Visual framing of European Years in Romanian public communication campaign blogs

Encuadre visual de los Años Europeos en los blogs de las campañas de comunicación rumanas

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ABSTRACT: **Since 1983, European Years (EY) have been implemented by the European Parliament and the European Council to raise the awareness of the local, regional, and national authorities on a common European issue. This article develops a visual framing analysis of the photographic representation of the European Year of Volunteering (2011) and the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) at a national level. The data will focus on the photographic images uploaded on the campaign blogs of two Romanian non-governmental organizations. This study has a threefold aim: first, to compare and contrast the use of photographic images in the blogs of two Romanian public communication campaigns; second, to develop a model of visual framing analysis focused on types of represented participants, social actions, and shots; third, to argue that the objectives and outcomes of the public communication campaigns on EY issues depend on the type of "I-ness" versus "we-ness" society a country is.**

RESUMEN: *Desde 1983, los Años Europeos son aplicados por el Parlamento Europeo y la Comisión para elevar la conciencia de las autoridades locales, regionales y nacionales en un tema común europeo. Este artículo desarrolla un análisis de encuadre visual de la representación fotográfica del Año Europeo del Voluntariado (2011) y del Año Europeo del Envejecimiento Activo y la Solidaridad Intergeneracional (2012) a escala nacional. Los datos se centrarán en las imágenes fotográficas subidas en los blogs de campaña de dos organizaciones no gubernamentales rumanas. Este estudio tiene un triple objetivo: primero, comparar y contrastar el uso de las imágenes fotográficas en los blogs de dos campañas de comunicación rumanas; segundo, desarrollar un modelo de análisis de encuadre visual centrado en tipos de participantes representados, acciones sociales y tomas fotográficas; tercero, argumentar que los objetivos y los resultados de las campañas de comunicación pública de los Años Europeos dependen de la representación social desde el tipo "yo" frente al "nosotros".*

Keywords: **European Years, Romania, frame types, photographic images, social actions, participants, shots.**

Palabras clave: *Años Europeos, Rumania, tipos de encuadre, imágenes fotográficas, acciones sociales, participantes, tomas fotográficas.*

1. *Introduction*

Studies of the European Union mention a twofold deficit: a democratic deficit (a vertical Europeanization as instances of top-down[1]) and a symbolic deficit (a symbolic distance between Central and Eastern Europeans and Western Europeans; a sign of emptiness associated within

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[1] Cfr. MACHILL, Marcel, BEILER, Markus and FISCHER, Corinna, "Europe-topics in Europe's media. The debate about the European public sphere: a meta-analysis of media content analyses", *European Journal of Communication*, 21 (1), 2006, pp. 57-88.

Europe[2]). Several attempts[3] have been made in order to reduce the symbolic deficit associated with the European Union: Koolhaas's barcode concept proposal for the EU flag in 2004, the *European Capital of Culture*, and the 2007 EU birthday logo competition. These attempts encompass the Commission's strategic principles to earn people's interest and trust by "going local".[4]

European Years are intended to implement the strategy of "going local". A European Year (EY) is a theme of action[5], chosen each year since 1983, to educate the widest possible audience and to attract the attention of Member State (MS) governments to a particular issue, and to change the citizens' attitudes or behaviours. The choice of a European issue to be discussed simultaneously across national public spaces and media, turns European Years into "a social construction constituting a community of communication"[6].

Focused on the principle of subsidiarity and decentralization[7], the goal of European Years is to go beyond the macro-level and to raise awareness and encourage actions on the part of national authorities, at the micro-level[8]. The emphasis laid on the role of the smallest, lowest and least centralized authority, in addressing a European issue, may show that "the bottom-up" approach is more efficient if the European issue reflects the national social, cultural, and economic context. A stronger relationship with European citizens is created by involving them in the implementation of EY issues through public communication campaigns run by their local, regional, and national bodies. Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 functions[9] of informing, connecting, involving and mobilizing have been used as strategies of visibility in the promotion of European Years. Used as motivational tools[10] in communication campaigns, blogs have a high degree of self-presentation[11] since they are perceived as a diary-like memoir of unfolding events.

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[2] Cfr. PRIBERSKY, Andreas, "Europe as a symbol in political image constructions", *Semiotica*, 159 (1/4), 2006, pp. 143-150.

[3] Cfr. AIELLO, Giorgia and THURLOW, Crispin, "Symbolic capitals: Visual discourse and intercultural exchange in the European capital of culture scheme", *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 2 (6), 2006, pp. 148-162; AIELLO, Giorgia, "All Tögethé® now: The recontextualization of branding and the stylization of diversity in EU public communication", *Social Semiotics*, 22 (4), 2012, pp. 459-486.

[4] The 2005 *Action plan to improve communicating Europe by the Commission* highlighted the fact that "communication is more than information" (p. 2). Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/communication_com_en.pdf [access May 10, 2012].

[5] A European Year is proposed by the Commission and adopted by the European Parliament and EU member governments. Available at: http://en.strasbourg-europe.eu/european-year,27569,en.html [access May 13, 2012].

[6] Cfr. RISSE, Thomas, "An emerging European public sphere? Theoretical clarifications and empirical indicators", paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the European Union Studies Association (EUSA), Nashville, TN, 2003. Available at: www.atasp.de/downloads/030322_europe_public.pdf [accessed 20 October 20, 2008].

[7] Cfr. PÜTZ, Christine, "Campaign practices ad survey use in the European Commission: The Eurobarometer survey", in KLIGEMANN, Hand-Dieter and ROMMELE, Andrea (eds.), *Public information campaigns and opinion research. A handbook for the student and practitioner,* Sage, London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi, 2002, pp. 105-124.

[8] Cfr. CMECIU, Camelia, "Insights into the European Years' communication toolboxes", *Styles of Communication*, 4 (1), 2012, pp. 36-58.

[9] Cfr. LILLEKER, Darren G., KOC-MICHALSKA, Karolina, SCHWEITZER, Eva Johanna, JACUNSKI, Michal, JACKSON, Nigel, and VEDEL, Thierry, "Informing, engaging, mobilising or interacting: Searching for a European model of web campaigning", *European Journal of Communication*, 26 (3), 2011, pp. 195-213.

[10] Cfr. LAWSON-BORDERS, Gracie and KIRK, Rita, "Blogs in campaign communication", *American Behavioral Scientist*, 49 (4), 2005, pp. 548-559.

[11] Cfr. KAPLAN, Andreas M. and HAENLEIN, Michael, "Users of the world, unite! The challenge and opportunities of social media", *Business Horizons*, 53 (1), 2010, pp. 59-68.

Functioning as k(nowledge)-logs, blogs are used by organizations during public communication campaigns to foster trust and empathy[12].

Blogging in EY public communication campaigns in Romania reveals the ways in which the micro-level of the individual action, embedded in the Romanian organizations' blog-posts, reflects the macro-level of the 2011 and 2012 European issues: Volunteering and Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

Our analysis will focus on two Romanian EY communication campaigns which were most visible in the online environment: *Let's Do It, Romania!* (LDIR)[13] in 2011 and *My Grandparents Are Cool/Bunicii mei sunt cool[14]* in 2012.

Let's Do It, Romania! (LDIR) is part of the community *Let's Do It, World!*, a project started in Estonia in 2008. Considered the most successful project of social involvement in Romania with a main objective, to clean-up the entire country in one day, *Let's Do It, Romania!* won the Golden Award for Excellence (non-governmental category) at the Romanian PR Awards in 2010.

The Policy Center for Diversity and Security ran the public communication campaign, *My Grandparents Are Cool/Bunicii mei sunt cool*, which highlighted the values of sharing experiences between generations. The blog of the campaign mainly focused on creating a virtual community which gathered stories, common passions, habits, and traditional objects that young people share with their grandparents.

The photographic images within these two campaign blogs may constitute evidence of Romanian citizens' (lack of) involvement and interest in European issues. The analysis will highlight three aspects:

a) the EY national campaign blogs as tools of e-representation of community actions;

b) the salience of national social actions framing volunteering (EY 2011) and active ageing and solidarity between generations (EY 2012);

c) the type of Romanian society ("we-ness" versus "I-ness") visually represented in the blog photographic images of the EY communication campaigns.

2. *Photographic images – structural feature of a blog*

A blog is a hybrid genre[15] and it may be placed on a continuum between standard Web pages and asynchronous CMC (content-mediated communication). The structure and content of a blog use the resources of different modes of representation belonging to offline and digital genres. The hybrid nature of a blog is rendered through three dimensions[16]: frequency of update, symmetry of communicative exchange, and multimodality. The dimension of multimodality highlights that like standard web pages, blogs are a combination of semiotic resources (written or spoken

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[12] Cfr. HERRING, Susan C., LOIS A., BONUS, Sabrina, WRIGHT, Elijah, "Bridging the gap: A genre analysis of weblogs", in *Proceedings of the 37th Hawaii international conference on system sciences*, 2004. Available at: http://origin-www.computer.org/plugins/dl/pdf/proceedings/hicss/2004/ [access March 19, 2011]; KENT, Michael L., "Critical analysis of blogging in public relations", *Public Relations Review*, 34 (1), 2008, pp. 32-40.

[13] http://blog.letsdoitromania.ro/ [access December 21, 2011].

[14] http://crpds.ro/bunicii-mei-sunt-cool/ [access December 22, 2012].

[15] HERRING, Susan C., LOIS A., BONUS, Sabrina, WRIGHT, Elijah, *op. cit.*

[16] Cfr. LEMKE, Jay L., "Travels in hypermodality", *Visual Communication*, 1 (3), 2002, pp. 299-325; HERRING, Susan C., LOIS A., BONUS, Sabrina, WRIGHT, Elijah, *op. cit.*

language, static and moving images, music, sound etc.) but they have a textual focus, like CMC. Besides the bloggers' verbal texts, images are the nonverbal counterpart and they constitute one important structural feature of a blog.

Two key notions of 'framing' are pertinent to our study: the application of framing analysis to visual images and the compositional framing of photographic images.

Defined as "schemata of interpretation"[17], frames are used to make sense of information or an occurrence, providing "principles for the organization of social reality"[18]. Selecting those aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a blog post, bloggers try to convey their opinions on certain events, issues and actors, but at the same time to promote their interests and values.

Photographic images as instances of visual structural feature play a significant role in organizational blogs, since they "subtly camouflage the constructed, historical, and social roots of ideology"[19]. Our choice for a framing analysis of the photographic images posted on the blogs of the Romanian non-governmental organizations has three reasons. First, visual framing is closely related to the position of the point-of-view. The photographer, by making certain compositional choices (camera angle, focus and distance), shows what is important[20] and therefore introduces bias. Second, photographic images tell a story about the social actions performed by the depicted participants in order to promote the EY issue at the national level. Third, until now the visual framing analysis of photographic images has mainly focused on news coverage of press photography depicting conflicts[21] or natural disasters[22]. The photographic images uploaded on a communication campaign blog will play a significant role. Considered "strategies of social control"[23], public communication campaigns are based on a cognitive flow, from an objective of informing, towards a motivational objective which implies a change of attitude and behaviour. Social diaries and/or participatory outlets[24], blogs, through their visual and verbal structural features, may be interpreted in terms of two functions: informing and/or mobilizing. The photographic images posted on the EY campaign blog either inform about past actions or mobilize for future actions.

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[17] Cfr. GOFFMAN, Erving, *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1974.

[18] Cfr. HERTOG, James K., MCLEOD, Douglas M., "A multiperspectival approach to framing analysis: A field guide", in REESE, Stephen D., GANDY, Oscar H., GRANT, August E. (eds.), *Framing public life: Perspective on media and our understanding of the social world*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 2001, pp. 139-162.

[19] Cfr. MESSARIS, Paul and ABRAHAM, Linus, "The role of images in framing news stories", in REESE, Stephen D., GANDY, Oscar H., GRANT, August E. (eds.), *Framing public life: Perspective on media and our understanding of the social world*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 2001, pp. 215-226.

[20] Cfr. BURGIN, Victor, *Thinking photography*, Macmillan, London, 1982.

[21] Cfr. FAHMY, Shahira, "Picturing Afghan women: A content analysis of AP wire photographs during the Taliban regime and after the fall of the Taliban regime", *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies,* 66 (2), 2004, pp. 91-112; PARRY, Katy, "A visual framing analysis of British press photography during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict", *Media, War & Conflict*, 3 (1), 2010, pp. 67-85; CANTRELL ROSAS-MORENO, Tania, HARP, Dustin, BACHMANN, Ingrid, "Framing ideology: How Time magazine represents nationalism and identities through visual reporting", *Communication&Society/Comunicación ySociedad,* 26 (3), 2013, pp. 1-20.

[22] Cfr. BORAH, Porismita, "Comparing visual framing in newspapers: Hurricane Katrina versus tsunami", *Newspaper Research Journal*, 30 (1), 2009, pp. 50-57.

[23] Cfr. PAISLEY, William J., "Public communication campaign: The American experience", in RICE, Ronald E. and ATKIN, Charles K. (eds.), *Public communication campaigns,* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi, 2001, pp. 3-21.

[24] LAWSON-BORDERS, Gracie and KIRK, Rita, *op. cit.,* p. 548.

3. *Methodology*

3.1. *Content analysis*

The photographic image will constitute the primary unit of our analysis since it is a sign of evidence that concrete actions framing EY issues (volunteering, active ageing and solidarity between generations) took place in reality.

The content analysis of the photographic images posted on the *Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign blog in 2011 and on the *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog in 2012 will focus on two aspects:

a) types of frames. We will adapt Robert M. Entman's typology of substantive frames[25] (problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, treatment recommendation) to three main frames of a public communication campaign: stirring awareness, community action, and evaluation.

b) types of social actions and of participants depicted in the photos. The salience of these two analytical categories in the photographic images of the EY national campaigns will be interpreted in terms of the collectivist ("we-ness") and individualist ("I-ness") society[26] with which Romania may be associated.

3.2. *Coding procedure and research questions*

The analysis included the following steps:

a) data collection: the visual images uploaded on the EY national campaign blogs were divided into advertising posters and photographic images. The *Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign blog (January – December 2011) had 382 blog posts which included 803 visual images (653 photographic images and 150 advertising posters). The *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog (January – December 2012) had 54 blog posts which included 223 visual images (214 photographic images and 9 advertising posters). The final data to be analysed included: 653 photographic images framing volunteering (EY 2011) and 214 photographic images framing active ageing and solidarity between generations (EY 2012).

b) photos – highlighting future or past events. The coding took into account the date of the blog posts which contained photographic images. A photo embedded into a blog post informing about an event to take place was to be coded as a photo framing a future social action. A photo

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[25]Cfr. ENTMAN, Robert M., "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm", *Journal of Communication,* 43 (4), 1993, pp. 51-58.
[26] Cfr. HOFSTEDE, Geert and HOFSTEDE Geert J., *Cultures and Organizations – Software of the Mind*, McGraw-Hill, New York/Chicago/San Francisco, 2005.

embedded into a blog post informing about an event which took place was to be coded as a photo framing a past social action.

c) photo theme/participant: the title of the blog photographic image which announced a certain social action (e.g. "Acțiune de cartare"/"Mapping action") or a participant (e.g. "Mireasă și mire"/"Bride and bridegroom");

d) human versus non-human participants: the coding of photos in terms of the type of participants: human (e.g. volunteers or NGO members in the 2011 campaign or elderly people and young people in the 2012 campaign) versus non-human (objects that may imply certain social actions; e.g. a glove is the sign of the social action of cleaning);

e) distance: seven types of shots[27] (extreme close-up, close-up, medium close, medium, medium long, long, extreme long). This typology of shots was applied to the human participants represented in the blog photographic images in order to render the collectivist or individualist society with which Romania may be associated throughout the national implementations of European issues.

The coding of the photographic images in terms of the analytical categories presented above was performed by two independent coders and the inter-coder reliability was 0.89 (pi value).

This study will address the following research questions:

RQ1: What was the salience of the frames depicting EY 2011 & EY 2012?

RQ2: What were the most salient social actions used in the depiction of volunteering and active ageing and solidarity between generations in the blog-post photographic images?

RQ3: What was the salience of photographic images related to past and future social actions used in the Romanian campaign blog frames depicting the two European Years?

RQ4: What types of participants were depicted in the photographic images?

RQ5: What were the most salient types of shots used in the portrayal of participants?

4. *Findings*

4.1. *Frames of European Years in Romanian public communication campaign blogs*

Since European Years are implemented as public communication campaigns, three main frames may be associated with the national public communication campaigns (RQ1): stirring awareness, community action, and evaluation. We will associate these frames with Robert M. Entman's typology of substantive frames (Table 1): problem definition (defining effects or conditions as problematic), *causal interpretation* (identifying causes), *moral evaluation* (conveying a moral judgment), and *treatment recommendation* (endorsing remedies or improvements).

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[27] Cfr. KRESS, Gunther and VAN LEEUWEN, Theo, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Routledge, London/New York, 2006.

Table 1. Frames in national EY communication campaigns

EY communication campaign frames	Frame type	*Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign (EY 2011)	*My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign (EY 2012)
Stirring awareness	Problem definition	*Informing*: visual images of waste, visual images of volunteers or NGO members holding workshops or information sessions	*Informing*: visual images of the NGO members or other volunteers holding workshops or information sessions
	Causal interpretation	-	-
Community action	Treatment recommendation	*Social actions – remedy*: visual images of mapping (biking, driving, walking), of cleaning	*Social actions – remedy*: visual images of story-telling, photo-sharing, drawing, planting trees, jogging
		Endorsing: visual images of Romanian public figures promoting the campaign	*Endorsing*: visual images of Romanian public figures promoting the campaign
Evaluation	Moral evaluation	*Awarding*: visual images of trophies, prizes, diplomas	*Awarding*: visual images of diplomas, flowers

We associated the frame of *stirring awareness* with *problem definition* (imagery of waste in 2011 and of elderly people in 2012 or of NGO members holding workshops or information sessions about the European issues at a national level) and with *causal interpretation* (possible imagery of the persons to be blamed for the presence of waste or for the exclusion of elderly people from families and/or society). As Table 1 shows, the blog photographic images did not focus on the substantive frame of causal interpretation. The non-governmental organizations prefer not to put the blame for these social issues on some specific persons.

The frame of *community action* was linked to *treatment recommendation* (imagery of social actions of volunteering, active ageing and solidarity between generations, seen as remedies; imagery of well-known persons as endorsers of the campaign).

The frame of *evaluation* was linked to *moral evaluation* (imagery of the awards given to the Romanian citizens who actively got involved in the national campaign activities).

Table 2 shows the salience of the three frames in the two Romanian EY campaign blog posts. One important discrepancy may be observed in the number of photographic images uploaded on the EY campaign blogs in Romania (653 photos in 2011 versus 214 photos in 2012). The lack of interest shown by Romanian organizations in promoting the 2012 European issue of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations at a national level, may be explained by the results of the Special Eurobarometer 378[28]. Whereas over 80% of citizens in the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, France and Finland understand that their population is ageing, only 30% of Romanians are of this opinion. The lack of awareness regarding this social issue triggers a low percentage (13%) of Romanian citizens being concerned about this problem, whereas 42% of Europeans are concerned about the fact that their population is getting older.

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[28]SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER 378 "ACTIVE AGEING". This survey was published in January 2012 and it has been requested by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and coordinated by Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM "Research and Speechwriting" Unit). Avalaible at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm [access September 23, 2012].

Table 2. The salience of frames in campaign blog-posts

Public communication campaign frames	*Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign blog (EY 2011)		*My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog (EY 2012)	
	No. Photographic images	% Photographic images	No. Photographic images	% Photographic images
Stirring awareness (problem definition)	293	44	1	0.50
Community action (remedy)	304	47	208	97
Evaluation (moral evaluation)	56	9	5	2.50
TOTAL	**653**	**100**	**214**	**100**

Two important aspects should be highlighted:

1) the frame of stirring awareness (problem definition) was mostly present in the visual framing of the 2011 public communication campaign, whereas the 2012 campaign mainly focused on the frame of community action.

2) there is a low discrepancy between the *stirring awareness* frame (44%) and the *community action* frame (47%) in the *Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign blog. The equal distribution of the two frames shows that photographic images for the 2011 EY campaign in Romania were used as motivational tools (defining the problem) and as evidence tools (social actions) as well.

Even if awarding as *moral evaluation* does not have a very high percentage in both campaigns, it is important for the NGO members to be aware that this type of evaluation is a sign of appreciation and of motivation for future volunteers.

4.2. *Social actions – means of national specificity*

The European issue of Volunteering (EY 2011) was chronologically framed in the *Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign blog posts. The past was linked to mapping the waste in Romania, the climax was September 24, the day of cleaning-up the country and the future was linked to evaluation and awarding. The European issue of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (EY 2012) was framed in the *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog posts as activities with a double function: for the young generation, a remembering and appreciation function, and for the elderly generation, a mobilizing function.

Since a public communication campaign focuses on the frames of stirring awareness, community action, and evaluation, we will take into account both the social actions as remedies, specific to the

substantive frame of *treatment recommendation*, the social action of informing about the problem, specific to the frame of *problem definition*, and the social actions of awarding, specific to the frame of *moral evaluation.*

Table 3. Salience of social actions

Let's Do It, Romania! campaign blog (EY 2011)			*My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog (EY 2012)		
Social actions	Nº photographic images	% photographic images	Social actions	Nº photographic images	% photographic images
Cleaning	185	28	Story-telling	88	41
Informing	151	23	Drawing	70	33
Endorsing	142	22	Photo-sharing	36	17
Mapping the waste	119	18	Planting trees	11	5
Awarding	56	9	Awarding	5	2
TOTAL	**653**	**100**	Endorsing	2	1
			Jogging	1	0.50
			Informing	1	0.50
			TOTAL	**214**	**100**

Table 3 shows that the most salient social actions (RQ2) visually framed in both Romanian campaign blogs coincide with the main objectives of the public communication campaigns. For EY 2011, most images showed volunteers cleaning the country (28%) and mapping the waste (18%). For EY 2012, most imaged depicted elderly and young people involved in the activity of story-telling (41%). The social actions of cleaning and mapping visually framed in the Romanian campaign blog coincided with the purpose of the global campaign *Let's Do It, World!* The social action of story-telling promoting the EY 2012 focused on five actions specific to Romanian grandparents: cooking, raising children, playing backgammon, knitting, and fishing.

As the visual framing of the social actions is concerned, the following discrepancies between the two Romanian campaign blog posts may be identified:

(1) Whereas the main social actions (cleaning, informing, endorsing, mapping the waste) specific to the *Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign have a partially equal salience, the social actions specific to the *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog mainly focus on three actions with different dominance (story-telling, drawing, photo-sharing);

(2) Endorsing is more salient in the campaign promoting the European Year of Volunteering than in the campaign promoting the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

The differences between the visual framing of the 2011 and 2012 EY social actions promoted at a national level show that the *Let's Do It, Romania!* blog posts focused on a more coherent distribution of campaign stages and communicative strategies. Unlike the 2011 campaign which focused on photographic images depicting social actions specific to all countries which took part in the *Let's Do It, World!* campaign, the 2012 campaign focused on photographic image depicting social actions specific to Romanian young and elderly people.

A social semiotic analysis of the photos of the two campaigns reveals a discrepancy at the level of

portraits that are visually represented. Social actions, such as cleaning or mapping, on the one hand, and story-telling or drawing, on the other hand, imply a transactional process[29], where the participants (pupils, students or grandparents) interact through their action with other human participants or objects (with the waste in parks or in the fields for EY 2011, or with grandchildren for EY 2012). Despite this common "design of a social action"[30], the photos from the two EY campaigns highlight certain portraits that imply some different social constructs[31] which may be associated with the issue of volunteering and solidarity between generations. The two types of portraits to which we refer are: *classificational portraits* ("to relate participants in terms of a kind of relation, a taxonomy"[32]) and *analytical portraits* ("to identify a Carrier and to allow viewers to scrutinize the Carrier's Possessive Attributes"[33]). The EY 2011 photos focused on "a sense of categorization by membership in a group"[34]. The groups of pupils, students or workers cleaning the waste or the groups of bikers mapping the waste have common features which make them belong to the LDIR community. These specific features are visually rendered by semiotic resources, such as T-shirts with the LDIR logo, bikes, or plastic bags. The EY 2012 photos focus on individual participants whose traits are clearly identified and who are photographed in a full-bodied frontal pose. The Carriers create a binary opposition (elderly persons versus children) and their attributes are highlighted by semiotic resources central to analytical images: dress-code (e.g., headkerchieves or woolen vests for grandmothers versus school uniforms for pupils), gender and age of the person portrayed (e.g., girls taught by their grandmothers to knit or boys taught by their grandfathers to fish). We will also provide a detailed analysis of the participants when interpreting the types of shots used in the EY 2011 and EY 2012 photos in terms of the visual representations of "we-ness" versus "I-ness" (see 4.4.).

4.3. *Photographic images – motivation versus evidence tools*

The photographic images were coded for two functions:
(a) the function of motivational tools, when related to future social actions;
(b) the function of evidence tools, when related to past social actions.
Motivation may be expressed explicitly (photographic images for future social actions) or implicitly (photographic images of past actions which may set up an example for other organizations to follow).
RQ3 focused on the degree in which this double function of photographic images was used in the two Romanian campaign blog posts. As Table 4 shows, the *Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign blog combined future and past social actions, whereas the *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign mainly used past social actions.

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[29] KRESS, Gunther and VAN LEEUWEN, Theo, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

[30] KRESS, Gunther and VAN LEEUWEN, Theo, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[31] KRESS, Gunther and VAN LEEUWEN, Theo, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[32] KRESS, Gunther and VAN LEEUWEN, Theo, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[33] KRESS, Gunther and VAN LEEUWEN, Theo, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[34] Cfr. AIELLO, Giorgia, "The 'other' Europeans: the semiotic imperative of style", in *Euro Visions* by Magnum photos", *Visual Communication*, 11 (1), 2011, pp. 49-77.

Table 4. Future and past framing of social actions

Let's Do It, Romania! campaign blog (EY 2011)			*My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog (EY 2012)		
Social actions	% Future	% Past	Social actions	% Future	% Past
Cleaning	14 (n=9)	30 (n=176)	Story-telling	100 (n=2)	41 (n=87)
Informing	5 (n=3)	25 (n=148)	Drawing	0	33 (n=70)
Endorsing	51 (n=32)	19 (n=110)	Photo-sharing	0	17 (n=36)
Mapping the waste	28 (n=18)	17 (n=101)	Planting trees	0	5 (n=11)
Awarding	2 (n=12)	9 (n=55)	Awarding	0	2 (n=5)
TOTAL	**100 (n=74)**	**100 (n=550)**	Endorsing	0	1 (n=2)
			Jogging	0	0.50 (n=1)
			Informing	0	0.50 (n=1)
			TOTAL	**100 (n=2)**	**100 (n=212)**

The discrepancy may be explained in terms of the different campaign objectives. The process of story-telling was framed as a recounting of past. Story-telling may be interpreted as a sign of the solidarity between generations since elderly people share their life experiences to young people. Thus, the blog of the *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign included only two photographic images as future social actions which may serve as explicit motivational tools. The non-governmental organization did not use the blog as a tool of announcing future actions, but as a tool of making visible the actions which took place.

The process of cleaning-up Romania in one day (September 24, 2011) presupposes some previous actions which should mobilize Romanian citizens. Endorsing (51%) and mapping the waste (28%) are the most salient activities framed as future social actions. The visual images include photographic images either of Romanian public figures promoting the LDIR or objects (bikes, gloves), as signs of involvement, used in the actions of mapping the waste and cleaning. The three most salient past social actions are cleaning (30%), informing (25%), and endorsing (19%). Informing and endorsing as past activities were framed by visual images from workshops held by the NGO members and by images of endorsers who held concerts in order to promote the campaign. The action of cleaning was a visual account of a chronological sequence: initial problem (images of waste), solution (images of volunteers), and final outcomes (images of bags full of waste).

4.4. *The framing of participants – "we-ness versus I-ness"*

Any social action depicted in photographic images is performed or experienced by participants. The participants represented in the campaign blog photographic images in two categories:
a) human participants/social actors (EY 2011 – volunteers, NGO members, endorsers; EY 2012 – elderly people, young people, endorsers);
b) non-human participants/concrete objects (EY 2011 – waste, awards, maps as signs of the social actions of cleaning, awarding, mapping; EY 2012 – pots, dresses, or chairs as signs of tradition).

Table 5. Participants

Let's Do It, Romania! campaign blog			*My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog		
Participants	N° photographic images	% photographic images	Participants	N° photographic images	% photographic images
Social actors	Volunteers	251	38	Elderly people (A1)	16	8
	NGO members	144	22	Young people (A2)	108	50
	Endorsers	182	29	A1&A2	78	36
				Endorsers	2	1
Objects		76	11	Objects	10	5
TOTAL		653	100	TOTAL	214	100

Table 5 shows the salience of participants (RQ4) in the blog posts of the two Romanian public communication campaigns. As observed, there is a clear predominance of social actors (in 2011, volunteers – 38%, endorsers – 29%, NGO members – 22%; in 2012 – elderly people – 8%, young people – 50%, elderly and young people – 37%). Whereas in the *Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign, there is an equal salience of social actors, in the *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign, a discrepancy may be noticed in the use of visual images of elderly people versus young people. In the 2012 campaign blog, three types of photographic images are used:
(1) visual images of elderly people (8%) as signs of active ageing;
(2) visual images of young people (50%) as signs of an implicit solidarity between generations (for example, images of pupils drawing their grandparents' houses);
(3) visual images of young and elderly people (36%) involved in the same activities as signs of solidarity between generations. Only 15% of the photographic images depict an explicit solidarity between young and elderly people (e.g. the social action of planting trees), 21% of the photographic images depict an implicit solidarity, the elderly people being present in the photos shared by pupils or in the drawings made by children.

The objects used as non-human participants in both campaigns serve as props for social actions. In 2011, the concrete objects (waste – n=61; maps – n=7) were used within the *stirring awareness* frame, as a means of informing about the location of waste. In 2012, the concrete objects (chair, teapots, wedding dress etc.) were used as starting points of the social action of story-telling within the *community action* frame.
The choice of shots is important to determine the type of social relations depicted in the representation of participants (RQ5). In the photographic practice, shots, ranging from close-up to extreme long, constitute "an index and instrument of integration"[35]. As Figure 1 and Figure 2 show, the two most prominent types of shots in the visual framing of the two European Years are different. In the *Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign blog, long shots (51%) and medium long shots (17%) are the most salient. In the *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog, medium close-up shots (42%) and medium shots (21%) are the most salient.

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[35] Cfr. BOURDIEU, Pierre, *Photography. A middle-brow art*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1982.

Figure 1. The salience of shots – Let's Do It, Romania! campaign blog (EY 2011)
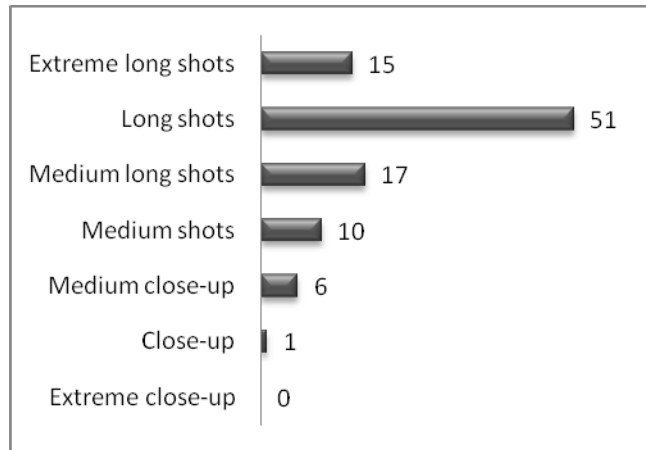

Figure 2. The salience of shots – My Grandparents Are Cool campaign blog (EY 2012)
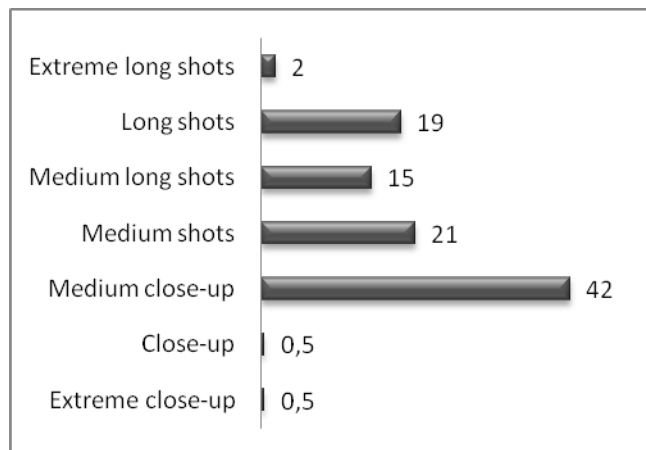

Figure 3 and Figure 4 are examples of portraying the participants in the two EY public communication campaigns in Romania.

Figure 3. *Let's Do It, Romania!* (source: http://blog.letsdoitromania.ro/) – representation of "we-ness"

Figure 4. My Grandparents Are Cool campaign (source: *www.buniciimeisuntcool.ro/*) – representation of "I-ness"

The long shots, medium long shots and extreme long shots prevail in the 2011 campaign on volunteering because the participants are visually depicted as members belonging to social groups (schools, private or public organizations). The medium close-up and medium shots prevail in the 2012 campaign on active ageing and solidarity between generations because the participants are visually depicted either as individual participants or as a pair formed of two persons (Me/grandchild/young person versus You/grandparent/elderly person).

This discrepancy between types of shots framing the participants of the two EY communication campaigns in Romania may be explained in terms of the dichotomy "we-ness" versus "I-ness" with which the 2011 and 2012 EY issues are associated.

"We-ness" is the mental basis of community volunteerism. This feeling of "we-ness" that volunteering focuses on "(…) increases citizens' willingness to engage on behalf of their local community"[36]. The volunteers as groups are identified by two verbal means: a) collectivity verbally rendered by the name of Romanian counties (Let's Do It, Romania! Braşov, etc.); b) individualization through organizational naming (Colegiul "Vasile Lucaciu"/ "Vasile Lucaciu" Highschool or Farmec SA, Toyota, Dacia, etc.). The dominance of long shots, in the case of the *Let's Do It, Romania!* campaign, renders the participants' desire to visually frame both the group and the outcome of their action (bags full of waste). The long shots and medium long shots also provide a depiction of the environment (fields, forests that were cleaned).

The pronominal shift to "I-ness" is implied in the 2012 EY issue since active ageing and solidarity between generations presupposes the individual depiction of active elderly persons or the two-member group depiction of a young and elderly person. The dominance of medium close-up and of medium shots in the *My Grandparents Are Cool* blog may be explained in terms of the campaign main objective. The social action of sharing stories and photos about elderly people implies the shaping of a personal space based on a closer and affectionate relationship[37]. These social actions specific to the European issue of Solidarity between Generations focus on a familiarity relationship, visually framing the young and elderly people either from the chest or waist up.

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[36] Cfr. STÜRMER, Stefan, "Community action", in CHRISTENSEN, Karen and LEVISON, David (eds.), *Encyclopedia of community. From the village to the virtual world,* Sage, Thousand Oaks/New York/New Delphi, 2003, pp. 238-241.
[37] Cfr. HALL, Edward T., *The hidden dimension*, Doubleday, New York, 1966.

5. *Discussion and conclusion*

The potential of photographic images as a structural feature of blog posts should not be under-estimated in public communication campaigns. Photographic images are "as power-laden as words"[38] and they may be used either as motivational or evidence tools. They are signs of authenticity, integration, evidence, reproducing and representing the reality by framing the participants as social actors performing certain actions promoted in the communication campaigns.

This study showed that blog posts, through the visual structural feature of photographic images, may be a visibility tool to demonstrate the implementation of European Years at the micro-level.

The visual framing analysis of the blog posts of two Romanian non-governmental organizations promoting the European Year of Volunteering (2011) and of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) showed that public communication campaigns on European issues, implemented at a micro-level, may have a threefold significance:

–a sign of the individualistic versus collectivistic society. In Hosfstede and Hofstede's study[39] on the individualism versus collectivism index, Romania scored 30, which highlights a low degree of individualism. In a collectivist pastoral society as Romania[40], the dominant values are caring for others and quality of life. Thus the close long-term commitment to the member "group"[41], be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships, plays a significant role. The dominance of collectivism ("we-ness" community) was suggested in the types of shots used in the visual framing of participants. The LDIR campaign (EY 2011) succeeded in turning 27 out of 41 counties into 'communities online'. The participants in the photographic images represented groups of people, long shots being the dominant type of shots. They formed communities in different regional parts of Romania, which had a virtual counterpart on the internet, by e-sharing their photographic images as evidence of their mapping and cleaning actions. The *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign (EY 2012) focused on sharing individual stories and the involvement of the regional counties was very low (8 counties). Unlike the 2011 EY campaign, the visual focus was on particular individuals, medium close-ups being the salient type of shots. The indifference shown by Romanians in promoting the European issue of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations may be explained by their lack of awareness regarding this social issue (13% of Romanians are concerned about the fact that their population is getting older).

–a sign of reflexivity, where memory plays an important part. Cleaning parks and harvesting crops as pupils, during the communist regime, were two habitual social actions that many Romanians will definitely remember. These practices used to lie on solidarity and socializing and they were a way of escaping from the difficult regime that we had to go through. The forced labor turned into a space where collective solidarity in fear[42] was the manifestation of joyful

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[38] Cfr. JEWITT, Carey, "Multimodality and literacy in school classrooms", *Review of Research in Education*, 32 (1), 2008, pp. 241-267.

[39] HOFSTEDE, Geert and HOFSTEDE, Geert J., *op. cit.,* p. 79.

[40] Cfr. SCHIFIRNEŢ, Constantin, "Identitatea românească în contextul modernităţii tendenţionale" ("Romanian identity within the context of tendential modernity"), *Revista română de sociologie*, 20 (5/6), 2009, pp. 461-480.

[41] LUCA, Adina, "Studiul despre valorile şi comportamentul românesc din perspectiva dimensiunilor culturale după metoda lui Geert Hofstede" ("The study on the Romanian values and behavior from the perspective of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions"). Available at: http://www.i-interact.ro [access October 20, 2010].

[42] Cfr. MUNGIU, Alina, *Românii după '89. Istoria unei neînţelegeri* (*Romanians after '89. The history of a misunderstanding*), Humanitas, Bucureşti, 1995.

dissidence. These social actions that we used to performs as pupils or students, may be associated with a type of negative joy[43], each of us experiencing the satisfaction of not going through worse experiences. This former type of communist social bond may explain the salience of photos depicting pupils (52 schools got involved into the LDIR campaign). Many of us still have photos from that time and they actually frame the same group portraits uploaded in the blog photos of the LDIR campaign. The social actions (knitting, cooking, playing backgammon in the park, raising children) depicted in the *My Grandparents Are Cool* campaign blog rely on the traditional actions that Romanians usually associate their grandparents with. We consider that the discrepancy in the use of photographic images framing European Years 2011 and 2012 in Romania may be also explained by the improper linguistic choice of the campaign title "My Grandparents are Cool". The mental representation of "to be cool" is not linked with activities performed together with one's grandparents, "to be cool" is rather associated with expensive cars, fashionable clothes, or clubbing.

–a sign of visibility. As the head of the LDIR non-governmental organization mentioned in an interview, this campaign was the best opportunity for private organizations (n=34) to make themselves visible through these CSR actions. As mentioned before, their identification was at a verbal and not at a visual level. There were very few photographic images depicting the public sector (representatives of the town halls, city halls, police). These EY communication campaigns at a national level may be used as a visibility strategy, especially during elections. Politicians should get involved in the debates and in the national policies that these EY campaigns try to change or improve. At the same time, non-governmental organizations should also make visible in their blog posts such public debates on national policies that their campaigns may have stirred. This study can provide practical insights for national campaign managers promoting European Years. First, campaign blogs should also include photographic images as motivational and evaluation tools. Second, photographic images as evidence of campaign activities should be equally distributed along all stages of the campaign. Third, the success of national public communication campaigns of European Years is highly dependent on the mental representations of European issues at the micro-level.

Although our study is based on only two national public communication campaigns of European Years, we consider that the visual framing analysis developed here may be used as a methodology for examining photographic images within a blog and it also allows for cross-country comparisons between visual implementations of European Years.

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[43] Cfr. PLEŞU, Andrei, *Despre bucurie în est şi în vest şi alte eseuri* (*On experiencing joy in Eastern and Western Europe and other essays*)*,* Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2007.

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