

Promotion, Popularisation and Pedagogy

Promotion, Popularisation and Pedagogy:
An Analysis of the Verbal and Visual Strategies
in the COE's Human Rights Campaigns

By

Sole Alba Zollo

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

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by Sole Alba Zollo

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*Human beings suffer,
they torture one another,
they get hurt and get hard.
No poem or play or song
can fully right a wrong
inflicted or endured.
The innocent in gaols
beat on their bars together.
A hunger-striker's father
stands in the graveyard dumb.
The police widow in veils
faints at the funeral home.
History says, Don't hope
on this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime
the longed for tidal wave
of justice can rise up,
and hope and history rhyme.
So hope for a great sea-change
on the far side of revenge.
Believe that a further shore
is reachable from here.
Believe in miracles
and cures and healing wells.*

Excerpt from *The Cure at Troy*
an adaptation of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*
by Seamus Heaney

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PREFACE

HUMAN RIGHTS, DISCURSIVE HYBRIDITY AND COMMENSURABILITY

Human rights, manifest in different domains covering institutional, political and everyday family spheres, remain a contentious issue. The presence of discourses surrounding human rights, paradoxically, foregrounds the absence of human rights. Put differently, violations in human rights across the globe attest the deeply embedded inhumanity in contemporary societies. The need for protection of human rights of those who are most vulnerable in our society points unambiguously to the darker side of (in)humanity. In the family sphere, consider domestic violence and child neglect/abuse where the notion of family, with its attendant role-responsibilities, comes under increasing public scrutiny. While many cases of human rights violation go unreported, in extreme scenarios when the so-called guardians and protectors turn perpetrators, state intervention becomes warranted with the onset of corrective and disciplinary regimes. In the spirit of preventive action, raising awareness about the many contours and consequences of human rights violations constitutes a safe middle ground—which is what this monograph by Sole Alba Zollo draws attention to.

Seamus Heaney's poem, with which this monograph opens, sets up the scene extremely well—how humanity is the cause of suffering. A full-scale research project on human rights will not succeed in putting an end to human suffering just as, to quote Seamus Heaney, “no poem or play or song can fully right a wrong inflicted or endured”. However, a micro-level textual analysis of available campaign materials can effectively unravel the intricate ways in which violations of human rights are accounted for—denied, neutralised and even defended—while giving a discursive voice to those who fall victims to violation of human rights.

The monograph places the human rights movement historically with the philosophical and legal overtones—depicting its transformation over time and space to suggest the phenomenon still remains ill understood—not to mention the challenges involved in implementing the human rights

conventions to underwrite a given social order. It then treats human rights as a portfolio in public communication with persuasion at the heart of awareness-raising. An agenda of empowering the vulnerable can be founded upon discursive pillars, evidenced by textual analysis.

The monograph identifies key sites of textual engagement originating from the Council of Europe: posters, TV spots, brochures, booklets. Adopting a broadly framed text/discourse analytic approach—which combines elements of rhetoric as well as multimodality—Zollo explores the trajectories of awareness raising via public campaigns, with potential for transparency, intervention and empowerment. Discourses of justice, ethics, morality, responsibility, trust, equality, practical reason etc. figure prominently in the texts examined. The tensions are evident as multiple audiences are targeted in these campaign materials, but priority rules for assigning weights come to the fore when core principles collide. A discourse of hope remains alive and is in need of sustenance.

The studied texts are rightly identified as being hybrid as they incorporate elements of promotion, popularisation and pedagogy—the so-called 3 P's in the monograph's title—as a way of deconstructing what goes under the notion of “awareness-raising”. Although segregated for analytical purposes, the 3 P's overlap in nuanced ways giving rise to hybridity. The hybridity extends to the analytical stance adopted for the current purposes—through an integration of social semiotics and critical discourse analysis. The different discourses—the legal, the socio-political and the cultural—are also intertwined. It goes on to show that hybridity is not an accidental, opportunistic move for combining a set of divergent genres but is something driven by necessity, while approximating purposefulness. Hybridity affords perspectival multiplicity, thus promising commensurability whereby intertextuality and interdiscursivity come to play a significant role. As the author claims, “the three P's work not just to raise awareness on human rights issues but also to promote the Council of Europe itself”.

Over the years I have seen this research project taking shape, so it is gratifying to see the published output.

Srikant Sarangi
Cardiff University, UK

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INTRODUCTION

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art.1)

I. Setting the Scene

The Council of Europe (COE), based in Strasbourg, is Europe's oldest and largest political institution, its aims are to guarantee democracy, the rule of law and human rights throughout the continent of Europe. As stated by Schwimmer¹ (2010), the Organisation is the actualisation of an "unprecedented" pan-European unity and the creator of a political identity, which builds on Europe's common cultural heritage. Created in the aftermath of the Second World War, it was the first and only institution that embodies the idea of European unification and later played an active role in bringing peace and stability to the continent.

In Europe, Hitler's barbarism had annihilated the notion of human rights, therefore it was necessary to reaffirm the dignity and worth of individuals. The formation of the COE was seen as one of the best ways to prevent similar tragedies in the future. Many people are unaware of the fact that the European Union (EU) would not have come into existence without the COE. Moreover, the Council of Europe made an important contribution to the birth of new democracies after 1989-1990. "As a matter of fact, the Council of Europe has done a great job in the transition process of the former communist bloc to European and democratic systems: it has really made history" (Schwimmer, 2010: 18).

It is the most developed and perhaps the most effective system of protection for human rights (Rhona, 2010) and since its creation, it has tried to build a universal culture of human rights enabling people to participate actively in a free society and promoting respect, understanding, and collaboration amongst its member States for the maintenance of peace. Nevertheless, in spite of its fostering engagement in several legal, social and cultural activities tasked to monitor and implement the principles of human rights, these rights continue to be violated on a daily basis in many countries. In order to promote and protect human rights, the Council of

Europe has undertaken a series of initiatives and, in particular over the last six years, it has launched various awareness-raising campaigns² primarily focusing on the right to life, but also highlighting the importance of other rights, such as social and cultural rights. Some of the Council of Europe's campaigns have dealt with some very sensitive issues, such as the death penalty, violence against women and child abuse. This book will concentrate on the informative and persuasive language employed by the Council of Europe to disseminate human rights protection by investigating its most recent educational campaigns.

II. The Specific Aims and Approach of the Study

The general aim of this study is to analyse the diverse modes employed by the COE campaigners in disseminating information on human rights. It will attempt to evaluate the linguistic and visual ways and means of persuasion used to raise awareness among people. The principal research questions are:

In what ways are the COE's persuasive communication campaigns employed to promote human rights to a diversified audience? How does the Council of Europe portray itself in these campaigns?

More specifically, the following sub-questions will be taken into account:

What persuasive techniques are employed in the campaign material in order to raise awareness on human rights issues?

To what extent do the linguistic and semiotic strategies interact in the different genre sources?

How do the discursive strategies of promotion, popularisation and pedagogy (the 3 P's) facilitate hybridisation and genre-mixing? What is preserved and what is missing in the new genres? What specific "markers" in the texts help determine this?

In other words, this research will attempt to identify, through the analysis of the 3 P's, the various verbal and nonverbal persuasive tools used by the Organisation in order to reach citizens on every possible level. Due to the complexity of the topic and its socio-cultural implications, the data will be examined through the analytical and methodological paradigms of Social Semiotics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

III. Plan of the Book

In order to answer the research questions, this book is set out as follows:

Seeing that the research will focus on the COE's campaigns for the protection of human rights, Chapter one examines the relationship between the institution and human rights. In order to do so the origins of human rights thinking and the history of their legal standing are briefly outlined.

Chapter two reviews the relevant academic work that has furthered the understanding of persuasive communication campaigns and the core concept of persuasion. Section 2.2 focuses on the symbolic nature of persuasion looking at the powerful role that images and words play in the persuasion process. Given that the research focuses on the COE's raising-awareness campaigns, section 2.3 introduces the basic features of public communication campaigns, which will be investigated in greater detail in the following chapters. The last section outlines the data under analysis.

Chapter three deals primarily with the methodological and analytical procedures for the analysis of the COE's campaigns. The main analytical tools employed are then discussed in detail—the concept of intertextuality and the COE's identity from the CDA analytical perspective and the social semiotics notions of genre and composition—and their suitability for answering the aforementioned research questions.

Chapters four, five and six present and discuss the text analysis identifying three main discursive intertwined strategies: promotion, popularisation, and pedagogy (the 3 P's). Each chapter begins by contextualising the data to be analysed and discussing the appropriateness of the selected analytical tools to answer the research questions that this book aims to address. The promotional discourse devices utilised by the COE with focus on the rhetorical structures are discussed in chapter four. Chapter five highlights the aspects of popularisation identified in the data through a pragmatic comparison between source legal texts and target texts (campaign material on the same topic) in order to investigate how the COE communicates legal discourse on human rights to the European layman, focusing on the linguistic and visual devices employed to simplify source genres. Chapter six examines human rights discourse via pedagogy with the objective of identifying the way texts and images interact to educate and train people. In order to facilitate the investigation of these three principal discursive strategies, the 3 P's are analysed separately, identifying and grouping the data collected in three different analytical chapters, but it is important to underline that aspects of promotion, popularisation and pedagogy often overlap and merge together in a text type.

The final section of concluding remarks sums up the main points by bringing together the findings and conclusions of the analytical chapters

and by discussing the contribution of this study to academic research made possible by the adoption of a deliberate multidisciplinary approach.

CHAPTER ONE

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

We, the people of Europe.
Carlo Sforza³

1.1 Human Rights: from a Philosophical Concept to Legal Developments

Human rights are the basic standards of equity and justice without which people cannot live with dignity. As such these rights pervade all aspects of our life. Since the formation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, governments, international bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and all sectors of society have tried to develop a universal human rights dimension in order to achieve international peace and security. Three main regional human rights systems—the Council of Europe (COE), the Organisation of American States and the Organisation of African Unity/the African Union—have concentrated their efforts on promoting human rights through education, training and public informative campaigns supported by bodies which monitor the efforts made by States in this respect.

Claims are presented, criticisms are formulated by invoking human rights but often the meaning of the term remains vague and an altogether too abstract concept. Human rights is a term which is frequently used and rarely understood. Unlike civil liberties which are rights allowed by the state, human rights, on the contrary, are not subject to any political machinery but they “[...] come from ‘below’, from a universal set of ethical principles which seek to ensure the equal worth of each individual life, and which are applicable to all peoples at all times and in all places” (O’Byrne, 2003: 26-27). Besides, human rights is a concept that has continually evolved throughout history. Intricately interwoven with the laws, customs and religions, human rights have undergone a change from

being a philosophical, moral principle to becoming a legal and political notion.

1.1.1 Human Rights' Philosophical Roots

The discourse of human rights may be relatively modern, but the idea itself is deeply rooted in the mists of time. Most ancient religions included codes of practice implying certain rights. Ancient and classical scholars also contributed to this discourse: for example, Aristotle discussed the importance of virtue, justice and rights in accordance with the political community; and Cicero and Seneca talked about being citizens of the world. Some scholars (O'Byrne, 2003; Ishay, 2008) would argue that religious texts, such as the Ten Commandments, embodying universal rules for moral and spiritual behaviour, laid the foundations of human rights. However, it is in the works of the European Enlightenment philosophers that we can trace the origins of human rights thinking as we know it today. It was John Locke in *Two Treatises of Government* (1689) who first suggested that there are natural rights shared by everybody, which are inalienable and cannot be removed by any political authority. In the eighteenth century the French Enlightenment philosophers—from Montesquieu to Voltaire to Rousseau—provided the basis of the political “rights of man”, but it was the German philosopher Immanuel Kant who in *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) laid the groundwork for the modern concept of human rights seen as ethical practice, thus breaking with Lockean abstraction. According to Kant, in fact, since individuals are rational beings who can determine those moral principles for securing autonomy and equality, human rights do not originate from God—as stated by Locke—but are the undeniable product of human reason. For the pamphleteer and radical Thomas Paine, the formal implementation of rights within the political sphere was essential for the establishment of social justice. In his work *Rights of Man* (1791) he defended some inalienable rights—rights of mind and rights of personal happiness and freedom—justifying the revolutions in America and in France, because they led to the signing of formal documents in which individual rights were legally recognised. Paine's ideas had a considerable influence on contemporary thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft who in 1792 wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* focusing on the role of women; in fact she is considered a pioneer of the struggle for women's emancipation. After Kant the discussion on human rights shifted away from the philosophical arena towards that of active politics. There was much discussion on the right to citizenship held by individuals within nation

States and this in turn induced an increasing awareness of the need for international law.

1.1.2 Human Rights in Concrete Laws

During the twentieth century much of this philosophical discussion shifted towards the notion of human rights protection. According to O'Byrne (2003), the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was one of the most important achievements of its time, since it transformed these abstract ideals into concrete law. Obviously, the Declaration did not emerge from a vacuum. Its origins can be traced back to the *English Magna Carta* of 1215, which enshrined a number of principles, which now fall within the ambit of human rights, even though they were limited only to barons. It contained a number of what later came to be considered human rights; for example the rights of all free men to be free from excessive taxes and from unfair or unlawful detainment, imprisonment or exile and the right of widows who owned property to decide not to remarry. The Carta was later converted into the *Bill of Rights* in 1688-89 which was the first document to use the language of "rights" even if the rights were given to the Parliament, and not to people. The 1688 Act established many of the rights, which are now in the *European Convention on Human Rights* (ECHR). Some characteristics of the language used are familiar, such as Article 3 of the ECHR⁴ which echoes the Bill of Rights provision against "*cruel and unusual punishments*"⁵. The USA and France adopted statements on rights after the revolutions when they respectively proclaimed independence. Both Declarations emphasised the existence of rights such as freedom and truth, drawing on the theories of Locke and Kant. In fact the French Declaration states that "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights" and "liberty consists in being able to do anything that does not harm others" (quoted in Rhona, 2010: 6). Both Declarations led to the development of international law, and they were important because they attempted to protect the rights of individual citizens according to a set of moral principles, which could be applied to all people.

It was at the end of the Second World War that the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) provided a framework for international human rights law. The devastation of the two wars had shocked the entire world so it became necessary to create an international body to protect future generations from such horror: the United Nations was founded and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted in order to guarantee social progress and respect for human rights. One year

later, in Europe the Council of Europe was established and in 1950 the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* was adopted thereby providing a European response to this issue.

Both philosophical discussion and rights regulations such as the Magna Carta in England, the French Declaration and the American Constitution have contributed to building international human rights law in which the COE plays a key role in guaranteeing the respect and protection of human rights among its member States.

Unfortunately sixty years later, we still live in a world where human rights violations are prevalent. Abuses continue in several states and Western nations often claim the observance of human rights regulations to non-Western nations while not observing them at home. Europe is full of examples of violations: discrimination, slavery poverty and sexual abuse. The rights of women, children and other groups continue to be ignored. Drafting and signing treaties is sadly not enough to eradicate human rights violations, so the COE is actively engaged in campaigning human rights promotion and protection.

1.2 The Council of Europe's Actual Objectives

Since its founding, the Council of Europe has successfully evolved in the pursuit of its aims. Article 1(a) of the Statute states that “*The aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress.*” Therefore, it is a prerequisite to membership that a potential state must actively guarantee democracy and fundamental rights within its territory, because these values are vital to achieve democratic stability. Moreover, the Council of Europe believes that the role of co-operation is fundamental as a means of meeting the challenges of modern society. Cultivating Europe's cultural identity and diversity, and trying to build a stable, functional and cohesive Europe through political, legislative and constitutional reform lie at the very heart of this process.

The circumstances in which the Council of Europe works have changed dramatically over the years. Technological, scientific, political, social and economic developments have brought new opportunities, but also the emergence of new threats to the human rights of the European population, such as cybercrime, people trafficking and terrorism. The graph below, in fact, illustrates the COE's present main aims:

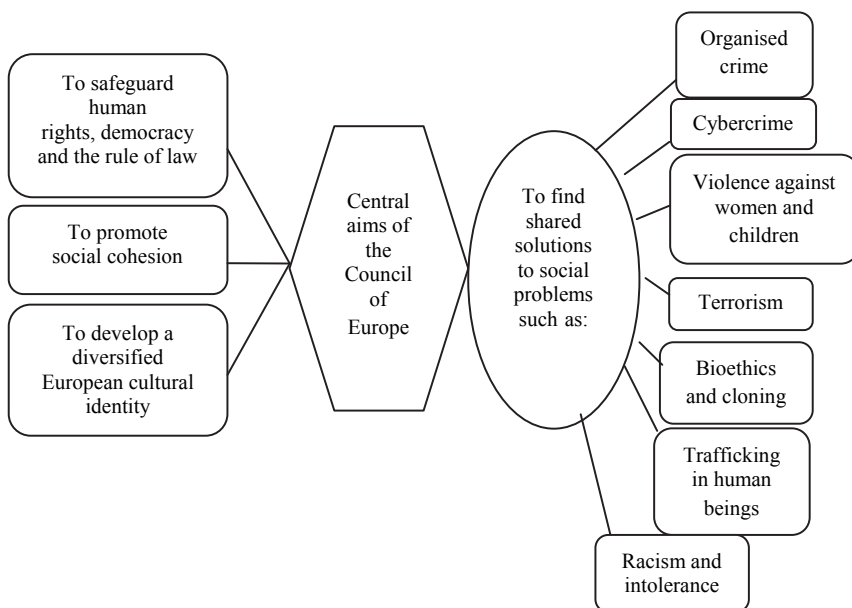


Figure 1-1 The Council of Europe's main objectives
(adapted from http://www.coe.int/t/dc/europeismore/fiche01_en.pdf)

In order to put its objectives into practice, the COE has produced several legal instruments, mainly conventions, and undertaken various actions which will be explained in more detail in the following sub sections.

1.2.1 The Main Conventions

The COE's wide range of initiatives are often expressed in the form of conventions designed to harmonise member states' laws. Conventions are the pillars on which the Organisation is built. They are legally binding agreements whereby states promise to co-operate on a particular issue once they have signed and ratified them. More than 200 treaties have been created to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law and new treaties have been introduced to tackle modern issues such as healthcare crime, international terrorism and cybercrime. These conventions are reinforced by many resolutions and recommendations, which play a vital role in finding solutions to European citizens' common problems. The *European Convention on Human Rights* constitutes the main basis of this great project. Established in 1950, it is the most sophisticated and effective

propagator of civilised values and democratic growth that all member states are obliged to guarantee to all citizens within their jurisdiction. The rights⁶ enshrined in it are essentially drawn from the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. This core text has inspired the many other Council of Europe agreements, initiatives and campaigns.

1.2.2 The Main Actions

As stated in section 1.2.1, Conventions are the Council of Europe's main instruments for the protection of basic human rights, but in order to put them into practice the Organisation has undertaken a series of initiatives—seminars, conferences and especially campaigns—that impact on the everyday lives of people. For instance, since one of its aims is to protect children from all forms of violence, including corporal punishment, it has set up a programme entitled *Building a Europe for and with children* and in 2008, it launched an awareness-raising campaign called *Raise your hand against smacking!*. Sexual exploitation of children is one of the worst forms of violence and has long-lasting damaging consequences for the young victims, so in 2007, the Council of Europe adopted the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and in 2010 it launched the campaign entitled *One in Five* to stop sexual violence against children.

Despite positive developments in law, policies and practices, domestic violence still occurs in every Council of Europe member state at all levels of society and most of the victims are women. In order to promote the protection of women against violence and the implementation of effective measures to prevent and combat such violence, from 2006 to 2008, it ran a campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence.

The counterfeiting of medicines has become a highly profitable activity, as sanctions are weak and cooperation among states is lacking. In order to fight counterfeit and illegal medicines, the COE is, for example, involved in the standardisation of medicines (European Pharmacopoeia) and it is also preparing a convention open to non-European countries too.

Europe is nowadays the only continent in the world where the death penalty is no longer in force, in fact no execution has taken place in Europe since 1997. The Council of Europe has been a pioneer in the battle for the abolition of the death penalty and two important steps were taken with the adoption of Protocol No.6 to the European Convention on Human Right in 1983 and Protocol No. 13 on the abolition of capital punishment in all circumstances in 2002. The Committee for the Prevention of Torture

(CPT) is the only European institution with the power to inspect any place of detention located in a Council of Europe member state (including prisons, police stations, psychiatric institutions and immigration detention facilities). Torture and the inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners still persist in Europe and the CPT has made a large number of detailed recommendations on improving the conditions of prisoners.

Since the Internet has a great impact on societies all over the world, the COE works to minimise the risks of misuse of the Internet by protecting freedom of expression, but also to maximise its potential to improve the quality of life, including that of disabled persons by providing accessible, secure and reliable Internet services. The Council of Europe's measures in this field are based on conventions and innovative tools aimed at fighting cybercrime, protecting children from harmful Internet content, preventing cyberterrorism, as well as promoting e-democracy. E-democracy, which is the use of new information and communication technologies by governments, political parties and citizens, is considered by the COE a means to strengthen democracy and restore interest in democratic institutions and the democratic process. Even if e-voting has been introduced in several countries such as the UK and Switzerland, people are still sceptical and fear that the data and information stored in the system could be used against them, so the COE is seeking to promote the use of e-democracy tools as a way of offering new opportunities for political participation, especially to people with disabilities who previously encountered difficulties in actively taking part in democratic processes. It pays particular attention to accessibility and design questions, so that these new technologies offer equal chances of full and active participation in the life of the community and do not constitute new sources of social exclusion. In some member states people with disabilities still have difficulties in accessing certain rights and freedoms, for example in fields such as employment, education or political life. Therefore, in 2006 the Council of Europe adopted a Disability Action Plan, which gives emphasis to the integration of persons with disabilities within the community.

The Council of Europe has made it a priority to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue because it is central in preventing discrimination because of ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural differences and in ensuring social cohesion and stability. In May 2008, it launched the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* providing policy-makers with guidelines for the promotion of intercultural dialogue as a tool to fight intolerance and foster mutual understanding of people's values and ways of thinking. This action is linked to the COE's work of defining a common policy in response to the challenges posed by

migration which in the last decades has increased dramatically. It has reinforced co-operation between receiving, transit and origin countries; it has called on member states to act concretely to improve the integration of migrants and their families and to combat racism, xenophobia and violence against them. There are approximately 10 million Roma present in almost all Council of Europe member states. They are Europe's largest minority but they are one of the most marginalised groups throughout Europe. The COE has set up the *European Roma and Travellers Forum* and it also runs the *Dosta Campaign*, which promotes the fight against stereotypes and prejudices towards Roma.

Clearly the COE has devoted most of its efforts to promoting human rights especially through raise-awareness campaigns. Public communication campaigns are an essential part of our life; as stated by Perloff (2003), we live in the epoch of the "permanent campaign" where campaigns are undertaken to influence people on every topic, ranging from personal issues to social issues. Human rights can be very persuasive and perhaps this is one of the reasons why human rights discourse is so fascinating. In fact, Clapham (2007) asserts that:

The language of human rights is deployed to criticize, defend, and reform all sorts of behaviour. Playing the 'human rights card' can be persuasive, sometimes even conclusive, in contemporary decision making; this is one aspect of what makes the moral force of human rights so attractive—they help you to win arguments and, sometimes, to change the way things are done. (Clapham, 2007: 1-2)

CHAPTER TWO

PERSUASION AND THE COE'S AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS

This chapter explains the term persuasion, reviewing the history of persuasion scholarship and presenting an overview of the main features of contemporary studies on persuasion. The concept of human rights was briefly outlined in chapter one, likewise it is essential to discuss the theoretical origins of persuasion in order to understand its relevance in contemporary society.

2.1 Persuasion in a Nutshell. From Aristotle to Contemporary Approaches

Persuasion is present in all human activities; people persuade each other while learning, working and socialising. Many scholars in communication, psychology and advertising have studied this concept for many years and most of these theorists agree that persuasion is “*human communication designed to influence the autonomous judgements and actions of others*” (Simons, 2001: 7. Italics in the original). O’Keefe stresses the fact that it is impossible to establish what persuasion is exactly, because a definition of this concept would not define its precise boundaries. He asserts:

[...] one definition might be deemed unsatisfactory because it is too broad (it includes cases that it should not), whereas another is deemed unsatisfactory because it is too narrow (it excludes instances that it should include). (O’Keefe, 2002: 2)

Persuasion is a human activity, because it implies a persuader who intentionally seeks to influence someone else and it requires that the persuadee makes a conscious or unconscious decision to change his/her mind about something. Persuasion tries to alter the way others think but it differs from coercion, because the latter implies negative consequences. When individuals believe they are free to refuse the persuader’s position,

the attempt at influencing them is seen as persuasion. On the contrary, when people perceive that they have no choice the influence is viewed as being coercive. Nevertheless, it is difficult to distinguish between persuasion and coercion as they are not opposites, but overlapping concepts. Persuasion thus implies free choice. Perloff, in fact, defines it as:

[...] a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviour regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice. (Perloff, 2003: 8. Bold in the original)

It is a symbolic process, because it comprises a number of steps and involves symbols both verbal and non-verbal which are immediately recognised. These symbols are the tools used by the persuaders to change persuadees' attitudes. The persuader does not focus on creating attitudes, but on convincing another person to change attitudes that he or she already possesses through the transmission of a message, which can be transmitted interpersonally, through mass media or the Internet. Consequently, a key aspect of persuasion is self-persuasion; persuaders do not change people's minds, it is the individual who decides whether to change his/her behaviour or not, but it is not always simple, because the tools of self-persuasion can be controlled by both benevolent and malevolent communicators. Similarly, according to O'Keefe persuasion is:

[...] a successful intentional effort at influencing another's mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of freedom. (O'Keefe, 2002: 5)

It is a process that begins with a source/persuader who has a goal. Firstly the source identifies those people who can help achieve the source's goal and elaborates a message in order to create, change or reinforce their attitudes (Benoit and Benoit, 2008). Then the message will be delivered to the targeted audience and if it is effective the audience will comply with the source's wishes. Figure 2-1 shows a simplified version of this process by applying it to the Council of Europe's campaigns:

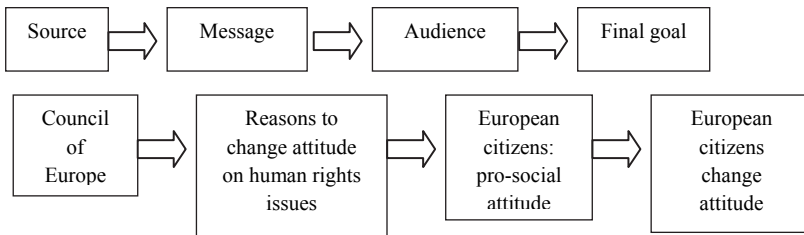


Figure 2-1 The persuasion symbolic process

2.1.1 From Aristotle...

Persuasion has been studied by many scholars and has a long history dating back to ancient Greece. It was the Greeks who invented rhetoric, the art of public persuasion. Sophists started to give lessons in this subject, but Plato denounced their work, because according to him rhetoric was the opposite of truth. It was not philosophy but like flattery, so it did not deserve respect. Then, one of his students, Aristotle thought that Plato was right about the important value of truth and the Sophists were correct about persuasive communication being a useful tool. His great contribution was to develop the first scientific approach to persuasion, in fact, he believed that the aim of rhetoric is not to persuade people but to discover the scientific elements of persuasion. According to him persuasion can be based on three principles: the nature of the communicator (ethos), the emotional state of the audience (pathos) and the message arguments (logos). He wrote several books on rhetoric and his treatise *Rhetoric* is considered the most important work on persuasion ever written. Roman rhetorical theorists like Cicero and Quintilian refined Greek theories of persuasion stressing the power of emotional appeals. After the end of the Roman Empire, the study of persuasion went into decline for several centuries. It was only during the sixteenth century that rhetoric regained its classical heights mainly thanks to Erasmus. His widely published book, *De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia* (1512), which illustrated ways to introduce the maximum amount of variety into discourse, contributed to the rebirth of interest in rhetoric. Later, in the eighteenth century America became a persuader's paradise with lawyers, merchants, politicians who engaged to influence people. Many rhetorical works were born, including the Declaration of Independence. Finally, during the twentieth century, many rhetoricians, from Kenneth Burke to Marshall McLuhan to Michel Foucault, wrote significant books on the topic.

2.1.2 ... to Contemporary Approaches

Today, rhetoricians continue to work on the concept of persuasion but their theoretical approach has been supplemented and sometimes replaced by social scientists' studies.

Social scientific studies of persuasion started in the 1930s with research on attitudes. Theorists such as William J. McGuire and Gerald R. Miller, took the concepts identified by Aristotle—ethos, pathos, logos—and examined their effects using the modern-day techniques of scientific experimentation. Nowadays persuasion has become a multidisciplinary field of study. Social psychologists focus on the individual, investigating people's attitudes; communication scholars look at persuasion in two-person units, analysing the effects of media on health and politics and marketing researchers explore consumer behaviour and the influence of advertising on consumers. Hence, today's approach is from a social science point of view: scientists formulate theories and hypotheses about persuasion, which are then subject to empirical testing. Persuasion is a practice of bridging distances, reducing psychological differences and this is at the heart of the coactive approach, which finds its roots in Aristotle, Burke and social-psychological theory. "Coactive persuasion is an umbrella term for the ways that persuaders might *move toward* persuadees psychologically so that they will be moved, in turn, to accept the persuaders' position or proposal for action" (Simons, 2001: 74. Italics in the original). By defining persuasion as a communication practice, Simons points out that persuasion means winning beliefs, not arguments:

[...] communicators who seek to win belief need to communicate with their audiences, not at them; moving toward persuades psychologically, recognizing that they are mostly likely to give you what you want if you can show them that what you propose also gives them what they want. (Simons, 2001: XXII)

To sum up, the roots of persuasion can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. While the early studies focused on the sources of messages and persuaders' abilities in building a speech, in later research there has been a shift from the use of logic to the psychological aspects of persuasion focusing exclusively on the receiver. It is the receiver who decides if persuasion has occurred, thus even unintended messages can become persuasive. Later on following Burke's ideas, contemporary scholars believe that persuasion occurs only through cooperation between source and receiver. Today's studies do not focus only on the source, the message or the receiver but on all of them equally since they all work together in a