Human Rights Campaigns: Raising Awareness via Multimodal Argumentation

Campañas sobre los derechos humanos: Despertando conciencia vía argumentación multimodal

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Abstract: The Council of Europe, the European leading human rights organization, has been engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights since its foundation. In addition to legal actions, over the years it has undertaken a number of awareness-raising campaigns. The analysis is conducted on a corpus collected from the Council of Europe's website. It includes different text types – posters, leaflets and booklets – which belong to the most significant campaigns launched in 2006. This study focuses on the linguistic and visual manifestations of argumentation across a range of different genres looking at the way in which they interact to produce a persuasive message. Against the theoretical framework of visual argumentation, in particular Roque's classification of mixed media argumentation (2012), and multimodal discourse analysis, the research aims to explore how the Council of Europe promotes human rights issues through argumentative-persuasive techniques and to what extent these strategies interact in the campaign material allowing for an expansion of the theory of argumentation.

Keywords: Visual argumentation, persuasion, public campaigns, institutional discourse.

Resumen: El Consejo de Europa, la principal organización europea de derechos humanos, se ha comprometido en la promoción y protección de los derechos humanos desde su fundación. Además de las acciones legales, a lo largo de los años ha realizado una serie de campañas de sensibilización. El análisis en este trabajo se realiza sobre un corpus recopilado en el sitio web del Consejo de Europa. Incluye diferentes tipos de textos –pósters, folletos y folletines– que pertenecen a las campañas más impor-

tantes lanzadas en 2006. Este estudio se centra en las manifestaciones lingüísticas y visuales de la argumentación en una variedad de géneros diferentes observando la forma en la que interactúan para producir un mensaje persuasivo. Dentro del marco teórico de la argumentación visual, en particular la clasificación de Roque respecto de la argumentación de medios mixtos (2012) y el análisis del discurso multimodal, la investigación tiene como objetivo explorar cómo el Consejo de Europa promueve los temas de los derechos humanos a través de técnicas argumentativas-persuasivas y en qué medida estas estrategias interactúan en el material de campaña permitiendo, a su vez, una expansión de la teoría de la argumentación.

Palabras clave: Argumentación visual, persuasión, campañas públicas, discurso institucional.

1. Introduction

Public communication campaigns can employ various communicative techniques and different materials, but they are all based on the art of persuasion. According to Perloff (2003) they are grounded on the symbolic process of persuasion whose main aim is to change public attitudes regarding an issue. He states that "campaigns reflect the nation's cultivation of the art of persuasion. They rely on argumentation, sloganeering, and emotional appeals in an effort to mold public attitudes" (Perloff, 2003, p. 303).

A public communication campaign may involve a conventional mix of text-types such as brochures, posters, videos or a different array of new communication methods (Paisley, 2001). In fact, the Council of Europe (COE) exploits different communicative strategies, using both a large variety of traditional materials and new technological communicative tools. Nowadays hundreds of internet websites are dedicated to campaign human rights issues and also the COE has created a well structured website devoted to the campaigns for the protection of human rights.

The analysis has been conducted on the Council of Europe's website campaign material created to raise awareness on human rights. By focusing on the posters, leaflets and booklets belonging to three of the campaigns launched in 2006 the study aims to identify the linguistic and visual manifestations of argumentation looking at the way in which they interact to produce a persuasive message.

The analysis has tried to answer the following questions:

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

To what extent do the linguistic and visual strategies interact in the campaign material allowing for an expansion of the theory of argumentation?

2. Persuasion and Argumentation

Social campaigns aim to spread ideas and practices through mass media. Their main purpose is to change people's behavior or attitude so this could be considered as a form of persuasion. For Perloff (2003) persuasion is a symbolic process where the persuader attempts to convince people to change ideas about an issue but in an environment of free choice. Similarly, Blair states that:

> What seems to be a necessary ingredient in persuasion as a kind of cause of behavior change is that the person persuaded assents to the pressure of the vector of influence. The person consciously assents, and that implies that he or she is free to resist the causal influences. (Blair, 2004, p. 43)

Persuasion is always present both if you want to promote an idea or a product, but there are some differences between commercial campaigns and social campaigns. Commercial campaigns want to convince people to act and buy something often appealing to the audience's desires and dreams. Conversely, social campaigns generally try not to perform a particular action but to change a specific behavior, and sometimes these campaigns are more complex since they refer to values, prejudices and stereotypes.

> Commercial campaigns are product-oriented, whereas political campaigns are person-oriented, intentionally addressing the aim of putting someone into a position in government. Social action campaigns are event- or action-oriented, intentionally addressing aims greater than any single individual, but likely to affect a group or groups within the society. (Pfau, 1993, p. 381)

Since arguments are instruments of persuasion and rhetoric includes the study of the tools of persuasion, it is important to take into account the relationship between persuasion, rhetoric and argument. Arguments give us reasons to accept a point of view and the standpoints can be descriptive as well as evaluative or prescriptive.

> The fact that certain propositions are deemed true, probable, plausible or otherwise worthy of acceptance, is considered to provide a reason, or a set of reasons, for thinking that some claim is true, some attitude is appropriate, some policy is worthy of implementation, or some action is best done. (Blair, 2004, p. 44)

As a social practice, argumentation is used in different communities of practice, and in this case it is used in a public sphere and in the specific context of social campaigns in order to raise awareness on human rights.

Arguments have always been considered verbal, because the reasons they employ are propositions expressed by sentences which have a truth value. Since times immemorial they have been associated with rhetoric. Aristotle is one of the first to investigate rhetoric and recognize it as a form of persuasion. Given the emphasis on the orator it is thought that the main instrument of persuasion is language so one of the ways of expressing a persuasive message is through verbal arguments, although not all the elements of an argument are explicitly expressed. Argumentation is often enthymemic. It means that one of its components – either a premise or a conclusion – is not explicitly stated and thus the proposition has to be completed in the receiver's mind by inferences, "en thyme". Argumentation is different from explanation, since the former is a linguistic and cognitive action aiming to justify or question the validity of problematic or questionable claims.

> While argumentation is an attempt to convince the listener of the acceptability of a standpoint with respect to a proposition, an explanation is aimed at increasing the listener's understanding of the proposition represented by the statement explained (explanandum). (Snoeck Henkemans, 2001, p. 240)

Nowadays the concept that arguments are expressed mainly verbally has been widely debated, since scholars have started to contest the idea

that rhetoric is the art of persuading through verbal language only, but also non verbal arguments can be persuasive. So they begin to propose the conception that rhetoric can also include visual language, in other words we could also affirm the presence of *visual persuasion* (Blair, 2004).

Visual arguments are more immediate and realistic and they can convey a message immediately. They are basically enthymemes, some parts remain unexpressed which must be understood by the audience. Visual persuasion can evoke feelings and does not use an argumentation in the traditional sense. For example, in 2009 in India, the Bangalore Traffic Police launched a road safety campaign using some shocking photographs in order to convince people not to talk to their families or friends when they are driving. As you can see in Figure 1, through the combination of visual and verbal elements the poster aims to stir emotions in the viewer. A woman is represented grimacing as blood spurts out from her mobile phone and the verbal message "Don't talk while he drives" is the conclusion to the visual argument, that is not only the car driver is responsible for his mobile behaviour. Following Groarke's claim (1996), a visual argument is an argument which includes elements such as premises, conclusions and evidence which are visual rather than verbal.

Figure 1. Poster *Don't talk while he drives.*

It becomes more and more important to consider that arguments used in practical argumentation are shaped by the particular fields in which they occur. Since the multimodal nature of the collected, data the analysis will be conducted taken into account the theoretical framework of visual argumentation, combining it with a multimodal discourse analysis approach.

3. Theoretical approach: multimodal discourse analysis and visual argumentation

Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary field of investigation, attracting the attention not only of linguists but also sociologists, anthropologists, communication experts etc. Dating back to the 1960s, it aims at analyzing linguistic mechanisms and how the meaning is constructed and used in particular social contexts. One of the most recent approaches to the study of discourse is Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) which focuses on the role of semiotic modes, beyond written and spoken texts, opening up the possibilities of analyzing other forms of communication such as pictures, colors, typography, etc. Since MDA is not generally very interested in argumentation, a visual argumentation approach can help to implement the analysis and better answer my research questions.

3.1. Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Multimodality entered discourse analysis through the works of Kress and van Leeuwen, starting from Visual Grammar (1996) and founding Multimodal Discourse Analysis (2001). Texts create meanings also through other communicative features such as images, color, the layout of pages, etc. The two scholars stressed out that communication, thanks also to new technologies – was moving away from monomodality to multimodality. Multimodality is the study of different semiotic modes in a text or communicative event. It is impossible to have a text which is pure language and moreover with digital technology it has become easier to mix modes. A page cannot create meaning through the use of language alone but relies on a combination of linguistic, graphic and spatial meaning-making resources.

Many scholars (Lemke, 2002; Norris, 2004; Jewitt, 2008) have been

investigating this field and have produced a number of valuable works focusing on the relationship between language and images. Although referring explicitly to Hallidayan linguistics, social semiotics and multimodal analysis demonstrate that a multimodal approach to texts gives new perspectives to the interpretation of language and communication.

There is increasing interest among scholars from different disciplines (linguistics, education, sociology, media studies) in the role of modes in representation and communication. These modes are perceived as closely connected in the communicative process and multimodal discourses have been investigated in a range of contexts, including workplaces, museum exhibitions, online environments, across a range of genres and technologies.

A fundamental aspect of multimodality is the analysis of language, but embedded within a wider semiotic frame. It is part of a multimodal ensemble. Multimodality is gaining pace as a methodological approach, since writing no longer seems sufficient in understanding representation and communication in a range of fields and the need to understand how writing interact with non-verbal modes has become necessary nowadays, especially in the online communicational landscape.

3.2. Visual argumentation

Argumentation theory focuses on one specific verbal activity, the production of arguments to support a standpoint. This is because every argument, being an attempt to persuade an audience by rational tools, intrinsically makes an appeal to some normative standard of reasonableness.

There are several and different approaches to argumentation theory but all agree about their purpose, that is to develop theoretical norms of argumentation and evaluate argumentative discourse. They focus on arguments as a communicative activity taking into account the contextual and pragmatic elements which are present in the production and interpretation of arguments (Eemeren van and Grootendorst, 2004; Eemeren van, 2009). So arguments are often produced implicitly or indirectly and they are understood within specific contexts. Arguments and more generally language reflects and constructs the context or situation in which they are produced.

According to Amossy (2009) the arguer may intentionally try to persuade his/her addressee about an issue where the viewpoints are clearly

divergent such as in a debate, and in this case there is an argumentative purpose, but he/she can also express standpoints and interpret the world without expressing any thesis such as in an information article and, since there is not an explicit persuasive intention, discourse here has an argumentative nature.

In addition, Amossy underlines the fact that argumentativity is an intrinsic characteristic of discourse as discourse always answers some clear or hidden questions or suggests a way of looking at the world.

> The argumentative nature of discourse does not imply that formal arguments are used, nor does it mean that a sequential order from premise to conclusion is imposed on the oral or written text. Orienting the way reality is perceived, influencing a point of view and directing behavior are actions performed by a whole range of verbal means. From this perspective, argumentation is fully integrated in the domain of language studies. The analyst has to examine the multiple verbal procedures through which the participants of an exchange try to reach an agreement, to deal with dissent or to influence ways of experiencing the world. (Amossy, 2009, p. 254)

In order to achieve these objectives we have to consider that "argumentation is an aspect of an overall 'discursive functioning' that has to be analyzed in its intrinsic logic" (Amossy, 2009, p. 254). Consequently, arguments should be studied taken in great consideration their specific contexts and cultural situations.

Groarke (1996) claimed for the development of a theory of visual argument raising an important and stimulating discussion for the theory of argumentation in general. His position was supported by several scholars (Blair, 1996; Birdsell, 1996; Shelley, 2001). First of all it was necessary to legitimize it showing that it is possible to argue not only verbally: many verbal arguments can be represented visually or it is possible to find in images an equivalent to verbal arguments.

As already stated, arguments make people accept a viewpoint through reasons. Traditionally an argument is considered only verbal and fundamentally propositional. An image is considered vague or ambiguous so it is believed that images cannot make arguments as they do not seem to be able to be true or false (Birdsell and Groarke, 1996). Some scholars object that ambiguity and vagueness are present in verbal (both spoken and

written) arguments too and sometimes vagueness is necessary in order to have an effective communication. Most visual arguments are a mixture of verbal and visual communication so words can help to clarify the meaning of images and moreover not all visual arguments are vague and ambiguous. Birdsell and Groarke (1996) affirm that it does not mean that verbal and visual meanings are identical. The meaning of a visual claim depends on the relationship between an image/text and the viewers. Besides, they underline the importance of context. Words alone do not convey the whole meaning.

> "Context" can involve a wide range of cultural assumptions, situational cues, time-sensitive information, and/or knowledge of a specific interlocutor. The immediate verbal context of a sentence is only one source of information interpreters use in determining the meaning of a string of words. (Birdsell and Groarke, 1996, p. 5)

Therefore, we should consider context also when we focus on visual arguments. Images should not be investigated in isolation from one another or from verbal statements.

Since Groarke's first studies on visual argumentation there has been a long debate among scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds. According to Roque (2009), visual argumentation is possible despite of the several critiques made against visual arguments. Two scholars in particular, Fleming (1996) and Johnson (2003) are clearly against it. This is mainly due to linguistic imperialism so scholars have preferred to focus on verbal argumentation and underlined the fact that language is fundamental to have an argument reinforced by an old definition given by van Eemeren in 1984. Luckily, more recent definitions of Pragma-Dialectics are more flexible, in fact van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004) state that argumentation can also be non-verbal.

Some more open standpoints (Blair, 2004) suggest extending the definition of verbal argument. But, instead of broadening the definition of verbal argumentation that could be a bit risky, according to Roque (2009) it could be wiser to analyze how a visual argument works before elaborating a definition. Another claim is that it is not possible a division between words and images so we cannot have visual arguments because we do not have pure images. Even though we cannot transform a visual argument

into a verbal proposition, we can find how an argument is expressed within the language of images. So we can agree with Roque (2009, p. 8) when he states that: "what is properly visual in a visual argument is not the argument itself, but the way it is visually displayed, which call for a closer look at the syntactic layout of visual images".

Most of the time a visual argument is not merely visual, but includes verbal components too. For instance, in most commercial or social campaign posters, a visual argument is based upon a combination of a verbal and a visual code and for this reason Roque (2012, p. 276) suggests another definition: "a visual argument is an argument conveyed through the visual channel and sometimes using the visual code alone, but most of the time both verbal and visual codes combined within the same message". Therefore, for him arguments result from mental operations independent from the verbal so they can also be expressed visually. "It is not the argument itself that could be considered visual, but the way it is displayed" (Roque, 2012, p. 277). He suggests a classification of the different types of relationships between visual and verbal argumentation to make clear how the two modes work together in mixed media. The first category is called "visual flag" (term borrowed by Groarke) and it is when a picture attracts attention to an argument presented verbally. The visual is only a flag and not a real argument since the image does not contain an argument but only direct our eye to the text which conveys the actual argument. The second category is when the visual and the verbal express parallel argumentations contributing both to the general meaning. There is no hierarchy between the visual and the verbal. Sometimes they can also present the same argument and it often happens in advertising posters. The third category is when the argument is elaborated using visual and verbal elements, so called "joint argument". Visual and verbal components are closely entangled in the building of the argument with a contribution from both. Mostly, the conclusion is given by the text. Finally, in the last category the argument is created through an opposition between the verbal and the visual.

More recently, Dove (2012) has proposed his personal view on visual argumentation which is in between the claim that there are visual arguments sustained by scholars such as Groarke (1996) and Blair (1996) and the skepticism illustrated by others such as Fleming (1996) and Johnson

(2003). Dove is not sure if visual arguments exist but he affirms that in several arguments "visual evidence" plays an important role.

As we will see in section 4, the arguments present in the corpus under investigation are mostly multimodal since they are a mixture of verbal and visual components and the analysis will take into account the above mentioned classification of mixed media arguments. For this reason, MDA can help us to see how images are "grammatically" displayed in order to identify visual arguments.

4. Analysis: the Council of Europe human rights campaigns

The analysis has focused on three COE's human rights campaigns launched in 2006: "Stop domestic violence against women", "Human beings – not for sale" and "Dosta! Fight prejudice against Roma". In particular, the investigation has been carried out on three text-types: posters, leaflets and booklets. The texts vary in terms of genre, but at the same time they are united in representing the same social practice or some aspects of it. Subsection 4.1 is devoted to the posters belonging respectively to the three campaigns. On the contrary, since the discursive features of leaflets and booklets are similar (the only difference is given by the length of the verbal content), I have decided to examine them together in subsection 4.2. In terms of argumentation strategies in the leaflets and booklets we find a lot of examples of verbal arguments due to the traditional format of this text-type, but, given the presence of other modes such as colors and typography, we can also identify some instances of visual arguments.

4.1. Visual argumentation in posters

In the data collected there are several examples of verbal arguments but it is important to underline the fact that the analysis has also revealed several examples of visual arguments. Visual arguments are frequently present on posters. Campaigns often use this technique to draw the reader's attention about a specific issue. Also in the COE campaigns posters play an important role in winning the attention of the public and creating awareness on a specific topic.

Stop domestic violence against women is a campaign designed to combat violence against women, including domestic violence with the purpose to make the public aware that violence against women is a human rights violation and provide support for the victims of violence. The repetition of the visual message (see figure 2) through the whole campaign has increased its persuasive power. Following Roque's classification, the image is an example of visual flag. This is a flag since the image does not present an argument but its function is to attract the viewer's attention to the verbal argument. The visual is not very clear and the text anchors its meaning. The message of the image is ambiguous but it attracts the public so the verbal argument helps to interpret the image.
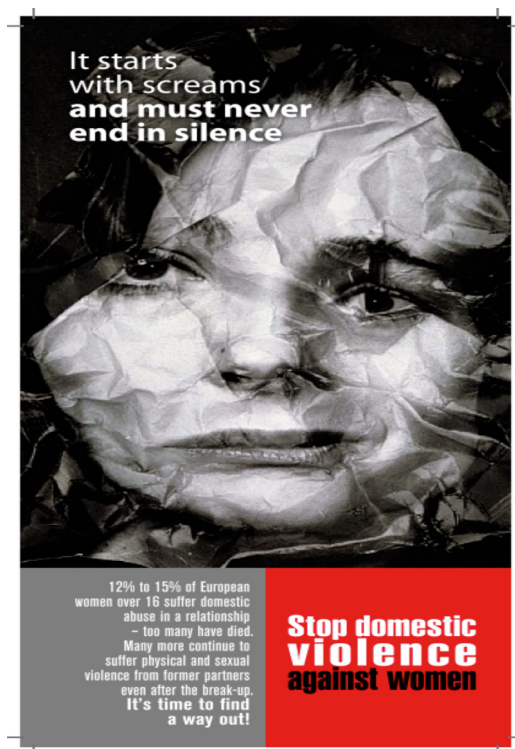

Figure 2. Poster *Stop domestic violence against women*.

There is a close-up of a woman's face looking at the audience with troubled eyes. Her features are normal except for the fact that they are not very regular, because the poster seems to be wrapped.

The verbal text becomes necessary to understand the persuasive message of the picture, for example the visual demand is reinforced by the deontic modal 'must' and the adverb 'never' of the slogan. The slogan on the top left exploits some rhetorical features typical of advertising discourse, the parallelism of the sentences and the antithesis of the verbs (start/end) and the nouns (scream/silence) which are commonly used to hit the viewer's attention.

Text 1

It starts with screams
and must never
end in silence

Moreover, the text at the bottom-left (see text 2) is a verbal argument which supports the visual message. The argument is expressed by premises which are reinforced by the use of statistics which gives a sense of truthfulness to the argument and can also create a rhetorical effect.

Text 2

12% to 15% of European
women over 16 suffer domestic abuse in a relationship
– too many have died.
Many more continue to suffer physical and sexual violence from former
partners even after the break-up.
It's time to find a way out!

The campaigners have reformulated a paragraph from the *Stocktaking study on the measures and actions taken in Council of Europe member States to combat violence against women* prepared by Prof. Dr. Carol Hagemann-White for the Council of Europe in 2006. Through the use of percentages, the COE tries to support its standpoint by giving to the argu-

ment an air of reliable scientific evidence. Producing scientific data is a strategic maneuvering to back up the final claim (Potter, 1996), that is a direct invitation to acquire consciousness and combat violence against women. The rhetorical effect is emphasized by the fact it combines elements of two opposite discourses: the scientific discourse through the use of percentages (12% to 15%) and promotional discourse, shown in the use of a conversational style (too many, many more, it's time to find a way out!). The catchphrase on the bottom right 'Stop domestic violence against women' contains an imperative which is a direct invitation to action, i. e. a directive speech act, which is the claim of the whole argumentative message. In this poster the picture is not itself an argument but a flag which "is not used to convey the message of the argument and only functions as a means of directing us to the text that conveys the actual argument" (Groarke and Tindale, 2008, p. 64).

Figure 2 is a poster belonging to *Dosta*, the COE awareness-raising campaign aimed to protect the rights of national minorities. In particular, its main objective is to bring non-Roma closer to Roma citizens by breaking down the barriers caused by prejudices and stereotypes.

The poster is an obvious example of combination of verbal and visual components that together contribute to the interpretation and understanding of the whole message. Visually there are four images which depict four characteristics usually associated with Roma women: we see a woman who is begging, a fortune-teller, some colorful clothes hung along a washing line and a woman who is escaping since she has just stolen some food. The visual argument is intrinsically embedded in the verbal message since the latter states that Roma women are not like those women represented in the pictures. The meaning of the first part of the claim 'I am not this' is completed by the pictures and the conclusion is given by the sentence 'I am a European Roma women'. The images represent the negative perceptions of Roma women that the COE is trying to fight through a combined rhetorical form of argumentation which has the effect of drawing the audience to participate in its own persuasion by filling in the unexpressed concepts. This is an example of *joint argument* since the whole meaning is given by the interaction of the verbal and visual. The syntactic interaction between the verbal and visual is given by the deictic "This" which refers to the images. Then the conclusion is given by the verbal sentence below 'I am a European

Roma woman'. In this poster, the images therefore play a central role in articulating the joint argument.

Figure 3. Poster *I am a European Roma Woman.*

In the poster "Human being – not for sale" (see figure 3) it is the interaction between the words and the image which helps the viewer understand the whole message. The first communicative message is that a 'new product' has been created for consumers: the human being. The image of

the woman represented in a plastic bag and the indexical meaning of bar-
code – almost every item purchased from a department store and mass
merchandiser has a barcode on it – accentuate the commercial nature of
the product. The second level consists of a black background on which a red
cross, the slogan 'not for sale', and the COE's logo are depicted. The final
message becomes clear only if the image and the words are read together
combining the two levels: society is advertising a new product – the human
being – but the COE wants to stop this phenomenon.

The argument may be constructed through an analogy between the ver-
bal and the visual. There is a redundancy between the verbal and the visual,
in fact the image shows the forbidden action crossed out by a graphic mark
and the verbal makes the message explicit. It is clear the crucial role of the
visual in the argument given by the use of a rhetorical strategy, that is a
visual metaphor.

Figure 4. Poster *Human beings – not for sale.*

4.2. Visual argumentation in leaflets and booklets

Usually in informative/promotional leaflets or booklets we find a dominance of verbal arguments due to the distribution of linguistic characteristics typical of these text-types. For example, the leaflet *Speak out against discrimination* is a clear example of verbal supremacy. The catchy headline (see text 3) is a verbal argument based on two premises which are explicitly expressed making clear the COE's point of view. The argument has the form of a linking of sentences leading to a conclusion: given that in the COE's member states discrimination is considered a crime and given that everybody can become either a victim or a witness of discriminatory actions (premises), and given that, if you want to avoid this (warrant), it follows that it is necessary to speak out against discrimination and make your voice be heard (claim). It is an argument in the sense that it provides a reason for a conclusion.

> **Text 3**
>
> IN THE 47 COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEMBER STATES
> DISCRIMINATION IS A CRIME
> YOU MAY BE THE NEXT VICTIM OR THE NEXT WITNESS, SO
> SPEAK OUT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION!
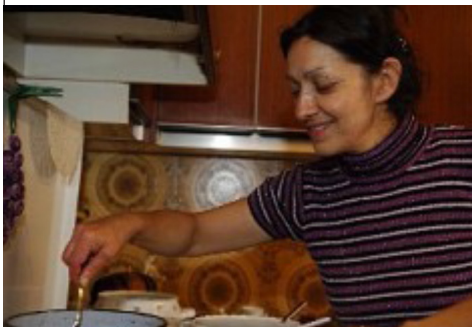> (Leaflet *Speak out against discrimination*)[1]

Nevertheless, in the booklets and leaflets under investigation, I have also identified different visual arguments. The booklet "Is this a stereotype"[2] starts from the assumption that there are many stereotypes about Roma. Typical prejudices see Roma like carefree nomads, wearing colorful clothes and lots of golden jewellery; they beg and steal, even children; they are lazy, they do not want to work, they have no education and the women tell fortune and can curse you if you do not give them any money. In order to stop these stereotypes the COE has also designed a booklet to fight them. Here the verbal and visual arguments are strictly related. The verbal text

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[1] Available at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/anti-discrimination-campaign/Source/Leaflet/DiscriminationLeaflet_EN.pdf.
[2] Available at http://www.dosta.org/en/content/toolkit.

informs us about the most common stereotypes concerning, for examples, customs (see figure 4) and women (see figure 5), and it contains the premises and warrants but most of the time it is in the pictures that the conclusion must be looked for. The images make the reader understand that the reality is different from what is said in the text, Roma people behave exactly like other European citizens, for example in figure 5 they are depicted while smoking and meeting friends in a pub. Similarly, in figure 6 the verbal text illustrates the prejudices towards Roma women and the COE justifies its standpoints by statements taken as facts, truth claims, and appealing to authority too (some scholars). The picture here is mainly used to reinforce the organization's viewpoints.

Figure 5. Booklet *Is this a stereotype?*

Stereotype n°6: Customs

When talking about Roma customs one has to keep in mind the Roma's diversity. There are a few customs which are similar among all Roma who still follow a traditional way of life but there are also very many customs that differ from group to group or even sometimes from family to family. Customs among Roma just vary as the customs of the population of any European country vary from region to region. In addition, one has to keep in mind that the majority of European Roma no longer lead a traditional way of life and do not follow or even know about the 'old' customs. In popular culture Roma are often depicted in a romantic way as beautiful, colorfully dressed people, proud and independent, life-loving and passionate, carefree and enjoying the simple pleasures in life. Their music is passionate and their women seductive. This picture is especially prevalent in literature and in paintings and is perpetuated today by groups such as 'medieval' societies or 'Renaissance' organizations, but cannot in any case be considered as the reality of today's European Roma.

Figure 6. Booklet *Is this a stereotype?*

Stereotype n°10: Women

There are two main ways of stereo-typing Roma women. The first one portrays Roma women as passionate dancers, ready to seduce any man, fiery and exotic, immoral and lusty; the other as old fortune tellers ready to curse you or to put you into trance if you do not give them any money. The second view depicts Roma women as dirty, having too many usually naked children, being beaten by their husbands and exploited by their wider family. They marry at age 11 and have the first child at age 13. Concerning the first view it has to be pointed out that traditional Roma have very strong moral values. Pre-marital intercourse as well as the be-trayal of the husband are tradition-ally unacceptable. In addition, some scholars argue that those elements of Roma dancing, which are often seen as seductive, are in fact relic of Indian temple dances, which were not intended to be seductive at all. Music, dancing, and fortune telling, which are seen as integral elements of Roma culture by many, were in fact a means of making a living. Con-cerning the second view, the difficult living conditions which many Roma face have to be taken into account. Lack of utilities such as running wa-ter, having no clothes for children, or eventual cases of domestic vio-lence are indicators of poverty but not of 'Gypsyness'.

The following leaflet (see figure 4.6) belongs to the campaign "Dosta! Fight prejudice against Roma". The front page is an example of visual argu-ment. Denotatively the image represents a very common everyday activity, but it is the slogan which adds a specific denotative and connotative mean-ing. The Romani word 'Dosta!' – meaning 'enough' in English – conveys a powerful symbolic meaning: it becomes a way to knit together Roma and

non-Roma, to bring these two different worlds closer together. The imperative mood - *Go beyond prejudice, discover the Roma* - is an explicit command, a communicative speech act which orders viewers to do something, to act against prejudice and racism that Roma people face all over Europe. The picture is divided in two parts: above we have the visual representation of a stereotype, colorful clothes hung along a washing line, while below a family is celebrating their child's first birthday. The father, who seems to be the major *actor*, holds the child in his hands while the mother stops his child's hand. It is a very familiar gesture: a child is always curious and usually tries to touch the cake. They are arranged in a symmetrical way, in a big and circular hug and all of them look at the candle, maybe symbol of life or a new society without prejudices. On the foreground, the little child is placed in the centre unifying the other people surrounding him around a central meaning. "For something to be presented as Centre means that it is presented as the nucleus of the information on which all the other elements are in some sense subservient" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 206), so he is the central element because he symbolizes the future and a new better life for Roma people thanks to the *Dosta!* campaign.

Figure 7. Leaflet *Dosta! Fight prejudice towards Roma*.

Also the leaflet "Stop domestic violence against women" exploits the combination of different modes to convince viewers to accept the COE's standpoint. The verbal text (see text 4) explains the causes and consequences of violence against women and the conclusion is on the front page where we have the same image (see figure 4.1) discussed in subsection 4.1. Even if here many scholars should argue that this is a verbal argument, I would also consider it a visual argument because of another mode involved: the color red.

Text 4

"Violence against women is the result of an imbalance of power between women and men, leading to serious discrimination against women, both within society and the family. Violence in the family or domestic unit occurs in every Council of Europe member state despite positive developments in law, policies and practices. Violence against women is a violation of human rights, the very nature of which deprives women of their ability to enjoy fundamental freedoms. It often leaves women vulnerable to further abuse and is a major obstacle to overcoming inequality between women and men in society.

Violence against women damages peace, security and democracy in Europe." (Leaflet *Stop domestic violence against women*)[3]

Probably the color red has been adopted to reinforce the verbal argument because of its connotations of "Danger" and "Stop". Moreover, the black and red contrast catches the attention and emphasizes the message contributing to its salience. Jewitt and Oyama (2001, p. 150) support this statement by stating that "the term 'salience' is used by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) to indicate that some elements can be made more eye-catching than others. This again can be made in many different ways, through size, through color contrasts (red is always a very salient color), tonal contrast [....]".

The Human beings – not for sale campaign aims at preventing the trafficking in human beings, protecting the human rights of victims and

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[3] Available at https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolecampaign/Campaignmaterial_en.asp.

prosecuting traffickers. Among the most interesting material investigated is the leaflet, created to explain in a simpler way the *Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.*

The images play an important role in the communicative context. For example, figure 8 shows a woman, with a bar code on her shoulder who is sitting in a trolley pushed by another person, probably a man. The message is quite obvious: the woman has been objectified, she can be bought and sold like a commercial product. The image appeals to the feelings and emotions of the viewer and represents visually what is given as facts in the verbal text and the quotation 'A new form of Slavery' is used to endorse the visual message.

Here we can identify another category. The visual and verbal present the same type of argument. There is a redundancy, as both stress the point that trafficking in human being is a modern form of the old slave trade. "The text describes and the image depicts" (Roque 2012, p. 283). The central role of the visual in the argument comes from the visual metaphor and the last paragraph of the verbal text might be considered as the conclusion of the argument: as a pan-European organization, the COE is committed to fight trafficking in human rights.
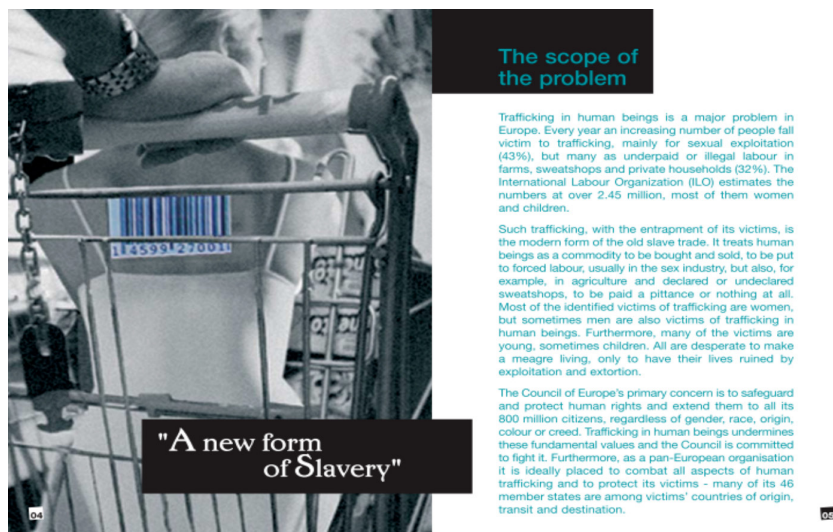

Figure 8. Brochure *Human being – not for sale.*

5. Discussion

Groarke (1996) has called for the development of a theory of visual argument. Several scholars seem to support his ideas (Blair, 1996, 2004; Birdsell, 1996; Roque, 2009, 2012; Shelley, 2001). Some are against this point (Fleming, 1996; Johnson 2003).

Opponents to visual arguments claim that they cannot be discursive or linguistic, but combining visual argumentation and multimodal discourse analysis can help support the existence of visual arguments, since multimodal discourse analysts have widely demonstrated that the concept of discourse can include visual discourse.

The analysis has showed that even if images and words are intertwined, thanks to MDA we can see how they work on a text-type and so how an argument can be expressed without converting it to a verbal proposition.

By adopting a combined theoretical framework, the study has revealed that in some cases images work as "visual flag", just a way to draw attention to the verbal argument, but there are also cases where the argument is expressed by the image. In visual arguments the propositions and their argumentative function are translated visually. Therefore, visuals contain propositions structured in an argumentative way and they are not a simple illustration of verbal arguments. A visual argument is "a concatenation of visual statements in a particular image [that] can [...] function as reasons for a conclusion" (Groarke, 1996, p. 111). Following Roque's classification (2012), we can affirm that the COE campaigners have widely exploited verbal and visual rhetorical and argumentative strategies, such as parallel and joint arguments, to convince the targeted audience to adhere to the theses presented in the campaign material, allowing, consequently, for an expansion of the theory of argumentation.

These strategies have also had a great impact on society, as the campaign "Stop domestic violence against women" ended in 2008 and it resulted in the drafting of a legally binding *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*. Similarly, at the end of the campaign "Human beings – not for sale" the *Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings* – the first European treaty in this field – was adopted and entered into force on 1st February 2008.

The combination of visual and verbal arguments in social campaign

material is "field-dependent" since they are related to the multimodal discourse environment. A categorization of arguments fields would be restrictive, since the analysis has carried out also the presence of *interfield connections*, for example argumentation over violence against women involves public and private spheres, i.e. international and local law, medicine, family relations, etc.

6. Conclusion

The collected corpus has been investigated through a combination of two approaches: multimodal discourse analysis and visual argumentation. Given the multimodal nature of the text-types, the analysis has underlined the interaction between verbal and visual modes, taken into account Roque's classification of mixed media argumentation. Textual is not necessarily the most important mode used for the construction and interpretation of social meaning, so this type of approach to texts may help to give new perspectives to the interpretation of language and communication.

The analysis has showed that in the COE's campaign materials an argumentative text is often an integrated text which includes words and images and together contribute to the creation of a persuasive message of great complexity. The results have demonstrated that the Council of Europe exploits both verbal and visual argumentative-persuasive techniques to promote and protect human rights.

One of the challenges facing this study is to find appropriate analytical tools that capture the argumentative strategies used in contemporary institutional discourse. The findings have allowed to reflect on the relationship between multimodal discourse analysis and visual argumentation theory and understand that these two approaches, even though originating in what seem to be separate traditions, may fruitfully be combined in the study of institutional discourse. This encounter could be beneficial, maybe essential, to complement and reinforce future research on context-based and dialogue-shaped argumentation processes in multimodal discourse environments.

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