

# LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES IN PROMOTING THE IMAGE OF THE MAYORS ON THE WEB- SITES OF SECTOR TOWN HALLS AND OF BUCHAREST CITY HALL

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## Abstract

The research deals with the leadership strategies used by the mayors of the six sectors and the General Mayor of Bucharest in order to represent and promote the organizational image and their own image. The success, performance and competitiveness of sector town halls and Bucharest City Hall also depend on the quality of leadership and the leaders' ability to use appropriate, attractive and customized online communication strategies in order to inform the citizens and achieve their electoral goals.

This research has the following objectives: (a) to identify the online strategies used by the seven mayors-leaders; (b) to identify the salience of tactics used by the seven mayors; (c) to identify the ethos categories within the mayors' online messages.

**Keywords:** local public administration, mayor, open leadership, communication, information, website, efficiency.

## 1. Introduction

Leadership should not be strictly associated with multinational corporations and it should not exclusively refer to the employer-employee relationship. Mayors are a special category of leaders. Besides their internal communication within the city or town halls, they are elected by citizens and thus they should build solid relationships with the inhabitants as well.

In this paper leadership will be linked to mayors and the main purpose is to identify the online leadership strategies used in their effort to communicate with citizens-voters. New media has become a significant tool for shaping a new kind of leadership associated with open and dialogic communication which facilitates both the visibility of the leader's vision and the practicing of a shared collective leadership (Tapscott, 1996).

## 2. Leadership and management – an inclusive relationship

Leadership means to accomplish things and to solve problems through people, to achieve goals or to carry out work tasks with the help of a team or a group. Leadership may be defined as 'a process of mobilizing, encouraging and engaging persons so that they may contribute to achieving the desired goals' (Prodan, 1999, p. 84). A leader's success depends highly on his/her ability to share his/her vision, enthusiasm and the meaning of his/her intentions with his/her team. Unlike a leader, a manager is a person who 'does things as they should be done. To manage means to lead others' work and to be responsible for the results' (Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman, 1992, p. 296).

The very concepts of management and leadership constitute the main difference between a manager and a leader. In his book *On Becoming a Leader*, Warren Bennis (2009, p. 42) provides a list of differences between a leader and a manager (Table 1):

**Table 1:** The differences between a leader and a manager

The leader innovates.	The manager administers.
The leader is an original.	The manager is a copy.
The leader develops.	The manager maintains.
The leader focuses on people.	The manager focuses on systems and structure.
The leader inspires trust.	The manager relies on control.
The leader has a long-range perspective.	The manager has a short-range view.
The leader asks what and why.	The manager asks how and when.
The leader's eye is on the horizon.	The manager has his or her eye always on the bottom line.
The leader originates.	The manager imitates.
The leader challenges it.	The manager accepts the status quo.
The leader is his or her own person.	The manager is the classic good soldier.
The leader does the right thing.	The manager does things right.

**Source:** Bennis, 2009.

Although a manager's job is to plan, organize and coordinate and a leader's job is to inspire and motivate, Bennis (2009) considers that management and leadership

go hand in hand, being complementary. This inclusive relationship between the two concepts highlights that a discussion about leaders should be linked to their qualities as managers. Managers are professionals specialized in carrying out managerial activities, in influencing the activities of other people and in obtaining results through their activities. At the same time, managers should possess a thorough scientific managerial upbringing, a true capacity to lead and organizing talent. Leadership reflects the manager's human dimension which may determine the group to work together to fulfill the organizational goals. Organizations have started to shift towards a new type of leader, a charismatic, transformational, open to change and interpersonal communication type of leader. In order to maintain an up-to-date vision, a leader should make sense of his/her organization, respect and take care of his/her employees. He or she should promote a set of transparent values and show integrity. One of his/her most significant qualities is his/her ability to achieve the management of change, a goal which is more and more important within the present complex context where everybody strives to remain competitive.

This brief insight into the complementary relationship between management and leadership highlights that leadership and influence are synonymous (Tellier, 1999, p. 126; Tannenbaum, Weschler and Massarik *apud* Zlate, 2004). In this perspective, we start from the principle that in any group (regardless of structure or number) individuals interact in pursuit of a common goal, referring to public or private interests, shaped or diffused. Leadership is designated as the interface between the leader and his followers' staff as 'interpersonal influence that a manager exerts on subordinates in the establishment and in particular the achievement of the objectives' (Nicolescu and Verboncu, 1999, p. 514).

### **3. Leadership and the online communication of city/town halls**

The development of new technology plays an important role in developing leadership as 'an interpersonal influence exercised in a defined and directed situation, through the communication process, to achieve a defined goal or goals' (Tannenbaum, Weschler and Massari *apud* Zlate, 2004, p. 23). In the last two decades, new technologies have provided and continue to provide tools for a more complex and diversified power and influence. The modern notion of leadership can not ignore the functioning of formal and informal groups and inter- and intra-group interaction. The most important change was from unidirectional communication to a bilateral type of communication based on dialogue. As Kent and Taylor (2002) postulated, the Internet should be used to its fullest potential – dialogically – to create relationships with group/community members. Leadership should focus on this online dialogue as an orientation because it will reveal features such as trust, empathy, mutual orientation and commitment. The dialogic website is the proper means of building relationships via the Web. The two authors mention that such a dialogic website should focus on five principles: (a) to create a dialogic loop (a two-way communication); (b) to provide useful information; (c) to generate return visits of the group/community

members; (d) to provide an easy-to-use interface; (e) to conserve visitors (Kent and Taylor, 2002).

The main quality of this new type of leader who tries to build a dialogic relationship will be the orientation towards excellence. The hierarchy is less stratified and the leadership is focused on feedback. Charlene Li (2010) talks about 'openness, transparency and authenticity' as the fundamental precepts of online leadership. As the author said, the opening relies more on rigor and effort than on the control. Using online media, leaders transform their organizations so that they become more efficient and more powerful, while being profitable in an open market economy. It ensures communication and social media connectivity and leads to a shared communication (a culture of sharing).

In 1993, Castells talked about the development of 'an informational city'. The productivity and competitiveness of such cities are determined by their ability to combine informational capacity, quality of life with connectivity to the network of other major institutions at the national and international levels. The literature on how city halls (as public institutions) utilize information technologies to serve constituents and communicate with the public focuses on three main strands:

- a) the societal functions that municipal websites may perform to define themselves as part of the social system in an information age. Starting from the four mass communication functions (surveillance, coordination, socialization, and entertainment), Jeffres and Lin (2006) showed in their study of the official websites of core cities in the 50 largest US metropolitan areas that information surveillance was the most important function, followed by interaction coordination services.
- b) the city council websites as a means of place brand identity communication. In their study on the place branding characteristics of New Zealand's City Council websites, Florek, Insch, and Gnoth (2006) develop a conceptual framework formed of three tools of place brand identity communications: place brand design, place brand behavior and place brand communication. The results of the content analysis of New Zealand's 16 City Council websites show that brand communication items were represented the most frequently whereas brand design items were the most diverse.
- c) the official websites as a tool of anti-corruption. Roncak's analysis (2008) on Slovak websites as anti-corruption tools showed that municipalities did not use all the possibilities that official websites (electronic version of official desk or minutes from sessions of municipal councils, etc.) may offer to be more transparent and that they did not perceive their websites as anti-corruption tools.

In Romania, the studies on the online communication of municipalities also focus on the role of the PR departments' degree of transparency and on the interaction between public institutions and citizens. Ștefan (2007) used the WebQEM method to analyze the quality of web sites of all the city halls in the seven Romanian development regions. The degree in which the official websites meet the citizens' needs was analyzed according to four categories: the identification of quality items, elementary evaluation,

global evaluation, and the interpretation of results. Constanta, Oradea and Sibiu were the first three Romanian city halls which offered the possibility to participate and interact, thus developing the civic spirit. The findings suggested that there was not a direct correlation between the points obtained by the first three city halls and the development regions to which they belong. Although Constanta had the highest number of quality points, the South-Eastern region was on the last place. Sabău's study (2009) focused on the development of e-government and the usability of the local institutions' websites in Romania. Starting from the United Nations model of development and to the European Commission maturity mode, Sabău showed that the majority of the Romanian local institutions' websites were at the second level of the EC maturity level (the improved level) just as the EC website was in 2009. The recommendation for local officials was to improve communication with citizens by trying to reach the last two levels, namely interactive and transactional levels. The SWOT analysis provided by Enache and Moroza (2013) for three Romanian city halls' websites showed the salience of unidirectional information but the lack of a reciprocal exchange of information with citizens or of the linking connection with other institutions.

Although the studies tackle different aspects of the online communication of city/town halls, one main conclusion is pervasive: city and town halls use their websites firstly as a means of sending information and secondly as a means of implementing a dialogic communication with the citizens. Whereas the studies presented above focus on a macro-relation of the city/town hall as an organization with the citizens, the present study highlights the ways in which the mayor as a leader maintains an online relationship with the citizens.

#### **4. Insights into leadership strategies**

Leadership and communication styles have been extensively studied (Barge and Hirokawa, 1989; Flauto, 1999; Hackman and Johnson, 2000; Clutterbuck and Hirst, 2002; Pell, 2007; Hogan, 2011). Authors mention either the competencies of a good leader (Bennis and Nanus, 1997) or the processes on which leadership relies (Prodan, 1999; Cornescu, Mihăilescu and Stanciu, 2003; Păuș, 2006). In their studies on leaders of American corporations, Bennis and Nanus (1997) identified four common competencies of leaders: management of attention, management of meaning, management of trust and management of self. Cornescu, Mihăilescu and Stanciu (2003, p. 221) consider that 'the team spirit is at the heart of leadership which is the integrated result of four processes: the building of trust among the involved persons; the establishing of mission and of some clear goals to which persons should adhere; the developing of some participative decisional processes; individual or group strong motivation'. These two insights into the leader's competencies and the leadership processes show that the success is highly dependent on the leader's ability to transmit his vision, his enthusiasm and the meaning of his intentions. Thus leadership reflects the manager's human dimension which allows him to influence and to determine the group to work together to achieve the organizational objectives (Păuș, 2006).

Starting from the leader's competencies (Bennis and Nanus, 1997) and from the leadership processes (Prodan, 1999; Cornescu, Mihăilescu and Stanciu, 2003; Păuș, 2006), we identified five strategies that mayors as leaders may use in their online communication with citizens:

- the strategy of presenting the mayor's vision: refers to the message sent by a mayor to the citizens of a city or town. The mayor's vision should focus on the future, emphasizing the planning stage and the decision-making process;
- the strategy of making the decisions visible and transparent: refers to those messages through which the mayor explains the decisions to citizens thus trying to enhance their trust in the actions of the city/town hall;
- the strategy of mobilizing the citizens through the personal example: is used to persuade the citizens to join some community action by setting the mayor as an example to be followed;
- the strategy of interactive leadership: highlights the shift from one-way communication to a bilateral communication with citizens by involving them in achieving the objectives. The process of consulting citizens is compulsory in a democratic state where online communication plays an important role. The mayor should find an equilibrium between authority and flexibility because the discussions should focus on the citizens' needs; and
- the strategy of personalized public image: refers to the mayor's human dimension, depicting him/her alongside with his/her family members or during different time periods (youth, adolescence, etc.).

As Bennis and Nanus (1997) mention, the management of meaning is one important competency of a leader and Fairhurst's definition (2011), from a discursive perspective, also focuses on leadership as a process of meaning management. Thus, an analysis of leadership strategies should be performed alongside an analysis of the messages sent by the mayor. To study the communication effectiveness based on the character of the speaker seems appropriate in this context since a mayor is elected by the inhabitants of a city or a town. Unlike other Romanian cities or towns, in Bucharest the politicians who run for the mayor position are more aware of the importance of maintaining a permanent communication with inhabitants regardless of the election campaign.

## **5. Methodology and research questions**

The study employs a content analysis of the websites of the Bucharest City Hall and the six sector town halls in order to determine the leadership strategies used in framing the mayors as leaders. The mayors analyzed are the following: Sorin Mircea Oprescu (General Mayor since 2008), Andrei Ioan Chiliman (mayor of Bucharest sector 1 since 2004), Neculai Onțanu (mayor of Bucharest sector 2 since 2000), Robert Sorin Negoită (mayor of Bucharest sector 3 since 2012), Cristian Popescu Victor – Piedone (mayor of Bucharest sector 4 since 2008), Marian Vanghelie (mayor of Bucharest sector 5 since 2000) and Rareș Șerban Mănescu (mayor of Bucharest sector 6 since 2012).

The comparative quantitative and qualitative analysis of the leadership strategies employed by the seven mayors focused on 16 months (January 2013 - April 2014), the most recent time interval since the last mandate. As mentioned earlier, I started from different leadership processes and competencies and I adapted them to the leadership strategies which a mayor may use on the website of a City or Town Hall to promote himself as a leader. The coding procedure included the quantification of each tactic as present (1) or absent (0) for each leadership strategy:

- the strategy of presenting the mayor's vision: letters to citizens;
- the strategy of making the decisions visible and transparent: press releases, general descriptions of decisions, interviews, statistics, charts, video files of press conferences;
- the strategy of mobilizing the citizens through the personal example: magazine articles about the mayor's actions within the community, photo galleries depicting the mayor working alongside with the citizens;
- the strategy of interactive leadership: e-mail, link to the City/Town Hall Facebook page, link to the Mayor's Facebook page, public debates, online forum, FAQ, vote on issues, information to be requested, photos, interactions with citizens (shaking hands, kissing, hugging, etc.); and
- the strategy of personalized public image: mayor's biographies (storytelling), photos of his/her family members, photos of the mayor depicting him/her during different time periods (childhood, youth), caricatures.

I will provide an in-depth analysis of three items of the leadership strategies: annual letters to citizens, press releases, and the City Hall magazine. The quantitative analysis of the press releases will focus on three variables: (a) the occurrences of the name and function of the mayor in the title; (b) the photos where he appears alone or in a group; (c) quotations of the mayor inserted in the press releases. The qualitative analysis of the mayors' discourses will focus on the annual letters to citizens and the City Hall magazine and will take into account the three categories of ethos presented by Smith (2002): credibility, charisma and control. The ethos discursively shaped on credibility refers to the mayor's status, expertise, competence and honesty, whereas the ethos shaped on charisma focuses on familiarity and similarity and the ethos shaped on control refers to authority. The study will address the following research questions:

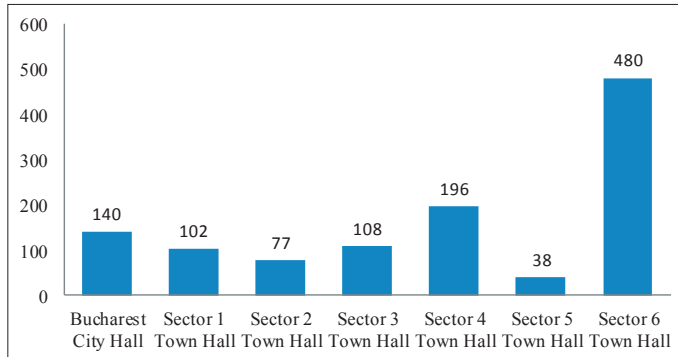
RQ1: What is the salience of online leadership strategies and tactics used by the seven mayors from Bucharest?

RQ2: Which are the most visible mayors in press releases?

RQ3: Which types of ethos categories do the mayors in Bucharest use in their messages?

The data included the homepage of the Bucharest City Hall's and the six sector town halls' websites and 1,141 press releases. As Figure 1 shows, the Sector 6 Town

Hall provided the highest number of press releases, followed by Sector 4 Town Hall and the Bucharest City Hall. The Sector 5 and Sector 2 Town Halls did not provide up-to-date information about the activities of these two town halls, having the lowest number of press releases issued in 16 months (n=38 - Sector 5 Town Hall and n=77 - Sector 2 Town Hall).



**Figure 1:** The salience of press releases - Bucharest City Hall and Sector Town Halls (January 2013 - April 2014)

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Salience of leadership strategies

The five leadership strategies included 21 tactics. The overall analysis shows that all seven mayors used less than half of the leadership tactics, the average number of tactics being nine (Table 2). Andrei Chiliman (Sector 1) was the most active on-line mayor in using the leadership tactics (n=10) whereas Marian Vanghelie (Sector 5) used only six tactics.

The strategy of interactive leadership was the most used strategy by all six town hall mayors whereas Sorin Oprescu mostly focused on the strategy of making the decisions visible and transparent (Table 2). Although all mayors in Bucharest tried to interact online with citizens, only Rareş Şerban Mănescu succeeded in activating six of the eight interactive tactics. The other mayors used less than half of the interactive tactics.

The strategy of presenting the mayor's vision was used by five of the mayors, the annual letters to citizens being considered an interpersonal means of creating a bond with the inhabitants of Bucharest. The strategy of making the decisions visible and transparent was mainly activated through press releases, a tactic used by all mayors.

Unlike the other five mayors, Neculai Onţanu (Sector 2) and Cristian Popescu-Piedone (Sector 4) activated both tactics of the strategy of mobilizing the citizens through the personal example. Sorin Oprescu, Marian Vanghelie (Sector 5) and Rareş Şerban Mănescu (Sector 6) did not focus on this strategy of mobilizing.

Andrei Chiliman (Sector 1) is the leader that used the strategy of personalized public image. Unlike the other mayors who used either none or one of the tactics associated with this strategy, Andrei Chiliman laid a great emphasis on the visual de-

**Table 2:** The salience of leadership strategies and tactics

Leadership strategies		Mayors in Bucharest						
		Sorin Oprescu	Andrei Chiliman	Neculai Onțanu	Robert Sorin Negoită	Cristian Popescu-Piedone	Marian Vanghelie	Rareș Șerban Mănescu
Strategies	Tactics	Bucharest City Hall	Sector 1 Town Hall	Sector 2 Town Hall	Sector 3 Town Hall	Sector 4 Town Hall	Sector 5 Town Hall	Sector 6 Town Hall
<b>Strategy of presenting the mayor's vision</b>	Letters to citizens	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
	Total	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
<b>Strategy of making the decisions visible and transparent</b>	Press releases	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	General descriptions	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
	Interviews	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Statistics	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Charts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Video files	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Total	4	2	3	3	1	2	1
<b>Strategy of mobilizing the citizens through the personal example</b>	Magazine articles	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Photo galleries	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
	Total	0	1	2	1	2	0	0
<b>Strategy of interactive leadership</b>	E-mail	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Link to City/Town Hall's Facebook	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Public debates	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Forum	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
	FAQ	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Vote on issues	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Information to be requested	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
	Photos – interaction with citizens	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
	Total	3	3	3	3	4	3	6
<b>Strategy of personalized public image</b>	Mayor's biographies (storytelling)	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
	Photos of his/her family members	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Photos (childhood, youth etc.)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Caricatures	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	1	3	0	1	1	0	1	
<b>TOTAL OF TACTICS</b>		9	10	9	9	9	6	8

1 = a present tactic, 0 = an absent tactic

pictions of his family members or of himself during different time periods (childhood or youth). Cristian Popescu-Piedone (Sector 4) was the only mayor who used caricatures as a tactic of personalizing his public image.

As the findings suggest, the sector mayors from Bucharest mainly used the online media to promote an interactive leadership, but the tactics focused rather on Web 1.0 than on Web 2.0, the most active interactive tactics being the e-mail and the information to be requested. As mentioned earlier, Bennis (2009) lays an emphasis on the fact that a leader inspires trust and that a leader is his/her own person. The two strategies that may highlight these features are: the strategy of mobilizing the citizens through

personal example and the strategy of personalized public image. Only three mayors used these two strategies in their positioning as a leader. In Romania, most politicians do not use their personal life as a strategy of mobilizing citizens and the mayors from Bucharest preferred to use those tactics which highlight their profession rather than their family.

### 6.2. Press releases: a tactic for mayor's visibility

The second research question focused on finding the most visible mayor in press releases. As Figure 1 shows, the Sector 6 Town Hall provided the highest number of press releases, followed by Sector 4 Town Hall and the Bucharest City Hall. The Sector 5 and Sector 2 Town Halls did not provide up-to-date information about the activities of these two town halls, having the lowest number of press releases issued in 16 months.

The analysis of the mayor's visibility was performed by taking into account three variables: (a) the occurrences of the name and function of the mayor in the title; (b) the photos where he appears alone or in a group; (c) quotations of the mayor inserted in the press releases.

**Table 3:** Mayors' visibility in press releases

	City/Town Hall	Mayor's name and function in the title	Photo of the mayor alone	Photo of the mayor in a group	Quotations	Total
Sorin Oprescu	Bucharest City Hall	64	0	12	48	124
Andrei Chiliman	Sector 1 Town Hall	3	0	3	45	51
Neculai Onțanu	Sector 2 Town Hall	6	0	0	0	6
Robert Sorin Negoită	Sector 3 Town Hall	38	40	58	39	175
Cristian Popescu-Piedone	Sector 4 Town Hall	40	3	59	68	170
Marian Vanghelie	Sector 5 Town Hall	4	3	8	0	15
Rareș Șerban Mănescu	Sector 6 Town Hall	2	0	0	8	10

Robert Sorin Negoită, Cristian Popescu-Piedone and Sorin Oprescu are the most visible mayors in press releases. As observed, Sorin Oprescu and Cristian Popescu-Piedone are the most visible at a verbal level. Oprescu's name and title are the most frequently used (n=64) whereas Popescu-Piedone is the most frequently quoted mayor (n=68). At the visual level, Robert Sorin Negoită has the highest number of photos depicting the mayor alone (n=40) and together with Cristian Popescu-Piedone, they are the mayors who appear in photos with citizens. Actually both mayors used the strategy of mobilizing the citizens through the personal example.

Sorin Oprescu is the second mostly quoted mayor. The quotes included in the press releases contain numerous 'thank you' messages from the mayor to the citizens and accountability for the commitments he made: 'I want to thank the residents of

Bucharest who responded to our appeal' (January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014); ' (...) because our goal is to make sure the residents of Bucharest live a civilized life' (February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014).

Andrei Chiliman is most visible through quotations (n=45). In his messages, the first person, plural is constantly used, marking thus the mayor's responsibility, as mayor and citizen: 'The citizens of sector 1 are the most dynamic, active and productive social segment in Romania. Therefore, we cannot afford keeping them stuck in traffic for hours' (April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014); '(...) our children have a harmonious and healthy physical and psychic development' (December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013); 'I assure the community of sector 1 that the new school year will start in excellent conditions for all schools' (September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013).

Robert Sorin Negoită (Sector 3) has the highest number of occurrences in the news on the town hall website, which strengthens the idea of the representational figure that the mayor assumes. The mayor is quoted 39 times in the 108 news items. If we take into consideration the photo gallery, the mayor appears in 58 out of 80 group photos. There are also 40 photos of himself in formal appearance (for instance, the photo of the mayor, alone in the foreground – ID type of photo). The photo is not related to the text: 'The Sector 3 of Bucharest announces the completion of the activities related to the project «Safety improvement and crime prevention in sector 3», code SMIS 7547'. When addressing the citizens, either a community or specific persons, the mayor uses the first person, singular, showing either his concern, compassion or commitment. For instance, 'I was deeply troubled when hearing the terrible news of the accident (...)', 'I am with Szoby Cseh in this difficult time of his life (...)', 'It is an honor for me to participate in this blood donation campaign. I hope my gesture will set an example for the residents of sector 3' (the text being accompanied by a photo of the mayor donating blood). The strategy of mobilizing the citizens through the personal example is obtained through snapshots from the events he attended (for instance, the mayor collecting trash in a park together with Sector 3 inhabitants). Another characteristic is that the mayor is present in most of the events organized by the sector town hall, unlike Neculai Onțanu (Sector 2), who rarely participates in the events, and when he does, he does not assume the representational role given by his position as a mayor.

The website of sector 4 town hall offers 196 press releases where the presence of Cristian Popescu-Piedone is the most visible, in comparison to the presence of other mayors. The mayor appears in 40 titles and he is quoted 68 times. Together with the photos on the home page of the website and in the town hall magazine, it is obvious that the mayor is concerned with the visibility of his image and he assumes a representational role, thus emphasizing the authority feature of the ethos control dimension. In terms of leadership, we can state that it is a mixture of charisma and control, but highlighting a type of positive leadership, with genuine concern for the citizens. The texts also include elements of storytelling, which mark the relationship of proximity with the residents of the sector, thus revealing the strategy of mobilizing. For instance, 'I am proud! The residents of Sector 4 are true Romanians! They have been

very receptive, some of them have even told me stories about bravery and how members of their families distinguished themselves in the war (...)’ (December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013).

The website of the sector 6 town hall, whose mayor is Rareș Mănescu, is a special case. Although there are approximately 480 news items/press releases or notifications from the town hall in the period 2013-2014, mayor Rareș Mănescu is rarely mentioned. Thus, until April 2014, the mayor is quoted in only 8 news items. There are no photos of him, and he is almost absent from the titles. However in the news broadcast by the town hall in the same period, the vice-mayor Gabriel Petrea appears more often in the news titles than the mayor (5 titles). He is also quoted 9 times and he appears in group photos. The vice-mayor appears in the title of a news item about an event that the mayor would normally attend (the snow removal): ‘The vice-mayor of sector 6, Gabriel Petrea, inspects today the snow removal equipment’ or ‘150 students participate in the snow removal process, at the initiative of vice-mayor Gabriel Petrea’ (with a group photo where the vice-mayor is shoveling the snow). In all the other sectors, the snow removal process has been coordinated directly by the mayors who appear in the respective press releases/news and were even taken a photo while removing the snow.

It is also worth mentioning that the sector 6 mayor, Rareș Mănescu, does not convey, as the other mayors do, any messages to the citizens, even on Christmas or the New Year’s Eve. The congratulations on religious holidays or name days (on Saint Nicholas, for example) have the same text, regardless of the occasion. The analysis also pointed out the impersonal note of the quotes in the articles, which are limited to recording facts/events. We have chosen 2 quotes where we find, however, a personal opinion, which is actually a conclusion to a valid and generally accepted opinion: ‘Each of us is good at doing something, each of us has something to give to others. As parent, I think that the role of education is to help discover the skills of each student’ (April 2014) or ‘I firmly decide that the green spaces are key spaces for the community members and the environment’ (March 2014).

### ***6.3. Representing mayors through types of ethos categories***

Mayors may highlight the three ethos categories (credibility, charisma and control) through letters to citizens and the town halls’ magazines.

#### *6.3.1. Presenting the mayor’s vision through letters to citizens*

The mayors’ letters to citizens are a tool of leadership strategy, emphasizing the mayor’s vision. Some of these messages were present on the home page of the websites, which shows the concern for promoting his own image as a mayor. Sometimes the messages are found in different categories of the website. For example, the message of Marian Vanghelie (Sector 5) is found in the category ‘Citizens’. Vanghelie’s message has an explicit electoral intention (‘The citizens are, above all, those who lead the sector 5. Through everyday little things such as keeping the sector clean, through less common things, such as electing a mayor every four years, we see how

good and beautiful the sector, where we live, becomes ... Together we can make things better...'). The shift from the 'I' discourse which is present on the Sector 5 town hall homepage to the 'we' discourse of this letter to citizens highlights the familiarity feature of the charisma dimension, focusing on a participative leadership style where the mayor empowers the citizens through their power of electing and through their ability to work as Sector 5 community members.

The mayor of sector 4 posts the Mayor's Message in the category 'Leadership'. The intention of influencing the citizens' vote is implicit this time ('As mayor, but especially as a resident of Bucharest, who was born and raised in Sector 4, I am proud of all I could accomplish and I thank you! I couldn't have done it without your support!'). Like Chiliman, Cristian Popescu-Piedone activates the competence feature of the credibility ethos dimension. Being born and raised in this sector are strong arguments for depicting himself as a competent mayor devoted to Sector 4. Although Piedone used the 'I' discourse, his leadership style is not an authoritarian one because he also empowers the citizens by asking for their support and by depicting them as the most critical evaluators of his actions.

Among the messages conveyed by Robert Sorin Negoită, we chose the message delivered on the 2014 New Year's Eve, which is actually a press release. The message is written in the first person, singular: 'For me, 2013 has been probably the best year... 2013 was the year of my reappointment, which makes me be highly motivated in the following period of mandate...' The message includes private information, as well, which highlights the confidence in recounted and shared joys: 'This year, I also had a great joy: my son Vlad was born'. Unlike the previous two mayors, Negoită did not include an explicit or implicit 'we' discourse. He emphasized the authority feature of the ethos control dimension highlighting that he was granted the right to control Sector 3.

By comparison, the message on the New Year 2009 of Andrei Chiliman (sector 1) is written in the first person, plural, and it includes the citizens in the story of the message. 'The end of this year finds us with most of our goals accomplished, which will allow the individual development of our community - the Capital of the Capital... Last but not least, the future of Sector 1 lies in a united community that fights for its interests. Happy New Year, Andrei Chiliman, mayor and citizen of Sector 1'. Chiliman uses the similarity feature of the charisma ethos dimension, enhancing an inclusion relationship through identification with the other inhabitants of Sector 1. The 'one of us' discursive strategy obtained through similarity is important when the communicator is seeking long-term persuasion.

Like Chiliman's message, the General Mayor's messages also show the permanent concern to identify himself with the citizens' wishes and the needs of the capital through similarity. Unlike the other mayors, Sorin Oprescu provides a metaphorical representation of Bucharest as a home and consequently its inhabitants as family members: 'Bucharest is our home and we must take care of it! The Bucharest City Hall aims to provide quality services, to give the city back to its citizens, who want

not only to inhabit it, but also to truly live, in a civilized and comfortable way, to be proud of their city and to enjoy it... The citizens' desires and demands have become my team's and my desires and demands'. If we analyze the message content beyond the integrative discourse, we can detect elements of participative leadership, which the mayor uses to convey his perspective on what the citizens want.

### 6.3.2. *Town Hall Magazines: a tactic of mobilizing citizens*

The leadership and visibility of mayors' image have also been analyzed in the magazines of the sector town halls. The magazines of sectors 1, 2 and 4 are published on the websites.

The magazine of sector 1 town hall has published 70 issues until 2014. Between November 2004, when it was first published, and 2008, there were 34 issues under the title 'Vocea primăriei'/'The voice of the Town Hall', 'Buletin informativ pentru cetățeni'/'Newsletter for citizens'. Starting with October 2008, the magazine gets a new title: 'Capitala Capitalei'/'The Capital of Capital', and the subtitle 'Revista cetățenilor sectorului 1'/'The magazine of Sector 1 citizens', with 32 pages richly illustrated and a modern design. The 38<sup>th</sup> issue of the magazine from October 2008 publishes the magazine commitment to the citizens in the column 'Cuvântul editorului'/'The editor's words', with the title 'Cine mai vrea o revistă?'/'Who wants a magazine?'. Since it was first published in 2004, the magazine has been promoting the image of the mayor as a citizen of the sector, whose mission is to be at its service and offer a perspective where citizens find themselves. On the first and second pages of each issue, we find an article signed by mayor Andrei Chiliman, together with photos of him, where the emphasis is constantly on the mayor's mission and the priorities of the town hall, through a very emphatic message: 'The new administration of sector 1 ... will be a friendly administration' (1<sup>st</sup> issue, 2004).

The magazine of sector 2 City Council, 'Foișorul de foc'/'The Fire Tower', which has published 70 issues during 9 years (March 2014), dedicates the first page (sometimes the first two pages) to an article-interview with mayor Neculai Onțanu, where a major problem in sector 2, which influences the citizens, is being debated. The interviews are accompanied by photos of the mayor, alone or in a group.

'Gazeta lu' Piedone'/'Piedone's Gazette', the magazine of sector 4, is a special case. It has been published for 7 years and it has 40 issues. The photo of Mayor Cristian Popescu-Piedone appears every time on the first page. In the 40<sup>th</sup> issue, the mayor appears in 8 photos, as well, alone or in a group, and in one of them he is removing the snow. The title of the article is 'Soluția lui Piedone privind dezăpezirea'/'Piedone's solution to snow removal'. The magazine offers us a charismatic mayor who identifies himself with the citizens through the similarity feature and treats them with the utmost confidence: 'We removed the mountains of snow'. The mayor's key words are 'transparency to the citizen', with an inclination towards paternalism: 'For you, citizens of Sector 4, no matter how great the effort, it is worth it'. The last page of each issue includes a caricature of mayor Piedone, accompanied by a humorous text,

which strengthens the idea of proximity to the reader and humanizes the character. The 40<sup>th</sup> issue publishes a caricature of Piedone holding a snowdrop and a few verses for women on March 1<sup>st</sup>: 'Born in mind by the zephyr, / A white and red cheerful thread, / May it flourish in your hearts, / The gift the Mayor sends you today (...)'. The photo of the mayor appears 22 times in the 39<sup>th</sup> issue, 7 times alone and 15 times in group photos, during various actions alongside with Sector 4 citizens. When the mayor is quoted, the quotations are inserted in a box with background color. The style he uses varies from the first person, plural 'we all raise the tricolor... we hold... in our hearts', to the first person, singular, when he wants to emphasize the responsibility towards the citizens: 'I stopped believing and waiting ...'. We find elements of storytelling in another article, with personal memory fragments which should serve as moral parable: 'Unfortunately, my parents are no longer alive, but looking at them [the old people], I remember my parents, and also that, as I am mayor now, I have the moral and social duty to do my best to bring a smile to their souls' (page 13, in the column 'Respect și prețuire pentru seniorii sectorului 4'/'Respect and appreciation for the seniors of sector 4').

## 7. Discussion and conclusion

The website, as a Web 1.0 means of communication, constitutes a significant landmark for informing and communicating with the citizens of the capital, in all the sectors and the Bucharest City Hall. The analysis of the websites of the sector town halls and the website of the Bucharest City Hall showed that the seven mayors used the five leadership strategies differently. With one exception (Marian Vanghelie), all the other mayors used the same number of tactics but the discrepancy was in what online strategies were activated. All mayors activated two strategies: the strategy of making the decisions visible and transparent and the strategy of interactive leadership. The first strategy (visibility and transparency of decisions) was mainly used by the General Mayor, Sorin Oprescu. He presents himself to the citizens as a strong personality, showing a transparent leadership and a constant concern for citizens by informing them on the great projects undertaken. Although Rareș Mănescu does not use the two strategies focused on informing the citizens, he is the most active mayor in the interaction with citizens.

The strategy of mobilizing the citizens through the personal example and the strategy of personalized public image are salient in the online representation of Neculai Onțanu (sector 2), Cristian Popescu-Piedone (Sector 5) and Andrei Chiliman (Sector 1). Andrei Chiliman activates the strategy of personalized public image offering an empathic image, supported by the numerous elements of storytelling used in the communication with the citizens and the appeal to personal history, which makes him constantly active and dedicated to the member of the community he represents. On the contrary, the mayor of sector 2, Neculai Onțanu, offers little personal information and a scarce presence at the events taking place in the community. His leadership focuses more on information and less on interaction; he presents the public image of

a fair mayor, who is interested in the citizens' wellbeing, especially in the socially disadvantaged or underprivileged citizens, without having a major emotional participation in accomplishing his mission. In comparison to the type of empathy displayed by Mayor Andrei Chiliman through his personal life, Mayor Cristian Popescu-Piedone projects a personalized public image based on a ludic approach. He is the only mayor who uses caricatures on the website, thus highlighting self-irony.

We consider that the visibility of one's actions is important for leaders. Visibility in press releases was coded on four levels: mayor's name and function in the title, photo of the mayor alone, photo of the mayor in a group, quotations. Bennis (2009) considers that 'the leader focused on people' and the analysis of the press releases showed that the photo of the mayor in a group was the most frequent category of visibility, followed by quotations. Robert Sorin Negoită (Sector 3), Cristian Popescu-Piedone (Sector 5) and Sorin Oprescu (Bucharest City Hall) are the most visible mayors in the press releases issued. Robert Sorin Negoită (Sector 3) is the most present on the visual public scene through photos depicting him at the events he organizes, thus maintaining a permanent and direct contact with the citizens-voters. Unlike Sorin Oprescu, whose visibility is mainly rendered through his name, Cristian Popescu-Piedone seems to set up an example through authority being the most quoted mayor. Unlike the other mayors, Marian Vanghelie (Sector 5), is less actively present on the website. The presentation of the mayor is made in the third person, enumerating the mandates he won, without any comments about his person. Even when the mayor is present at some events, he is not quoted in the news; his presence is only reported and possibly an opinion he expressed is posted. Marian Vanghelie's lack of oratorical talent may be an explanation for his online absence. Despite this absence in the online environment, Vanghelie has been leading the town hall for years. This discrepancy between the online presence and the winning of a local mandate shows that good leadership based on interaction does not necessarily influence the citizens' vote.

The analysis of the mayor-leaders' messages rendered in their letters to citizens and in the town halls' magazines focused on identifying the categories of ethos for each of the seven mayors. The charisma ethos dimension through familiarity and the credibility ethos dimension through credibility are the most pervasive types of ethos used in the representation of the Romanian mayors. 'The one of us' and 'we' discourse was mainly used by Andrei Chiliman, Cristian Popescu-Piedone, Marian Vanghelie and Sorin Oprescu. During all his mandates, the mayor of sector 4, Cristian Popescu-Piedone, presented himself as a charismatic person, for whom being empathic and receiving the citizens' affection are essential. However, this does not prevent him from displaying the image of an authority who does not tolerate any action of the public administration or the private environment that could be against the law, the citizens' interests or his own resolutions.

If Marian Vanghelie questions the role of communication in leadership because he won four consecutive mandates without any strategies of communication, Rareș Mănescu (Sector 6) is at his first mandate and we cannot know yet whether the lack

of communication will influence future elections. Rareș Mănescu's website is the only one where the Media columns are not active. One notable feature is that it is the only website where the name of the vice-mayor Gabriel Petrea and his actions are promoted more than those of the mayor. After only 2 years of mandate, it is difficult to comment on the leadership and image strategy of the sector 6 mayor. The message might be about a type of leadership where the team is more important than the leader, but it can equally prove a faulty management of these aspects.

The analysis reveals two important aspects: on the one hand, the leadership style can be underlined by the analysis of the mayors' image on the town hall websites; on the other hand, the mayors' electoral success is not directly influenced by the image provided on the town hall websites and the number and quality of the press releases or the news. Without being the subject of the present research, we can consider that the mayors' success during elections and, especially, their reelection depends on much more complex factors, among which the socio-economic specificity of the sector.

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