

DIALECT SPEAKING WORKING-CLASS WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we investigate the research question ‘How are female dialect users from former industrial areas depicted in the media?’ by comparing media representations from two former industrial areas, namely Heerlen/Parkstad in the Netherlands and Østfold in Norway. Both representations are parodic and can be characterised as ‘high performances’ (Johnstone 2011, p. 658), and we argue that these performances are informed by the class-divided, previously industrial societies in Heerlen/Parkstad and Østfold. Our results show that being local seems to conflict with normative conceptions of femininity in these representations.¹

[1] INTRODUCTION

This article is dedicated in memorial to our dear colleague, Janne Bondi Johannessen. Everyone who spent time with Janne experienced her great commitment to gender equality issues. During several lunch breaks at Henrik Wergeland’s house at Blindern, Janne shared strong opinions about how women who are hoping for success in the mainstream media need to adapt to narrow norms of femininity. Janne often referred to examples of how female success often goes hand in hand with a transformation into a skinnier and blonder body on higher heels.

When touching on linguistic norms of femininity, examining findings provided by traditional dialectology research is not very helpful. Its focus on so-called NORMs (non-mobile, old, rural men) as respondents (Chambers & Trudgill 1998) leaves us with sparse knowledge about how women use(d) dialect. By including women as informants, the Nordic Dialect Corpus (NDC) (Johannessen et al. 2009) serves as an exception to this NORM principle, as does the Syntactic

[1] We would like to express our gratitude to the peer reviewer and Irmelin Kjelaas for exceptionally good and constructive feedback on this article.

Atlas of the Dutch Dialects (SAND) in which women were included (164 women and 348 men).

In this article we will explore the research question: *How are female dialect users from former industrial areas depicted in the media?* This will be investigated by comparing media performances that stage women in two former industrial areas, namely the former Eastern Mine District, with the city Heerlen, the Netherlands as its centre, and Fredrikstad–Sarpsborg in Østfold, Norway. The data are a short movie clip from Heerlen (Parkstad) and a commercial movie from Østfold.

Our approach in this article is grounded in the nature of the parodic performances we are investigating that can be characterised as what Johnstone (2011) identifies as ‘highly self-conscious broadcast performances of speech and social identity’ (p. 658; henceforth: ‘high performance’). In high performances, people show one another how forms and meanings are to be linked. They are metapragmatic activities where enregisterment processes occur. Yet, according to Johnstone, high performances can and will mean different things to different hearers, and they are actually designed to do so. Because we lack data that can amplify other possible social meanings, our analysis needs to be considered as preliminary.

The absence of a specific focus on women in dialectology is mirrored in other disciplines, such as historical science, that inform public images of the past (Stuyck et al. 2009, p. 71). This is illustrated here with the painting in *Figure 1* that was recently displayed on a wall in a former industrial town in Østfold, Norway



FIGURE 1: Wall painting in Moss, Østfold (Nervold 2019).

to commemorate migrant and local workers from the former local industry. It depicts a bygone era in the local history and is located on the premises of the former glassworks, where a modern apartment project soon will be erected as a part of the remodelling of the city. Only men are

depicted in the painting, leaving the impression that women were absent from one of the most central aspects of local history. The same holds for how collective memories are renewing the coal-mining past in Heerlen, the Netherlands, where narratives from women – not allowed to work in the pit themselves – as wives, (grand)mothers, aunts, daughters and sisters and with crucial roles in the domestic work (preparing meals throughout the day due to the men’s shift work, washing filthy pit clothes, etc.) have been entirely underrepresented (Stuyck et al. 2008, p. 78; see also Figure 2).



FIGURE 2: The faces of those who tell stories about the coal-mining past.
(<https://www.demijnen.nl/collectie/interviews>)

[2] INTERSECTION OF SEX, GENDER AND CLASS IN HIGH PERFORMANCES

In sociolinguistic research, a so-called gender paradox has been a frequent topic. The gender paradox suggests that women, from an etic perspective, are both more conservative and more innovative than men in terms of linguistic variation and change (Labov 1991 [1972], p. 243). The classic situation is that men use more dialect features than women, implying that women’s language is more levelled or standardised, from the perspective of the standard language (see e.g. Chambers & Trudgill 1998 [1980], p. 61). These assumptions are left behind by more recent practice oriented research, and concurrently with the change in sociolinguistic theory, feminist theory experienced a shift as well. Rather than conceptualising gender as an identity someone just ‘has’ (sex or biological

gender), gender is considered something people ‘do’ (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003, p. 4) – that is, how one identifies in terms of gender and constructs it through gender practices, and how these practices are understood by others. The construction and reflection of gender appears to be undoubtedly influenced in complex and multilayered ways by practices intersecting with social class, locality (this paper), ethnicity, age, etc.

A constructivist approach to gender requires a brief discussion of the terms *gender* and *sex*. It is a theoretical assumption that gender is the socially constructed counterpart to the binary biological category of sex (McElhinny 2003, p. 22–23). This dichotomous picture of gender can be conflated with a presumption of heterosexuality in Western countries, overstating the similarities within the categories and understating similarities across them (p. 23). Philosopher Judith Butler argues that:

Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex [...] gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which “sexed nature” or “a natural sex” is produced and established as “prediscursive” prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts. (1990, p. 7)

Gender builds on biological sex and exaggerates biological differences (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003, p. 10). In a deconstructive feminist approach, the question ‘what are the gender differences?’ cannot be answered; differences found in and constructed by people’s practices, including their speech behaviour, cannot simply be explained by invoking gender. Instead, McElhinny (2003, p. 24) argues, one needs to ask how and why gender differences are being constructed the way they are, or what notion of gender is being normalised or naturalised in such behaviour; how are categories like ‘woman’ created? In our analysis, we explore how the category ‘(post) industrial woman’ is created in the media presentations we are investigating.

Even if hegemonic gender norms may be linked to procreational needs, the ways that gender is imbricated in other axes of identity can reinforce or challenge notions about class and ethnicity (McElhinny 2003, p. 25). Chun (2019) calls for investigations of the connectivity between class and gender and states that the problems with the division of gender into binary categories are similar to grouping by class. Instead of viewing class as a ‘thing’ in the sense of a categorical grouping, class should be viewed as a social-relational process dynamically

shaped by situational contexts (p. 2).

Classed identities, like all identities, are co-constructed, negotiated and manifested through interactional-relational positionings in various contexts (Chun 2019, p. 3–4), which can be interpreted in line with what Bucholtz and Hall (2005) call ‘class performativity’ that ‘emerges and circulates in *local* discourse contexts of interaction’ (p. 585–586, emphasis added). Meinhof and Galasiński (2005) see identity as a discursive construct which continually shifts in the *local* context. We construct our experience of ourselves and the reality surrounding us out of the socially available resources: ‘Identity is a discourse of (not) belonging, which is continually negotiated and renegotiated within a localized social context’ (p. 8). In praxis, locally negotiated identity is placed in ready-made templates that the nation, centre-periphery dynamics, society or the social group provides, and binary gender categories can serve as an example of such ready-made templates. The same applies for other parts of our identity work, and Meinhof and Galasiński see the local project of identity as ‘being framed not only by a myriad of intersubjective narratives of group affiliations, but also provided by the *public discourses* available to the social actor’ (p. 10, emphasis added). We will point to high performances as an example of an available public discourse that frames local identity intersecting with gender and class categories in Heerlen and Østfold.

Physical spaces are imbued with meaning by how they are experienced and the angles from which they are viewed (Johnstone 2010, p. 391). The meaning of the local contexts is central in our interpretation of the media representations from a placemaking point of view. Placemaking entails the transformation of space into social space (Lefebvre 1991), and people make places through their practices (Cresswell 1996; Cresswell 2009; Thissen 2018).

Johnstone (2011, p. 658) asks if dialect enregisterment works differently in high performances than it does in other genres. They link locally occurring linguistic forms to models of speech, behaviour and action (p. 657). This is especially interesting from a gender/class perspective in the former industrial areas that we compare in this analysis. In Heerlen, ‘normative conceptions of masculinity and femininity go hand in hand with the history of the mines’ (Cornips & Van den Hengel 2018, p. 21), and evidence from Østfold seems to point in a similar direction (Stjernholm & Søfteland 2019). According to Woolard (2016, p. 24), locally valued identities are often characterised by being ‘rough, gritty, physical, sexual, earthy; in short, “real”’, that is, traits that can be said to have strong masculine connotations. If ‘local’ means masculine, what resources are available for local female identities and their depiction in (social) media?

[3] BACKGROUND: COMPARING TWO INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Both Fredrikstad–Sarpsborg in Østfold, Norway and Heerlen as the centre of the Dutch Eastern Mine District are located in peripheral borderlands and shared a parallel blooming period in the industry between late 1800s to around 1970. Rich natural resources, together with excellent conditions for communication both in terms of exporting goods and recruiting labour, made these places ideal for industrial activities. Numerous workers came to work in the industry and, in both Østfold and Heerlen, the workers and their families were housed in designated neighbourhoods separating them from the locals, including elite and supervising staff, potentially catalysing class distinctions (Cornips & de Rooij 2019; Cornips & van den Hengel 2018; Svendsen 2004; Eliassen 2004).

The industrial activity caused substantial pressure on local language. In Heerlen, highly educated workers brought standard Dutch to the town, and migrant workers, their respective languages and the local speakers shifted from the local dialect to (regional) Dutch in the public and work spheres (Cornips & de Rooij 2019). Also Østfold has experienced a language shift the past decades, where the local language seems to be oppressed by a regional variety strongly influenced by the language in the capital of Oslo (Stjernholm & Søfteland 2019). Both language situations bear witness to a contemporary remodelling of these areas, suggesting that negotiations concerning local and social identity construction are still an ongoing process. From 2020, Østfold was included in a bigger administrative unit leading to the removal and replacement of the name Østfold. A similar transformation – that is, the removal of every reminder of the coal mining industry – has taken place in Heerlen, as this area was recently renamed Parkstad, literally ‘park city’, a transformation that can be interpreted as a process of social diffusion or gentrification (Ley 1996). These processes have the potential to pursue class distinctions brought along through the immigrant history and historic housing arrangements. The painting in *Figure 1* (see introduction) demonstrates the importance of connecting the past and present in the remodelling of a place, and also how women are being shut out and therefore silenced in the discourses where these ongoing negotiations are taking place. Commemorations of local women are not visible.

[4] HOW WOMEN ARE DEPICTED IN A MEME IN ONLINE MEDIA: THE FORMER EASTERN COAL-MINING AREA, HEERLEN, THE NETHERLANDS

We discuss a clip taken from the Czech movie *Slunce seno a pár facek, sestřih*, ‘Sun, hay, and couple of slaps, montage’ (1989, 127 minutes), characterised as a comedy, with actress Helena Ruzicková figuring as a mother and Veronika Kánská as her daughter. The clip of the original film has been modified using the

smartphone application *MadLipz* that makes it possible to record one's own voice and dub the clips posted on their app. The version of the clip in which the two women – mother and daughter – figure as main characters is thus taken out of its original context; that is, the movie is anchored in place, or localised, through dubbing by the local *MadLipz* group called *MadLipzParkstad*, which consists of four young male members. It was posted by *MadLipzParkstad* both on the *Parkstad App* and Facebook around 20 November 2019 and had resulted in 55,500 views by 26 February 2020. *MadLipzParkstad* stated in private correspondence (Facebook, 26 February 2020) that they took the clip from the *MadLipz* app and it was dubbed in the local language by a member of the *MadLipzParkstad* team. The clip as a meme is a multimodal sign in which image and speech are combined, and it (re)produces locality through language use that is recognisable for a local audience. Although we cannot trace how often this clip has been 'used' in the various online media, every meme typically enables intense resemiotisation in that 'original signs are altered in various ways, generically germane – a kind of "substrate" recognizability would be maintained – but situationally adjusted and altered so as to produce very different communicative effects' (Varis & Blommaert 2014, p. 8), which in this case is a parody of norms for femininity and social class that literally silences the women protagonists, since they are dubbed by male voices.

The clip opens with a view from a kitchen which also appears to be the living room. It zooms in on the adult daughter, who enters the room by opening the door more widely. She is dressed in a perfectly ironed, immaculate white blouse with short sleeves and an upright collar worn with, again, perfectly ironed grey trousers held with a small black belt. Her hair is short and blond, and she wears silver-colored earrings. She appears to be a good example of normative femininity.

When entering the room, she first stares at what is sitting on the table, then turns her back to the viewer to walk very decisively towards the old-fashioned sink in the right corner with wall tiles and a mirror above. She is checking her hair in the mirror before turning her face towards her parents. Below the sink sits an old-fashioned trash can.

The daughter is dubbed in a male voice in largely standard Dutch but with a



FIGURE 3: The daughter enters the room/kitchen.

recognisable ‘melodious’ or ‘sing-song’ intonation associated with the Dutch spoken in Limburg (Hagen & Giesbers 1988), and in an extremely high pitch: ‘*Zo even lekker gewinkeld*’ (‘So, I have done some pleasant shopping’). The video shows the tininess of the room, with one open window above a couch on which a small blond boy is reading a magazine, and a clock and other items hanging on the wall. The boy has his feet on the couch and his legs spread wide. The room is stuffed with pots and pans, open jelly pots, towels and beer bottles, emphasising the remarkable contrast between the sloppiness of the room and the very neatly dressed and coiffured daughter.



FIGURE 4: The mother sitting at the table.



FIGURE 5: The mother swings her arm forcefully to slap the daughter.

The camera swings to the left to show her mother sitting at the short end of the kitchen table. The mother has short hair as well, but it looks messy and its colour is very dark, almost black. Although the daughter is thin, the mother is clearly overweight: her blouse is covered with wrinkles and ends at her shoulders, showing naked arms. She appears to be a counter-example of normative femininity.

The kitchen table is overcrowded with items like open pots, cups and other objects and a white enamel wash basin.

The mother, also dubbed in a male voice, addresses her daughter in a very low pitch: ‘*Ben je in Heerlen geweest?*’ (‘Have you been in Heerlen?’), and while the daughter walks from the sink towards her mother in the corner, she replies, ‘*Nee in Maasjtricht*’ (‘No, in Maastricht’) in a high pitch again. The mother now makes a full swing with her arm to beat her on the side of her face.

The father sits, hardly visible, at the long side of the kitchen table and plays no role at all in the conversation between mother and daughter, similar to the boy on the couch. Neither reacts to the swatting by the mother.

The father is wearing a brown singlet – a ‘wifebeater’² – and he is drinking beer from the bottle and picking his nose; there is something yellowish on his plate. After being slapped by her mother, the daughter falls across the table and, in falling, takes the enamel wash basin along, ending on the ground with the wash basin on her head (end of video).



FIGURE 6: The father is nose-picking.



FIGURE 7: The daughter falls after being slapped by her mother.

The potential meanings of the clip are multilayered. It first links the mother and daughter with place-based linguistic identities: they are both dubbed in the sing-song intonation typical for the south of Limburg and ‘coal mining’ Dutch of Heerlen, using linguistic forms that are clearly recognisable by a local audience. First, the indexicality of the deletion of the word-final /t/ in the past participle *gewees(t)* ‘been’ in the mother’s question is ambiguous: it indexes place (Johnstone 2011) for a local audience, namely because *t*-deletion is recognisable for someone who speaks the dialect of Heerlen and elsewhere in Limburg. Moreover, *t*-deletion indexes social class, for it is perceived as an uneducated and sloppy way of speaking in standard Dutch (Cornips & de Rooij 2020). Second, the use of palatalised /s/ as /ʃ/ instead of standard Dutch /s/ in the place name *Maastricht* as *Maasjtricht* before the consonant /t/ is a characteristic of the dialects spoken in the eastern part of Limburg, which includes Heerlen but excludes Maastricht (*Mestreech* in the Maastrichtian dialect), which is located thirty kilometres to the east.

Moreover, the conversation between mother and daughter is also an act of place-making, as it deals with the stereotypical,

[2] According to dictionary.com, the origin of the term wifebeater is associated with a Detroit native who was arrested for beating his wife to death in 1947. Later, this connection between lower-class, brutish men and the undershirt was reinforced by Hollywood; see <https://www.dictionary.com/e/take-off-wife-beater-put-tank/> (accessed November 2020). Our excellent US based proof reader has also informed us that the shirt is “associated with the (formerly very popular) TV show “Cops,” where low-class domestic violence suspects often appeared in their front yards and were taken into police custody in those undershirts. It’s pretty interesting that the dictionary links it to a specific, different, and earlier origin.”

locally constructed opposition between Maastricht and Heerlen. The daughter is from Heerlen, but instead of shopping in Heerlen, she went to Maastricht, although both cities are known for their shopping centres. Maastricht is the capital of the province of Limburg, where the economic, social and cultural capital is and was seated, whereas Heerlen was the centre of the former Eastern Mine District. Within this opposition, inhabitants of Maastricht and Heerlen are stereotypically imagined as belonging to a higher and lower social class, respectively. Maastricht people are stereotyped as *sjiek* (*chic* in French), which means ‘posh’, and *sjiek* refers to Maastrichtian inhabitants as part of the industrial elite in the nineteenth century and the urban bourgeoisie in the twentieth century (Cornips & Knotter 2017). Conversely, the people in the very small village of Heerlen (with only about 6,000 inhabitants around 1900) were farmers and seasonal labourers, and predominantly coal miners working underground after the 1930s.

Indexicalities of class and localisation practices intersect with gender in the clip. The constructed opposition between the Maastricht-shopping daughter as higher social class and Heerlen, and the mother, as a lower social class is connected to their gender performances. As Partington (2014) convincingly argues, the creation of class-specific ‘intertextual’ meanings in the clip are produced through practices that influence how the audience understands specific linguistic forms, clothes and other ‘stuff’ ‘within class-specific competences developed through previous encounters with objects and images’ (Partington 2014). This is also applicable for gender performativity. It is, as such, interpreted in the context of a wide range of practices, such as the mother who wears a wrinkled blouse and slaps her daughter in the face.

From a normative gender perspective, one could expect this kind of practice from the patriarch in the family. That role is given to the local woman (the mother). The father is passively picking his nose, as this does not concern him at all. His shirt, the *wifebeater*, is an ironic contrast to this. The neatly ironed clothes of the daughter exaggerate the opposition between the local, low-class identity and the high class chosen by the family member who has opted to depart from the local. She follows up her gender performance by checking her hair in the mirror. The contrast between her light-coloured and slim normative femininity and her mother’s dark (local) gender performance is exaggerated through the mother’s messy, obese appearance.

The contrast is taken further by the performative dubbing by males of these two women. The daughter is given a much higher pitch, whereas the mother is dubbed in a much lower pitch than one would expect. Second, the mother speaks

sloppy (t-deletion and dialectal Dutch) which is indexical for lacking formal education.

Moreover, mother (with a messy coiffure) and father are sitting at the kitchen table in a tiny sized room surrounded by ‘stuff’ that is everywhere in the room (open bottles, towels, the old-fashioned sink). Yet, the audience is fully aware that the class construction comes about through a parody of what is imagined as lower social class and bad taste. Parody is involved through exaggeration that the audience will recognise: the slapping of the daughter, the magnified contrast between ‘sloppy’ mother and ‘neat’ daughter, the nose-picking father in a ‘wife-beater’ and too much stuff in a too-small a room without any luxury items.

[5] HOW GENDER IS CONSTRUCTED IN A COMMERCIAL: A WOMAN FROM ØSTFOLD, NORWAY

This section will investigate a television commercial³ for the popular tabloid newspaper in Norway, VG,⁴ from 2006. The main actor in the commercial is a woman from Østfold, the actress Vivi Haug (1936–2014), who was often referred to as *VG-dama* (‘The VG-lady’) after figuring in this commercial.⁵

The commercial starts out with VG-dama having a conversation on the phone in her living room, presumably with her friend Hjørdis. The conversation



FIGURE 8: VG-dama on the phone getting ready to go to the grocery store.

continues almost throughout the entire commercial, even as the situations and her listeners differ: with Hjørdis on the cell phone when leaving the house; with some random kids at the bus stop; with the bus driver on the bus taking her to the grocery store; with a woman outside the store; with the cashier inside the store; with a male passerby outside the store; with the bus driver again when going back; on her cell phone

outside her house when returning home; and finally on her home telephone inside the house when she returns. When she finally hangs up, she prepares to relax in her armchair reading the newspaper, but after opening the paper she enthusiastically comments on the first thing she reads, and states, ‘I need to call

[3] The commercial can be found here: https://youtu.be/_HRg1m2TGnk

[4] VG is an abbreviation for Verdens Gang and can be translated to ‘as time goes by’.

[5] https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vivi_Haug

Hjørdis', implying she will start talking on the phone again.

For this commercial, the potential meanings are multilayered. From the beginning, VG-dama's practices index place (Johnstone 2011) both linguistically and thematically. Her constant talking brings her into several place-related subjects: she is telling her interlocutor(s) that she is eating chunked bacon and tomatoes for breakfast, and that the bacon was bought in Sweden:

Jeg er så sulten når jeg står opp om morran
I am so hungry when I get up in the morning

jeg vet du
I know you

men heldigvis har jeg vært i Sverige
but luckily have I been to Sweden

og kjøpt sånne [plural] **bekentærninger** [plural]
and bought these kind of chunked bacon

og så er jeg nødt til å ha sånne
and I need to have these

hva er om heter igjen cherrytomater
what are they called again cherry tomatoes

VG-dama's affinity for bacon must be considered as a place-making practice. Due to the proximity to Sweden, Østfolders are known as frequent cross-border shoppers. Bacon (and meat in general) is considerably cheaper on the other side of the border, and the 'bargain leak' has not been popular among Norwegian politicians. In an interview with the newspaper *Dag & Tid* in 2002, the minister of agriculture stated that going over the border from Østfold to shop in Sweden is *harry*. Harry is a pejorative Norwegian expression for preferences with low social prestige.⁶ Besides being a place-making practice, VG-dama's desire for bacon can

[6] https://ordbok.uib.no/perl/ordbok.cgi?OPP=harry&ant_bokmaal=5&ant_nynorsk=5&begge=+&ordbok=begge. This has again become relevant because the coronavirus pandemic has led to closed borders with Sweden. A commentary written by the capital-based doctor, Trude Basso, with the headline 'It is now dangerous to be harry' [Nå er det farlig å være harry] (<https://www.nrk.no/ytring/na-er-det-farlig-a-vaere-harry-1.15103126>) was published on the webpage of the national broadcaster, NRK. Starting with 'Feel free to call me a snob. But dropping bacon and beer from Sweden is a small sacrifice [in the ongoing pandemic]', she is building a contrast between herself and her job as a doctor and people who travel to Sweden for shopping: 'It is boring when you live along the border and have to pay the same for tobacco

be interpreted as a reaction to the statements from the minister, defending local practices in a parodic way. Eating bacon (regularly for breakfast) is not considered healthy, and the amount of lifestyle-related disease in Østfold is above average compared to the rest of Norway (Østfold Fylkeskommune 2016). This is also elaborated when VG-dama expresses that she cannot quite remember the name of cherry tomatoes, which are healthy (*hva er om heter for no igjen cherrytomater*, ‘what are they called again, cherry tomatoes’). The humorous take is effective to keep the seriousness of the situation at a distance – that is, the connection between class, poor personal economy and lifestyle-related diseases.

Her use of local dialect features, such as the form *morran* ‘morning’, the monophthong *beken* ‘bacon’, and the plural pronoun *om* ‘they’ links her to place-based linguistic identities that are recognisable by (at least) a local audience. In addition, her low-pitched voice is interesting for this matter, as the parallel between Østfold and Heerlen is striking. Researchers have pointed to the potential social meaning of pitch in eastern Norwegian (e.g. Kjeldstadli 2000 [1994], p. 126; Stjernholm & Søfteland 2019, p. 123), but as far as we know this has not been investigated properly. Lower pitch is associated with speech varieties spoken in industrial areas in Oslo and Østfold, and the Østfold dialect is also known for so-called ‘dark’ vowels, especially the ‘dark’ /a/, a feature that came to Østfold from Swedish, according to Andersen (1978, p. 273). Yet our data point in the direction that the connection between low-pitched speech and the working class is not limited to the national situation in Norway; it seems to have a wider range.

Also in this commercial, indexicalities of class and localisation practices intersect with gender. VG-dama is a senior woman, probably around 60 to 70 years old. Her makeup is exaggerated and smeared on her face. Her jewellery looks cheap, and her hat is obviously of a low-quality material with a naïve animal print. Her clothing seems somewhat unplanned, with different colours and patterns, and her bag seems to be of simple canvas. Her home is a modest wooden house similar to working-class houses in the area. Its interior is cosy and more tidy than the room displayed from Parkstad, yet still



FIGUR 9: VG-dama on the bus with smeared makeup and an animal-print hat.

as people in the rest of the country’, she states. Basso was very soon accused of speaking from a privileged point of view; see, for example, <https://www.nrk.no/ytring/noen-ma-til-sverige-1.15105695>.

overcrowded with stuff and not in line with contemporary interior trends associated with the upper classes and the socially mobile. When she leaves her coat on the couch and the plastic bag that she has brought home from the store on the floor, the impression of a cluttered house is reinforced. This commercial does not draw a sharp contrast between local and non-local women like the clip from Heerlen. Yet VG-dama's feminine behaviour is not in line with the normative feminine character that the daughter in the Heerlen clip represents. On the contrary, VG-dama's feminine practices must be considered as stereotypical and undervalued.

VG-dama's constant talking – to everyone she meets – is performative and speaks to a lack of formal education (for which women historically had fewer opportunities than men) and etiquette while simultaneously pointing to stereotypes of women as chattery and gossiping. When the bus passes Hjørdis's house on the way to the store, she comments on Hjørdis's curtains, and the same thing happens when passing Hjørdis's house for the second time on the way back. The first time she passes, she only remarks that the curtains are new. The second time she says:

du	bevare	meg	døm	gardinene	til	ho	Hjørdis
you	save	me	them	curtains	to		Hjørdis
er	ikke	verst	når	du	ser	dem	for annen
are	not	that bad	when	you	see	them	for the second
gang	må	kanskje	Se	dem	flere	ganger	
time	must	maybe	See	them	several	times	

Here she is implying that one needs to see the curtains several times to like them, and also that her immediate reaction to them was negative, which depicts her as a stereotypical gossipier.

Her lack of formal education is also displayed when she states to the cashier at the store (and therefore in public) that she only watches *Glamour* on television, which is the name used in Norway for the American soap series *The Bold and the Beautiful*. *Glamour* was/is a daytime TV show, implying that VG-dama is at home during the day and is therefore not employed (anymore).

At the end of the commercial, when VG-dama is about to rest and finally stops talking (for a few seconds), we see only her legs when she raises them onto a footrest and her hands holding the newspaper. Her socks have red and white stripes, which are the colours of VG's logotype and also the colours of the local football club of the city of Fredrikstad in Østfold. These socks situate VG-dama



FIGUR 10: VG-dama comes to rest with her feet up, displaying her red-and-white-striped socks, the colours of the local football club in Fredrikstad.

not only to the Østfold region but to the former industrial town of Fredrikstad. Fredrikstad is obviously the place where she is home and able to rest. The socks also index an identification with working-class football supporters that, certainly before the 1960s and the commodification of football, centres around ‘the local team, masculinity, active participation, and victory’ (Giulianotti 2002).

[6] DISCUSSION

In this section, we will return to a further discussion of our research question, *How are female dialect users from former industrial areas depicted in the media?* First and foremost, it is crucial to emphasise that the potential meanings in these media representations are multilayered, and the practices of the women are clearly recognisable as exaggerations and interpreted as parodic. Yet indexicalities of class and localisation practices obviously intersect with gender and link them to place-based working-class women’s identities. In the myriad available discourses, these high performances serve as examples of a public discourse that frames local identity and gender categories in Heerlen and Østfold.

Both media representations show remarkable correspondences: in both cases normative conceptions of femininity are breached. The local women are depicted with a lack of etiquette through the slapping practices in Heerlen and (sloppy) ways of (constantly) speaking with (too) low-pitched speech with specific lexical and morphosyntactic items that comply with stereotyping normative conceptions of gender and class. Common to these practices is that they depart from the normative feminine category represented by the daughter in the clip from Heerlen. The category ‘(local) (post) industrial woman’ in these representations seems to counteract normative femininity. Through the slapping the daughter is actually punished for her non-local shopping and for identifying with (normative) femininity. The practices of the local women that can be called ‘woman-like’ are predominantly acted out through feminine practices with low status, such as (a lack of) interest in their own appearance, the type of impression their domestic surroundings give, and sloppy, never-ending speech about unimportant things (curtains and daytime TV). Taken together, these depictions do not obey normative conceptions of femininity; they are not essentially bodily or biological but come about through the speaking,

dressing and other practices of these women. In line with Partington's (2014) arguments, their place-making practices and use of local dialect influence how the audience understands specific linguistic forms and create class-specific 'intertextual' meaning.

Our findings correspond with Woolard's (2016, p. 24) descriptions of how locally valued identities often are characterised by what we claim as masculine connotations. The communicative effects of the representations are parodying normative conceptions for femininity and social class recognisable for a local audience; it is through exaggerating the practices that these normative conceptions become visible. This is also emphasised towards the end of the commercial, when the socks of VG-dama reinforce the connection between 'local' and 'masculine', in line with Giulianotti (2002).

Finally, it is relevant to mention that in a Norwegian context, the connection to the working class may not be perceived as obvious, due to Norway's history as an egalitarian (Myhre 2015) and linguistically liberal society (Trudgill 2002, p. 31). Because this commercial does not draw a contrast between VG-dama and another character representing the normative female, the *contrast* between her and normative conceptions of gender and class is not as obvious as it is in the clip from Heerlen; it is rather implicit through the parodic depiction of her. Chun (2017) points to the prevalent tensions between the 'objective' categories of class and the subjective ones of lived discursive identifications. VG-dama's practices have low-class connotations, and simultaneously, this points to a kind of ordinariness that does not need to be perceived negatively. Her ordinariness is probably recognisable to most Norwegians but not necessarily in a negative way, just like the newspaper she is promoting, which has been the best-selling newspaper in Norway for a long period of time. Nevertheless, VG-dama represents a depiction of female Østfolders that feeds into the stereotypes about local women. Following Johnstone (2011, p. 658), the high performances we have discussed in this paper link locally occurring linguistic forms to models of speech, behaviour and action (p. 657), which continuously link 'local' to 'masculine', which leaves a narrow space in which to construct local femininity.

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