Care and caring undoubtedly are one of the core concepts of feminist political theories. No human being is completely independent of care and, unfortunately, due to the dominant constructions overtime, care became a gender biased concept – being more associated with women seen both as givers and receivers – and therefore pushed towards the private sphere and consequently depoliticized. The emergence of the new mediums for communication, such as the various social platforms from Twitter to Instagram has engendered the new phenomena of *influencing*. In this sphere, and correlated to the increasingly anti-gender inequality discourse and for a more partnerial family

and men's involvement in fatherhood and childcare, *dadfluencing* appeared.

In this context, we tried to see how does this concept functions in the Romanian sphere, how two of the dadfluencers are dealing with the issue of combating gender inequalities and promoting a more partnerial family model. Unfortunately, perhaps as it was to be expected, the answer tends to reflect a negative relationship. Thus, the two protagonists are both focusing in product promotions, and they put forward a conservative worldview that focuses on male expertise and authority but that also complains about the various situations encountered during fatherhood. Postings that address gender issues are scarce and they usually give the impression that the authors are completely disconnected from the power-centered discourse, the construction of inequalities or their causes. At the same time, they are placing themselves easily in conservative stances – the father of a daughter that cries for the police to stop him from hurting the boys at the door when his daughter has grown up (*Taticool*) or the stereotypical stance regarding men that are clearly the only ones able to offer parenting advice and guidance (following the cultural model according to which the best cooks are always men).

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