

MEDIA CAMPAIGNS - FORMS OF PROMOTING SOCIAL MESSAGES

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Abstract

The messages transmitted through the media have value if they are able to perform the social communication functions and if they generate feedback from the public. The potential media campaigns to show solidarity on behalf of the public can be measured by the problems solved within a predetermined span of time.

Keywords: *audience, media campaign, social mass-media institution, social message, solidarity, social value.*

The complex phenomena and processes that characterize contemporary society call for the mobilization of the press and an increased activity, able to meet the pace of the developing reality. Media intervenes in the course of events that characterize the massive informational potential as a catalyst agent of the reactions from the public, which, in a society based on democracy, must be taken into account by the public authorities. The pressure exercised by citizens on policy makers is a direct result of the process of informing continuously, a process that is the task of the media system in a community or society. The connection that is established between the participants in the act of leadership and the representatives of public opinion can not be achieved without the mediator factor, a role which the media has assumed since old times.

The lively character of the media, manifested through the influence it exerts on the public, it is argued by media institutions assuming the role of initiators of media campaigns focusing on promoting social values. In this way, the press uses the available leverages broadcast channels available to transmit a message to the public, in order to mobilize it, to appeal to its solidarity. Media campaigns initiated by institutions other than the media, also resort to the channels offered by means of mass communication, only that in this case, the press is not an initiator, but a simple supplier of information or a distributor of a

message, formulated by other entities or organizations. For example, the social campaign against smoking in public, "Moldova out of smoke" (Ministry of Health of Moldova, 2016) was launched on October 11 2016. The organizers are the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, Country Office in the Republic of Moldova. The aim of the campaign was to inform citizens about the enforcement of the amendments to Law 278 of 14.12.2007 on Tobacco Control (Law no. 278, 2007). The campaign was promoted through press materials made the national news portals: diez.md through the news "(video)" Moldova out of smoke": The Ministry of Health launched a social campaign against smoking in public" and UNIMEDIA. info through the news "(video)" Moldova out of smoke. "Spot against smoking in public offices" (Ministry of Health of Moldova, 2016).

In addition to the binding role that the press performs when it comes to social campaigns, exemplified in the preceding paragraph, it may also play a role of initiator: when the idea, the concept, the plan and achievement of these ones are activities carried out within publishing houses.

The notion of media campaign, referring to mass- media, can be approached from the perspective of terminological determinations and by establishing the dissimilarities that exist in relation to other lexical expressions of the same family. Differences are certified between the concept of advertising and that of media campaign. In literature and the contemporary explanatory dictionaries the last is defined with the term of "advertising", translated as publicity. *The English-Romanian Television Explanatory Dictionary*, for example, defines the advertising campaign as: "Any public announcement made

with the intention of promoting the sale, purchase or lease a product or a service, to advance a cause or idea, or producing other effects pursued by the proponent announcement for which was allocated a certain span time in the program for money or for similar reasons (IONIAN, 2005). The term is used in this regard by the European Convention on Transfrontier Television too, of the 5th of May 1989, article 1 f (European Convention on Transfrontier Television, 1989). The same term is defined in the Broadcasting Code of the Republic of Moldova, article 2, paragraph 1): "Advertising - any form of message on the exercise of a trade, craft, professional activity, aiming to promote the supply of goods or provision of services for money, a cause or idea or to produce another effect desired by the one dealing with the advertisement or the broadcaster himself, released under a contract with a private or legal person, public or private, in exchange for a fee or other benefits, any form of announcement broadcasted for self promotional aims" (The Broadcasting Code of Republic of Moldova, 2006).

It should be mentioned that the concept can be extended to other elements of the media: online, news agencies, the printed press: newspapers and magazines in these cases dealing with the terms "space for advertising", instead of "broadcasting time for advertising."

In another source of reference there are specified the English notions of the keywords used in this article or their etymology. In the *Dictionary of Communication and Public Relations* there are presented the concepts of "media campaign" and "press campaign" (DEJICA & CERNICOVA-BUCA, 2014). We note that the authors make a distinction between the two terms, which induces the idea that the terms, though often used as synonyms, in practice, can not be characterized as similar.

According to the *Romanian Language Explanatory Dictionary*, the campaign is an "action organized by a certain plan, in order to achieve political, social tasks, etc., in a certain period of time" and the press campaign, in particular, is an activity of "mobilization of the public opinion through articles published in the press, in favor or against a situation, a case, a person etc." (DEX, 1998), a definition that can not be characterized

as exhaustive as there are not specified the media means used, not does it stressed the role of the media in achieving them.

Media campaigns represents the most often used concept in union with the terms of issue or social problem or phenomena that are in range of themes that are part of the area of interest to readers. A telling example of the of the mentioned term in the context of projects aimed at improving the welfare is provided by the study of the researcher from Moldova Republic, T. Socolov, who claims: "A large project for community development can not be applied if the population does not have sufficient knowledge to conceive and carry out. The press is to present things simply, to approach the potential participants to the understanding the meanings of the action" (SOCOLOV, 2005). The informative character press messages is stated, being designed to provide extra knowledge for proper reception and dissimulation of the processes that take place in the community or society. The development of the idea is contained in characterizing the social groups, conducted by researchers who concluded that the individuals do not need a lot of information, but a message to the point, an event approached correctly, to determine decisions and actions (MOȘNEAGA, 2001), elements that need to be taken into consideration when designing a media campaign.

The most adequate idea of how the construction of social reality through the types press is reproduced by G. Tuchman too, stating that "the news is a social construction of reality" (TUCHMAN, 1978). The study conducted by the researcher in question was based on the observation method, applied in several American newsrooms and interviews with workers in the media industry. The conclusion issued by the author following the investigations focuses on the idea that the act of making news is the act of building reality itself rather than to a description of reality. The convergence relationship between these two processes is explained by the mosaic character of information released to the public by media institutions. Readers are subject to involuntary unintended actions of the reporters and media influenced by their products, presenting fragments of reality, gathered according to certain criteria. The audience is in contact with two

distinct realities: the reality itself can not be fully observed given its complex nature and the media reality, a carbon copy of the original facts. In the context of the statements issued the media campaigns are one more model of reproducing the reality by the media, the character of this action being a voluntary one and focused on a clearly defined goal. If traditional media messages tend to present a picture of reality based on readers' interests, media campaigns are a form of urging public action.

In terms of social campaign, the key concept of this article is tackled by G. Stepanov. The researcher presents the concept as an "element of social journalism ... which generally represents attempts to prevent or educate the general public on issues that concern directly their existence, the aim being to influence, to render sensitive the public awareness on issues that exist in society, promoting social values such as responsiveness, support, social solidarity, etc. (STEPANOV, 2015). There are also set the means by which the means of mass information act to promote the desired changes. They are selected according to the types of problems which are treated. According to the author, the media campaigns whose purpose is "fighting the social injustices and the horrible realities that some social individuals live every day" use awareness raising strategies that target the sentimental level and cause emotional reactions that manifest themselves through solidarity and the desire to help.

Often, media campaigns focus on the ability of the public to solve some social problems facing disadvantaged citizens themselves or their peers by physical conditions or social status. Some other times solving the cases presented by the media campaigns are in keeping with the intervention of the authorities through the decision-making power they have. M. Coman fights against the idea of social development through the act of imposing authoritarian paths traced beforehand (COMAN, 2004). The most appropriate way, according to the author is "self-development" a model which the governments of the states establish strategies and plan information and conviction campaigns of small communities, especially their elites. The latter task will be to decide the type of desired development, to ask for funding from authorities,

to monitor the process of modernization. The role of media is identified in this case by providing information and dissemination. The example provided by the author is consistent with the conclusion issued: "...the groups listening radio campaign in Tanzania which aimed to improve hygiene (1974) and food (1975). In the first year there were 2.5 million villagers involved (40% of the population) and the second 2 million ... ". Although M. Coman does not refer exactly to the concept of media campaign, but the role of the media in general plan, its reduction to the concept of the present study may explain the behavior of the public when it is subjected to repeated messages on social problems faced daily. Media campaign, illustrated by the example can be seen as an effective means of disseminating information, given the ability to ensure the invisible bond between individuals by creating rules, favorable attitudes.

The essence of the concept is also determined by the studies of the researchers from the Russian Federation. D. Georgiev (GEORGIEV, 1979) defines media campaign as "publishing a large number of materials for a determined period of time, unified by a common theme and having a well defined purpose. The beginning, the development, the end, the common theme and the clear purpose - are characteristics of the campaign. These elements makes it different from other materials which are published in the newspaper successively over a long period, related to a topic, but which do not have established limits and a final goal. "According to the author the campaigns can be of 2 types:

- Improvised - they occur by chance, at an event and develop according to the event. The ultimate goal can not always be determined from the beginning, that is why the end of the campaign, can not be foreseen, and the composition and the topography are determined by the dynamics of the event;
- Planned - develop under the aegis of the editorial staff, according to a elaborate scenario.

The researcher highlights too several features of a successful campaign, noting that this qualification can be assigned if the three points that are part of the preparation phase are observed:

- The choice of the theme, the core justifying publication of the messages;
- The choice multidimensional and comprehensive information concerning the theme and depth of its study;
- The correct planning of the campaign.

A master plan of the campaign, according to the model developed by the author, must include a script designed simultaneously in two dimensions: the theme and the organization. The thematic dimension includes the basic directions and sequence of actions that will be undertaken and in the organization - the types of actions, which editorial staff will develop within the campaign.

The next step after the training is the implementation of the plan. The editor's task is to elaborate the composition of the campaign. This is usually built according to the following steps: the start, the knot, the climax, the deployment, the end.

CONCLUSIONS

The subject of media campaigns can be treated in correlation with the specific cases presented and the promoted social values. The trends in contemporary media of inciting to solidarity and citizenship education can be pursued under the messages launched by media institutions, messages that require emotional involvement and result in establishing cohesion between citizens through their participation in solving certain social problems.

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