

**IMAGE OF THE LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: MEASURING
THE LEVEL OF UTILIZATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
SERVICES AND AUDIENCES**

RĂDULESCU Corina¹

Bucharest University

Abstract

In the present days, in Romania there is a poor correlation between the objectives of the public communication and the citizens' horizon of expectations. Therefore, at the level of image management of a public institution it is obvious that gaps between reality and perception can appear. In the present paper our scope is to measure the level of utilization by the inhabitants of Bucharest (400 respondents) of the public information services and audiences, the degree of satisfaction towards them, and starting from the primary data we have obtained we want to demonstrate that the citizens' perception of local public administration, particularly towards the aforementioned services – is not an arbitrary one, subjective as it seems at first sight, but on the contrary it defines itself as feedback, an objective reaction to them. Through our lines, we give reasons why a public institution should have a pro-active behaviour towards the citizen and image management should not be an exclusive act of leading the respective institution but rather an effect of all parties involved in the good management of the community.

Key words: *image management, perceived image, local administration, evaluation, providing public data, audience.*

¹ Associate professor, Faculty of Administration and Business, Bucharest University, Bucharest, Români, e-mail: c_radul@yahoo.com

1. Introduction and theoretical base

1.1. What is image management?

The image of a public institution does not exist as such, „in itself”, but as a result of the intersection of three registers (A, B, C), which are equally important:

- A. reference image (selfimage) or projected - we refer to the way in which the public institution wants to be perceived (and within it we place the objectives of communication);
- B. transmitted image through communication supports (publications, mass media relation, public relation, Internet, etc.) of the wanted image;
- C. perceived image or subjective one which reflects people's opinion on the respective institution.

The sum of the three dimensions forms up a real image (or identity of the public institution). The difficulty lies in achieving coherence between them. The main aim of image management, particularly of institutional communication, lies in the very way they try to draw near the three layers of institutional image in order to reduce the gap between reality and perception. The result of intersecting the three images – as a consequence of the effort of being efficiently managed – forms a real image, an objective one of the institution (identity).

1.2. Necessity and opportunity of image management

In present we can see a real gap between A and C, between selfimage that reflects the citizens' view on Romanian public institution. Mostly, they blame the arbitrary character of perception (as a psychical process), they consider that the perceived image (C) is always subjective and arbitrary, and also blame the lack of objectiveness of mass media (B – transmitted image) which takes sides (eg voices the funder's point of view).

Why should be a minimum coherence of the three layers of image? The aim of image management, particularly institutional communication is to draw near the three levels of image so that we could have the real image of the institution, its very identity.

The process of image building (A) of a public institution is complex and it takes time to build it, but it can rapidly be demolished unless the institution takes protection measures. It should adapt to the times in order to

show the public that it is evolving with time. The process consists of an assembly of phenomena having the purpose of reflecting institutional reality as it is – unvarnished, starting with its „infrastructure”, that is organizational culture, then passing through all communication directions (information, training, promoting services, civil communication campaigns etc.) towards products quality which are provided to the citizen, visual identity, social activities to which the community takes part in. The sum of efforts to build a specificity is eventually „crystallized” in identity and credibility, then if the positive image is persistent in time, the reputation and notoriety of institution takes contour. The second component of image (**B** - transmitted image) – refers to „all communication supports (advertisement, mass media relation, Internet, etc.) it translates the reference image, institution communication objectives” (Jézéquel and Gérard, 2012, p. 30). Mass-media should be an important partner for public institution, it can facilitate or on the contrary can complicate (Lohisse, 2009, p. 194 and Libaert, Westphalen, 2009, pp. 405 - 411) the modelling of a positive image.

One can notice that public image depends on many factors and it is deeply rooted in human perception, therefore it is very fragile. According to specialty articles and work, it is defined as „a favorable representation which an organisation or institution has among people with the aim of attracting the clients’ liking” (Haineş, 2010, p. 141), or „an opinion which a citizen makes about the character and personality of the institution” (Haineş, 2008, p. 166).

1.3. The scope of the present paper

The of the present paper is measuring the third register of the image (**C**), to show which is the utilization level of different services/public communication, especially supplying public data and audiences to the inhabitants of Bucharest city. In this respect, we used a survey based on a questionnaire – 400 respondents. The primary data have been processed using SPSS. After interpreting the data, we will show that the perceived image (**C**) is not so subjective as it seems at first sight, but on the contrary it defines as a normal reaction, feedback to the two components of the image (**A**, **B**), it possesses a high degree of objectiveness.

As a result of the answers provided by the citizens of Bucharest regarding the two services of public communication – supplying public data and audiences – we have an answer to the question: how public administration can take action in the future in order to improve its image, which its major communicational objectives are. We hope that the present paper will constitute

a proof that public image management should not be an exclusive act, unilateral of leading the respective institution but rather an effect of the involvement of parties interested in the good functioning of the community (public institution, mass media, other communication supports, citizens). Thus, when a public institution projects its image (A), it should consider the population's horizon of expectation – that is citizen (C).

2. Methodology

With the view of determining the level of image of local public administration in Bucharest and how it is perceived by the citizens (C), we formulate two objectives:

1. Measuring the degree of utilization of public services provided by the local public administration in Bucharest;
2. Measuring the degree of satisfaction towards the services of the local public administration.

Starting from these objectives, we propose to verify the following hypotheses:

1. Which is the level of requesting by the Bucharesters the services of public information and audiences?
2. The more direct is the citizen's relation with the local public administration, the higher the satisfaction towards the provided service.

In order to answer these questions, we conducted a sociological survey (Rotaru and Iluț, 2006, pp.79 - 85), to collect primary data regarding the utilization level of services which provide public data and audiences for the Bucharesters. The survey was conducted on a representative sample of adult residents of Bucharest (table no.1). The sample comprised 400 respondents aged 18 and over; error margin is +/- 5%, at a confidence level of 95%. The sample is split proportional with the number of people surveyed in each administrative sector of Bucharest (Chelcea, 2004, pp. 61 – 64).

The stages of sampling:

- setting the population number (at the level of January 2011) for each sector. Thus we established the number of questionnaires needed in each sector;
- setting the number of sampling points for each sector and
- random choice of sampling points.

Table 1: Distribution of questionnaires on sectors

Sectors	Population	% out of total population	Number of questionnaires
Bucharest, sector 1	227,717	11.7	47
Bucharest, sector 2	357,338	18.4	74
Bucharest, sector 3	399,231	20.5	82
Bucharest, sector 4	300,331	15.4	62
Bucharest, sector 5	288,690	14.8	59
Bucharest, sector 6	371,060	19.1	76
Total population Bucharest City	194,4367	100	400

*Population of Bucharest at the beginning of 2011

3. Citizens' perception of services that offer public data and audiences. Case study on local public administration in Bucharest.

3.1. The first hypothesis refers to approaching the services of public information and audiences. As a consequence we need to know the dynamics of providing public data and audiences within the last 10 years at the level of local public administration.

3.1.1. At first, we are presenting the evolution of the relation citizen–local public authority regarding **public data providing**. In order to follow the dynamics of the evolution of the two communication poles, we are comparing two sets of opinion: those who have requested the services during the last 3 years (2008 – 2011) and those who have requested them in 2001 – 2007.

After processing the survey questionnaire, the conclusions are: in Bucharest, 44.1% citizens required information of public interest in the last three years. Out of the 55.9% who did not require any services in the last three years, 17.7% required public data between 2001 – 2007. We can notice 61.8% of the interviewed Bucharesters required information of public interest from local public administration, in the last 10 years (table 2).

Table 2: Requesting public information in 2001

Answers	People who required information of public interest 2001 - 2007	People who required information of public interest 2008 – 2011
Yes	73.8 %	82.4 %
No	15.5 %	14.5 %
I do not know/no answer	10.8 %	3.1 %
Total	100.0	100.0

Comments to the answer of the question „What public data have the inhabitants of Bucharest required over the last 10 years ?” :

- people required information mostly about social assistance/facilities – 29% out of total required data, that is: documents to apply for social assistance, healthcare insurance, income statement;
- the second type of public data requirement was for housing and real estate – 22.2%, that is: property register in the land registry, cadaster, demolition, land purchase, construction permit;
- the third type of public information required was related to marital status documents – 18. 5%;
- then followed information on auto register (9.9%);
- information on city aspects and need to build sewage infrastructure;
- landscaping of green areas 8.6% and
- information on small businesses (6.8%) and other businesses (4.7 %).

Comments to the answer of the question „After how many days have you received an answer to your request?” the average answer time to the requirements of public data over the 10 years analyzed (2001 – 2011) remained within 11-12 days.

It is worth mentioning that the percentage of the people who received a positive answer from the local authorities has grown from 74% in 2001 – 2007 to 82% in the last three years (2008-2011).

Question: „How satisfied are you with the service of public information offered by the public administration?”, put it differently, whether the image of service has improved or worsened over the period surveyed. We have got the following results (table 3):

Table 3: Bucharest citizens' satisfaction with the service of public information related to the moment they asked for the service

Public data requested between:	Very satisfied	satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	I do not know	Total
2008 – 2011	9.5%	59.5%	19.8%	4.8%	6.4%	100%
2001 – 2007	61.2%	12.2%	10.2%	2.8%	4.1%	100%

The percentages in bold show that there is a significant statistical association (the test of adjusted residual value) to the positive value.

One can notice that the degree of satisfaction of the population has recorded a slight decrease over the last period of time. The statistical association has been made for the years 2008 – 2011 with an answer „satisfied” whereas before that period the answer was „very satisfied”.

3.1.2. Another service provided by the public administration which has been surveyed within the field work research is **audience** required by the population. The survey aimed at verifying aspects regarding the second register of public communication, that is the relation between public service and its beneficiary observing the following steps in achieving it (relation pedagogy): receiving, listening, dialogue and solving the problem. Thus, the audience service provides a feedback on the relation quality if all necessary stages are followed (request of public data, receiving and orientation, listening, dialogue and solving the problem).

After processing the primary data, we can provide the following comments: it took 9.6 days to receive an answer to requesting an audience and after 11.7 days they were received in audience. The most common audience reason was for construction authorization (house construction – 31.8%), roads condition, sewage and parking places (16.4%). Requiring social assistance comes on the third place (13.4%). 7% wanted a job. Other audiences were for: shelters for the stray dogs, financing various sports and cultural events.

From the perspective of the second hypothesis – degree of satisfaction towards the service delivered – we are interested in the quality of relationship with the client, attention given by the institution to each step in the process of public audience (receiving in audience and orientation, listening, dialogue and problem solving). Thus, we can notice a mitigation from the part of local public administration towards the issues raised by the citizens (table 4).

Table 4: Relationship dynamics with the citizen in the process of public audiences over the last 3 years

Answers	Have you asked for an audience?	Have you been listened to?	Have you had a dialogue/discussion on the public information required by the citizen?	Has your request been solved?
Yes	17.5 %	82.8 %	67.0 %	59.5 %
No	82.5 %	17.2 %	33.0 %	40.5 %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of subjects	400	70	70	70

3.2. Testing the second hypothesis in our paper – the more direct is the citizen’s relation with the local public administration, the higher the satisfaction with the service – we will analyze the relation between the two services – providing public data and audience – and the degree of satisfaction towards them.

The primary data show that the degree of satisfaction is higher for public data than audiences. The rate of favourable answers is detailed in table

Table 5: Relation between services providing public data and public audience: degree of satisfaction

Type of service required from the public authority	Very satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	I do not answer	Total
Had been received in audience at the City Council in the last 3 years	13.0 %	54.3%	19.7 %	13.0 %	0.0 %	100.0
Requested public data from public administration in the last 3 years	5.6 %	65.2 %	23.6 %	4.5 %	1.1 %	100.0

statistical association between the answer and degree of satisfaction regarding citizens' treatment by public administration

3.2.1. In order to see the situation inside the public audience process (the second hypothesis), we will present a table which shows the correlation between different components of public audience and degree of satisfaction for each step. Comments: degree of satisfaction regarding the way the citizen was treated by the public administration is growing from the point when the audience is required to listening to his problems on one hand and on the other hand to the dialogue proper with the public administration and then, obviously, to solving the problem or request (table 6). To put it in a different way, the more attention is given by the public administration to the problems raised by the citizens and realizes „the communication relation: receiving, listening, dialogue, treatment” (Zémor, Lemaire, 2008, p. 83), the higher the satisfaction degree to the service provided. This could be a paradox in the condition of public administration receptivity to the problem which represents the scope of the audience and it decreases as the problem is solved.

Table 6: Relation between the stages of public audience process and citizens' degree of satisfaction related to how they are treated by the public administration

Satisfaction degree towards the way the citizen was treated by the public administration

Question		Very satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	I do not answer	Total
Have you requested an audience at the City Council in the last three years?	yes	16.3%	38.8%	24.5%	16.3%	4.1%	100.0 %
Have you been listened to?	yes	19.0%	42.9%	19.0%	14.3%	5%	100.0 %
	no	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0

							%
Have you had any dialogue about your problem?	yes	17.6%	44.1%	20.6%	14.7%	2.9%	100.0%
	no	14.3%	28.6%	21.4%	21.4%	14.3%	100.0%
Has your problem been solved?	yes	26.7%	60.0%	6.7%	6.7%	0.0%	100.0%
	no	0.0%	10.0%	50.0%	30.0%	10.0%	100.0%

significant statistical association between the answer given and degree of satisfaction regarding the way people was treated by public administration

Question: „What are the reasons that made the citizens not to request the two services provided by the local public administration?“, the most reasons mentioned are (table 7):

- they found out public data without making a written request for an audience (40.8%);
- they did not receive any answers to their requests (35.2%) and
- the answer comes very late (24.0%).

Table 7: What was the main reason for which you did not request public data over the last 10 years?

Reason	Relative frequency (%)
Answer/solution comes very late	24.0%
Get data without any application/written request	40.8%
I requested many times but did not get any response to my application	35.2%
Total	100%
No. of people surveyed	153

The main reason for which they did not request any audience was that they managed to solve the problems without any audience (38.5%). A close percentage (36.0%) is represented by sceptics („I knew that if I requested an

audience, my problem would not be solved”), and 21.8% said that such problems are solved for them by other people (table 8).

Table 8: What was the main reason for not requesting an audience with the public administration?

Reason	Relative frequency (%)
I know that if I make a request, my problem will not be solved	36.0%
I solved the problems without requesting an audience at the city council	38.5%
Members of family, friends solve the problems with public authority	21.8%
Other situation	3.8%
Total	100%
No. calculation basis	138

4. Interpretation of survey questionnaire results

4.1. The first hypothesis – level of requiring public data and audience by the citizens of Bucharest, the conclusion is that they regularly asked for the two types of service, they requested the first to a higher degree and less the second (61% requested public data in the last 10 years and only 17.5 audiences).

As for the type of public data which were requested (the most frequent problems they face with) we can notice the need for information (29% information related to social facilities: social assistance, social health care, income statements; then 22% information regarding housing, 18% marital status documents, 9.9% information about autos, etc.).

As a conclusion, people’s expectation from the part of administration refers to practical issues, as they are defined in specialty literature: „Public communication is defined as formal communication that tends to the exchange and share of information of public utility and maintains the social liaison for which public institution are responsible for” (Zémor, 2003, p. 27). As Dominique Mégard states: „public communication, attached to a territory or an institution plays a key role in society. It contributes to public debate and the use of public services. It has an important part in promoting and giving meaning to public actions. Public communication aims to all: citizens, tax

payers or beneficiaries of public services – and maintains alive a territory and local development, accompanies projects and public debates; adds value to general interest and civic behaviour; information and management of teams; build an identity and valorize a territory.” (Mégard, 2012, p. 11). Public communication is also defined by Martial Pasquier as: „an assembly of activities of public institutions and organizations that aims to transmit and exchange information with the main scope of presenting and explaining public actions and decisions, promoting legitimacy, defend recognized values and help maintaining social bonds.” (Pasquier, 2011, p. 43).

After processing the questionnaire primary data, we can see that over the last years, the relation between local public administration and citizens was better and more cooperative. The need of the Bucharest citizens for public information is bigger and bigger (table 2), and the public institutions seem not to cope with this. This aspect is pointed out by the fewer „very satisfied” and „very satisfied” answers. As a result, more and more people are dissatisfied (table 3).

As far as the service of public audience is concerned, it must set out as a communication objective a development of all „steps” involved in the relation with the citizens: firstly, receiving and orientation, then listening (understanding the specific language of each citizen), dialogue (a key way of assessing public service) and treating/solving the problem.

4.2. The second hypothesis – there is an intrinsic causality between the existence (or not) of a direct contact between public administration and citizens and their degree of satisfaction – the survey questionnaire has validated it. Thus, we can notice that there is a direct proportionality relation between a direct approach/contact of the citizen with the service and degree of satisfaction to it (the second scope of the present paper). Practice comes to confirm what specialty literature has already established and acknowledged.

Direct communication is the best form of communication (it is considered complete as within it we can control both the coding process, achieved in our case by the public institution and decoding from the part of citizens). Proximity – a must that has to be achieved as well as possible within „communication relationship” – involves the existence of direct communication. Only with it one can establish that type of relationship which in sociology is called „primary relation” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 79). Also, only in its case communication takes place immediately and mutually. A reversed connection is thus achieved, in which „the roles are reversed” (Mounin, 1998,

p. 79) - the transmitter (public institution) becomes the receiver, and the citizen becomes the transmitter. In this way, they create the premises for a dialogue (the climax in the pedagogy of relationship: receiving, dialogue, treatment), a permanent exchange of ideas/languages, with no intermediaries. B.Voyenne describes this type of communication: „A person – transmitter – comes into direct contact with another person – receiver – or, possibly, with a certain number of receivers through a transmitting system which can be a physical or a symbolic one, on the condition that it should be known by both parties who communicate.” (Voyenne, 1962, p. 11).

Therefore, direct communication is an interpersonal communication by excellence. According to Mihai Dinu (2008, pp. 36-37), it follows six main objectives: inner knowledge (based on invitation to reciprocity which supposes sincerity from the part of communicator), know the outer world by exchange of information with other people (process that enables the subject the opportunity to add to his/her personal experience, which is inevitably limited, a part of accumulated experience by those with whom he/she has interpersonal relationships), establish and maintain significant relationship with other human beings (with the aim of satisfying basic needs such as solidarity in the case of public communication), interlocutor’s persuasion, influence or change opinions, convictions, beliefs, attitudes or their behaviour (objectively is a priority in the process of public communication, in general), help of human beings either cognitively through counselling, information, training or affectively when they need solace, moral support. A last objective – play and entertainment – refers to a great number of communicational strategies that have a play feature unrecognized as such.

Direct communication – presence of dialogue and interactive character – allows „coproducing a personalized service” (Gerstlé, 2011, p. 185) which is expected by the citizen from a public service when „his particular case” is listened to, the citizen is given the authority of „social contractor” endowed with public power which he thinks, deductively, as being superior. We should remember that for any citizen his/her problem is unique, important whereas for the civil servant behind „the counter” the problem is redundant (one more reason for the latter to follow all the steps of the communication and treat the citizen with respect).

Another explanation, the more satisfied the citizen, the more direct the contact with the administration is – but Romanian society is insufficiently formalized; norms and regulations have not penetrated yet in the very essence of public administration mechanism. Therefore, Romanians in general,

Bucharesters in particular, are inclined to be more trustful in administration if they can directly have a relation with the administration office workers. Being face to face and seeing him/her directly (eyes expression is the most important means of conveying non-verbal messages), talking directly with the representative of local public administration gives confidence and assurance in solving the problems or getting some support. This is how one can explain the fact that citizens are more satisfied with the service of audiences than public data supply, although the rate of solving the requests through audiences is much higher with public data. (shown in table 5).

In order to understand the reasons for which Bucharesters have not requested public data in the last 10 years (table 7 – 35.2% of the citizens have not received any response to their request, and 24% say that the response comes very late) and they did not go to the audience (table 8 – 36.0% of the surveyed citizens consider that their problems are not solved if they get an audience) – we ask for the concept of social representation. People's lack of confidence in administration is a feed-back that has appeared in time, as a result of the indifference and lack of interest shown by the administration whenever the citizen wanted to solve punctual problems.

Authority and credibility of the transmitter (public institution) matters very much in the economy of communication process (public), and „the quality of services, degree of confidence of citizens in them are fundamental coordinates for the image of the institution” (Miège, 2010, p.84). They are formed over a long period of time, therefore the results of the survey questionnaire can be interpreted through the concept of social representation.

According to Serge Moscovici social representation is „a system of values, notions and relative practices to objects, aspects or dimensions of the social environment that allow not only establishing the life framework of individuals and groups of people, but also it equally constitute an orientation instrument of how the situation is perceived and responses are elaborated” (Moscovici, 1994, p. 43). Thus, social representations „constitute a particular way of knowing, proper to common senses whose specificity resides in the social character of the processes which produce it” (Moscovici, 1984, p. 85). It refers to entire knowledge, beliefs, opinions shared by a group towards a given social object. Social representations have with it, simultaneously, a rapport of symbolization (being in its place) and a rapport of interpretation (giving it meaning). Symbolizations and meanings „are the result of a mental process which results into a specific construction of the social object” (Neculau, 1997, p. 28).

Thus, the subject re-constitutes reality which he is confronted with, after this process results a real „mental modelling” of the object. In this re-constitution of reality, the social factor is of utmost importance: on one hand, the subject does not act independently in the social field to which he belongs to, on the other hand, a representation is the result of an assembly of specific interactions having the object in its centre. Internal communication of the group – involving models, beliefs, values - „it modifies and orientates the activity of producing individual meanings” (Giuly, 2009, p. 112). They are found at the confluence between social psychology, social representations are fed on religious faiths, cultural practices, rituals, daily imaginary and are conveyed through speech. Haineş R. argues that: „Social representations must be approached as cultural expression forms that appeal to social codes in order to interpret individual experiences in society, values and models to define a certain social status, symbols used by the thinking of collective entities”(2000, p. 74).

In conclusion, social representations are a sort of reading grid of reality, „a place in the world of values and a proper interpretation of this world” (Habermas, 2005, p. 194), a behaviour style, a way of communication with the outer world, an orientation in the world of objects and of facts, a process of classification. They show a way of thinking the context in a practical manner, a filter, a screen between social pressure and personality system, an enrichment of reality, its re-reading.

Related to this „reading grid” (social representations), we can understand why 82.5 % of the citizens have not requested audience, we can understand the sceptical answer given by 36.0% respondents (who refused to have a dialogue with the public institution because it cannot solve their problems in that manner).

5. Final conclusions

Taking into account what has to appear among the three layers of an image proper to a public institution (A – reference image, B – transmitted image, C – perceived image by the citizen), the aim of the present paper is to measure the level of local public administration image as it appears in the view of the people from Bucharest (C level of the image). That is the reason why we used a survey questionnaire for the population (400 respondents).

The two objectives of our research (measuring the level of utilization of public services provided by the Bucharest local administration, as well as

measuring the degree of satisfaction of the citizens towards them) have found a response in the analysis of the primary data obtained after applying this survey. Also, the two hypotheses corresponding to the objectives – level of asking for the service of public information and audiences, as well as the degree of satisfaction (contentment) of citizens towards them – have been validated by the results of the sociological survey. When processing the primary data, firstly we followed the dynamics of providing public data and audiences over the last 10 years (table 2 and table 4), then the degree of satisfaction of the Bucharesters towards the two directions of public communication (table 4 shows public information service, tables 4 and 6 audiences).

Following the case study, we can state that in the present time, we see a slight decrease (from 61.2% during 2001 – 2007 to 59.5% in 2008 – 2011) of the degree of citizens' satisfaction to the service of public information, we see little interest from local public administration to the problems raised by the citizens over the last 3 years (table 4: from 82.8 % of how many were listened to, now it is 59.5 % with solving the problems), hence people's lack of confidence in public institutions (tables 7 and 8).

Unfortunately, local administration does not take into consideration the pedagogy of communication relationship: receiving and orientation, listening, dialogue and addressing the problem. The answers of the Bucharesters are crucial in this respect (table 6) - graduality involved in the second direction of public communication (that of establishing relations and have a dialogue to achieve the role of the public powers, precisely providing the expected service) – remains just an ideal in our society.

We also demonstrated the importance of a direct contact (proximity) in the relation between citizens and representatives of public institution. The survey (table 5, table 6) clearly shows – the more satisfied the citizen, the more direct is his relation with public authorities (we cover the second hypothesis of our research). In addition, the citizen is more satisfied when the „steps” involved in the pedagogy of communication relation are observed: receiving and orientation, listening, dialogue and problem solving.

The final conclusion to which primary data lead us is that, for the time being, the public institution correlates to a very small extent its communication objectives included in the reference image (A), with the citizen's horizon of expectation (level C of the image), and his response is a natural one, objective, to this insufficiency. The 400 respondents from Bucharest, convince us once more that the public image management of the

respective institution does not have to be an exclusive act but rather a feedback of the interested parties involved (A, B, C) in running the community well. It is very important to have a proactive behaviour from the part of the public institution in its relation with the citizens, inform, support and involve them in ongoing actions. Establishing „loyal relations” (Cobut and Lambotte, 2011, p. 274) applies not only to the private sector but also the public one. The electorate like the consumer aims to short term solutions, even immediate solutions to their problems. But loyalty in time for one party, a public institution or a brand must transcend short term and with public institutions has to lead to legitimacy.

In other words, if image management would be done in its complexity (let us remember that there are laws that regulate this „come-and-go” between layers, that is Law no. 52/2003 regarding Decisional transparency in public administration and Law no. 544/2001 regarding Free access to information of public interest) it would be much more coherence between A, B, C, eventually the gap between reality and perception would be reduced. Like in art, taste does not aesthetize in an arbitrary and sovereign manner (but responds to a request of the work of art – that is virtually overwhelmed and causes everything), in the same way, citizen’s opinion (broadly expressed, social representation), is formed as a „replica”, answer to the public institution (A, B), which through its whole activity, particularly the way its communication objectives are expressed and how they are translated into different communication supports (media, advertisement, public relation, Internet, etc.), brings about a certain reaction and interpretation. Thus, the perceived image (C) possesses a high degree of objectiveness.

Through the present lines we would like to call the attention upon the importance of action and reaction exchange, contribution to the answer, continuous, plurality of citizen in public communication, and we want that in future within the relation administration – administratees they do more and more actions to improve contact, „arouse” the citizen so that to be determined to take part in the events of his life and other people lives and result in a contribution not only to the application of institutional policies, but to the very process of their elaboration thus justifying the role of receiver co-participant.

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