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'Popular politics': a discourse theory analysis of Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa's TV/radio program *Citizen Link*

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Dissertation (MC499) submitted to the Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics, August 2014, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MSc in Media and Communications.
ABSTRACT

At a moment when the relationships between media and politics seem to be challenging democracy, very polarised media wars have emerged in the context of Latin America’s 'left turn'. The private media, highly intertwined with the market and traditional powers, have become strong political oppositional actors, while progressive governments challenging many neoliberal logics have deployed a series of 'populist' media strategies, which have generated many debate in terms of their legitimacy and democratic nature. In this context, a new format of direct communication has emerged in the region, among which Ecuadorian president's program *Citizen Link*.

Most debates around these media wars have focused on political economy aspects and the power relations among different actors. While these aspects are crucial to understand the setting, not enough attention has been put on the discourse constructed through the different media. I will contribute to these debates by proposing a discourse theory analysis.

Guided by the general question of what role can a direct communication format play in a process of political 'turn' and what are its democratic implications, I will frame the discussion around Laclau’s post-marxist theories on populism, to undertake a discourse theory analysis of the program Citizen Link. I will focus on the building of two political camps and the tensions between a counter-hegemonic process and its transition towards hegemony. I shall argue that while the format could play a role in legitimizing a process that has challenged many entrenched powers, it has failed to promote an inclusive and participatory arena, thus putting the whole political process at risk.
I. INTRODUCTION

“Another sign of development will be when this mediocre press – thanks to the rejection of the Ecuadorian people, because no one believes in them anymore – stops being listened to and ceases to exist.” (Rafael Correa, Citizen Link #378, 21st June 2014)

Every Saturday, Rafael Correa, president of Ecuador, speaks to the Ecuadorian people in his program Citizen Link, where he actively contends his country's private press. This has raised many questions regarding the interrelation between media, politics and democracy.

In today's hyper-mediated world, both media and politics seem to be in crisis. With the expansion of neoliberalism and the opening of markets, global corporate media has become more concentrated and entertainment oriented than ever (McChesney 2001). In the thriving of a “society of the spectacle” (Debord 2006), politics have become unthinkable outside a mediated frame, with a 'politics for show' at the expense of 'talk' taking the scene (Meyer 2002, p.70). All of which is leading to a decrease in political engagement and connection (Mughan and Gunther 2000; Couldry 2007). Yet, without involvement, democracy's legitimacy fades (Dahlgren 2009, p.1).

Latin America appears to be going in a different direction, with a series of complex political processes, a total reconfiguration of its mediascape and an increase in political participation. After two decades of neoliberal deregulation and austerity measures, which resulted in a series of financial crises and growing inequalities (Harvey 2006, Klein 2007, Dello Buono 2010), governments critical of neoliberalism emerged. Though with many differences from one another, in which scholars have tended to dichotomise them between moderate social-democrats –such as Brazil's Lula- and more radical 'populists' –such as Chávez or Correa-, these governments converge in alliances and are seen as part of a regional 'left turn' or 'pink tide' (Beasley-Murray et al. 2009). This 'left turn' has also brought about manifest 'media wars' (O'Shaughnessy 2007). The private media, highly intertwined with the market and traditional powers, have become strong political oppositional actors (Kitzberger 2012, Martens and Vivares 2013), going so far as to support attempted coups (O'Shaughnessy 2007). On the other hand, governments have deployed a series of strategies to regulate the media and gain
media power of their own, which has generated many debate and tensions (Ramos & Orlando 2012, Kitzberger 2012).

In Ecuador, Rafael Correa came into power in 2007 with the promise of a 'Citizen Revolution', after a decade of acute political and economic crisis (De la Torre and Conaghan 2009). The financial sector had collapsed, levels of inequality, extreme poverty and migration had escalated, alongside a serious governability crisis: in 10 years, three subsequent elected presidents were ousted from power by popular mobilisation; a total of 10 presidents came and went during that period (Ramos & Orlando 2012; Conaghan 2008). Notwithstanding, with 9 consecutive elections and referendum victories, Correa has managed to remain in power until today, maintaining levels of popularity above 80\%\(^1\), and with an increase in political participation and trust in democracy\(^2\). His success can be understood by a series of redistributive policies, the reduction of poverty and inequalities, and a flourishing economy, yet a central factor is attributed to his handling of the media (Ramos & Orlando 2012; De la Torre and Conaghan 2009).

Central to the government's media strategy, a new format of direct communication emerged: the program Citizen Link, which has given the president high exposure and disputes the narratives over social reality (Ramos & Orlando 2012, p.30). Dismissed by opponents as a 'populist' strategy, many debates have emerged on the legitimacy of this format. Guided by the general question of what role can a direct communication format play in a process of political 'turn' and what are its democratic implications, I will frame the discussion around Laclau's post-marxist theories on populism, to undertake a discourse theory analysis of the program Citizen Link. I shall argue that while the format could play a role in legitimizing a process that has challenged many entrenched powers, it has failed to promote an inclusive and participatory arena, thus putting the whole political process at risk.

At a moment where the relationships between media and politics seem to be challenging democracy (Meyer 2002), it becomes extremely relevant to analyse this new kind of dynamics, albeit to learn from its contradictions and missteps. However, these should be understood in their particular context, challenging the tendency to universalise notions deriving from a Western perspective (Curran 1999).

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2. Latinobarometro[http://www.latinobarometro.org/latContents.jsp](http://www.latinobarometro.org/latContents.jsp)
II. THEORETICAL CHAPTER

The democratic legitimacy of the Ecuadorian government's media strategies have been subject to heated debate. Many scholars understand them as an 'activist' response to oppositional media (Ramos & Orlando 2012; Kitzberger 2012; Dello Buono 2010; O'Shaughnessy 2007), while others have deemed them 'populist' in a sense that challenges democracy (De la Torre 2013, Waisbord 2011, Rincón and Magrini 2011). Laclau (2007) claims the term 'populism' has been widely used to undermine political processes of broad popular mobilisation, responding to a normalization of liberalism (p.19) and a “denigration of the masses” (p.63); he thus advances a theory on populism that considers its democratic potential. Populism emerges as an interesting concept to frame this debate, for its approaches relate to different perspectives on democracy.

To frame my theoretical discussion, I shall start by considering James Curran's (1999) suggestion to de-westernize media studies, to avoid generalisations from Western perspectives, by which it is crucial to analyse media systems in their own context (p.2). Laclau further argues every social articulation is historical and contingent, and should be analysed as such (Howarth 2000). In this sense, I propose to combine a set of theories with contextualisation, to uncover the socio-political contingent articulations of the region. (1) First, I shall situate the region's mediascape by looking into political economy analyses. (2) I will look into debates around the mediation of politics. (3) I shall situate Latin American populism and its tensions with liberal-democracy, (4) to then tackle Laclau's (2007) post-marxist theories on populism. (5) Finally, I will use post-marxist approaches to democracy to draw a normative hypothesis, which I shall then test through my empirical analysis.

1. An absent watchdog

Theories focusing on political economy and media systems can shed light on the complex set of power relations in the region and on tensions around the watchdog discourse.

A former wave of media reconfigurations should be understood under the context of the expansion of neoliberal deregulation in the region, promoted by the influence of US neoconservatives since the 1980's (Harvey 2006, Klein 2007). With the opening up of
markets, second-tier media companies in Latin America became more concentrated than ever and constituted powerful regional cartels, with tight alliances to US media corporations (McChesney 2001). Lacking a public service media tradition, the media in the region also adopted a liberal discourse, highly influenced by the US (Waisbord 1999). Regional organizations such as the Inter-American Press Association played an important role in promoting these values (Waisbord 1999), and continue to do so in today's debates (Ramos & Orlando 2012). Under a liberal model, the media's main democratic role is understood as that of a watchdog over the State, which implies complete independence from the State, guaranteed through its anchoring to the market; any regulation is thus deemed unacceptable (Scammell and Semetko 2000, Curran and Park 2002). This notion differs from the European 'public service' model, where media's independence is to be assured through a public utility, rather than the market (Mughan and Gunther 2000). A liberal underlying premise is thus to view the State as the main potential enemy, leaving the market unquestioned -and unscreened- (Scammell and Semetko 2000, Curran and Park 2002). With the media becoming 'big' business, and given their penchant for entertainment and profit-making, Curran and Park (2002) have called the watchdog argument into question, doubting the media's capacity to protect the public interest and assure pluralism.

Latin America's watchdog model raises all the more questions, for, even in its own terms, the model was never properly applicable due to close-knit relations between media and governments, as much under authoritarian regimes as under democratic ones (Waisbord 1999). These relationships, however, have not been completely symmetrical: governments have used regulation powers to pressure the media, while the media have used their own power to influence the political agenda (p.50). More recently, the media grew closely involved with both States and markets, thus undermining their capacity to oversee either of them (Waisbord 1999, p.52). Many scholars believe the media in the region became so intertwined with the market that they tend to favour their corporate interests over the public good, thus mistaking the defence of 'freedom of speech' with the defence of these ['free market'] interests (Martens and Vivares 2013, Martín-Barbero 2006, Ramos 2012). This also promoted a public imaginary of the media as business, rather than a public service, eroding its capacity to create a public arena (Ramos & Orlando 2012). With the region's left turn, the private media started
playing active and overt roles as opposition, strongly opposing regulation (Kitzberger 2012, O’Shaughnessy 2007, Martens and Vivares 2013).

We thus identify a tension between the liberal-watchdog discourse and the applicability of this model in the region, also crucial to understanding the oppositional role the media started playing in the last decade.

2. Presidents on television

Analyses of the relationship between media and politics, particularly in the West, have pointed to an increased tendency towards 'celebritisation', leading to a debate between its potential to increase political participation and its downsides for democracy.

The expansion of broadcast media brought about an increased mediation of politics and a 'new visibility' for politicians, more intimate and close to the people (Thompson 2005, p.38). Approaches to the 'mediatization' of politics have pointed not only to politicians' growing dependency on media exposure, but also to politics increasingly becoming “subordinate to the logics of mass media” (Meyer 2002, p.56). In that sense, a 'politics for show' and 'star-system' predominate, at the expense of 'talk' and authenticity (p.70). This also points to a generalised propensity to 'package' policies for media presentation, with a predominance of soundbites over in-depth debate (Franklin 2004). Against this background, Street (2012) has observed a rise of 'celebrity' politics, with politicians becoming celebrities and other celebrities supporting political movements, resulting in a 'spectacularisation' and 'personalisation' of politics. An important feature of this 'celebritisation' has to do with favouring politician's personal lives and personality over political and policy-making debate (Marsh et al. 2010), which for Van Zoonen (in Marsh et al. 2010), has led to a 'lowering of the quality' and 'dumbing down' of politics (p.331). In sum, a generalised notion of political content being eroded in the face of 'spectacle' prevails among scholars, in a context where interest and involvement in politics has widely decreased, by which democracy itself seems to become threatened (Mughan and Gunther 2000). However, scholars such as Coleman and Power have opted for analysing celebrity culture's potential to draw audiences back into politics, considering the mobilizing success of certain formats, such as reality TV (Couldry 2007). Given this debate, Couldry
(2007), through empirical research, in fact detected a decrease in political engagement related to celebrity culture.

The high media exposure of certain Latin American presidents has also been understood as part of today's tendency to 'celebritise' politics (Rincón 2008). A new format of direct communication, like the program Citizen Link, has bloomed in the region: between 2000 and 2010, seven left-wing and right-wing presidents had their own TV or radio program (Ayala and Cruz 2010). Coining the term 'tele-presidents', Omar Rincón (2008) deems politics are being reduced to a 'reality TV' style spectacle that operates through emotions and a 'melodramatic pact', displacing argumentation and political debate. However, Rincón denies any ideological difference between left-wing and right-wing politicians (p.12), by which the region's complex set of power relations is overlooked. On the other hand, though playing on the affective dimension Rincón mentions, these formats seem to be deviating from many global tendencies; namely, at the opposite pole of 'packaging', presidents take the podium and speak unfiltered and uncut for hours, thus combining a more traditional style of political speech with mediated spectacle and today's 'new visibility'. Finally, while Colombia, having had a right-wing 'tele-president', has maintained its voter turnout percentages below 50%, the region's 'left turn' countries have seen an increase in voter turnout to over 80%³, as well as increases in 'trust in democracy' and 'political interest'⁴.

While theories on the mediatization and 'celebritisation' of politics point to an impoverishment in political debate and a decrease in political interest in the West, Latin America has seen the emergence of highly mediated presidents drawing vast popular support and an increase in voter turnout. Without implying Latin American politicians are not part of today's hyper-mediated trends, this points to the question of what other factors beyond media exposure and 'spectacularisation' can draw political participation. I will suggest populism as a best-fit theory to explain this identification.

³ Turnout database http://www.idea.int/vt/viewdata.cfm#
⁴ Latinobarometro http://www.latinobarometro.org/latContents.jsp
3. A populist alternative

An understanding of Latin America's long tradition of populism, and its tensions with liberalism, can explain why it has become an endemic trend in the region, as well as its implications.

Among the many traditions of populism, Latin America has known a particular model, very different from European right-wing nationalism (Waisbord 2011). Since the first post-war wave, Latin American populism was defined under three main angles: first, as an economic model of import substitution industrialization and 'keynesian' redistributive policies; second, as a political 'style' characterised by a charismatic leader, strong popular mobilisation, a nationalist rhetoric, and the demise of the ruling oligarchies (Demmers et al. 2001). The success of this 'style', then turned it into a recurrent trend among both right-wing and left-wing politicians (De la Torre 1997). The third key defining characteristic has been its tension with liberalism: populism has tended to bypass constitutional mechanisms and institutions, by considering them tools of oligarchic control, and thus claiming to represent the people directly (Beasley-Murray et al. 2009).

This antagonistic relation between populism and liberalism is better understood in the light of a decolonial analysis of the region. For decolonial scholars (Quijano 2005, Mignolo 2011, Escobar 2010), Latin America was constituted throughout colonization and modernization by a 'coloniality of power'; that is, by marginalising and 'racialising' indigenous peoples, constructing knowledge under a Eurocentric rational form and constituting state hegemony and liberalism (Quijano 2005). This 'coloniality of power' perpetuated throughout the Republican and Neoliberal eras, in which the national elites controlled most – State and non-state – powers (Quijano 2005, Escobar 2010). Under this perspective, large sectors of the population, particularly the indigenous, never accessed full citizenship (Quijano 2005), and liberalism has existed under 'failed' versions (Beasley-Murray et al. 2009). This also explains a dimension of the success of populism, and its potential for political inclusion. Populism has indeed functioned as a sort of 'shock force' enabling the political inclusion of marginalised sectors, despite this being often at the expense of democratic precepts (Beasley-Murray et al. 2009, p.324). In Ecuador, traditional populism sought to bring the 'marginal others' into
politics, by taking politics out of the 'elite cafes' and into the streets (de la Torre 1997). As 'citizenship' was hardly accessible to everyone at that time, the notion of 'lo popular' -the popular- emerged to express extended social mobilisation (O'Donell in De la Torre 1997, p.14). This notion of 'lo popular' was later incorporated as a constitutive element of identity by social and revolutionary processes during the 1960-70's, hence, the 'popular education' and 'popular communication' movements emerged, following the legacy of Paulo Freire (León 2008). These movements started advocating for communication rights and democratisation, which would influence the current reconfigurations (León 2008).

The media reconfigurations can also be read in the light of populism. Disputes over the media indeed arose since the first waves of populism, as under Perón (Repoll 2010). Since the region's 'left turn', progressive governments claimed communication to be a 'public service', as opposed to a private one, and started deploying a series of media strategies and regulations: new communication laws, the consolidation of public media, extensive media campaigns with spaces of direct communication – such as Citizen Link -, and a strong rhetoric discrediting private media (Kitzberger 2012). Waisbord (2011) suggests these strategies do not correspond to either a state-run media monopoly nor to a mixed “public broadcasting and private ownership”; but rather to classical Latin American populism, characterised by the will to gain direct control over media outlets, the use of unfiltered access to audiences, and antagonising with dissidents (p.104). Yet, beyond the need for media exposure in today's context of mediated politics (Rincón 2008), many of these measures have been understood as an 'activist' strategy to counter oppositional media, while others have responded to the historical demands put forward by social movements and civil society groups (Ramos & Orlando 2012; Kitzberger 2012). Critiques of these media strategies, on the other side, have mostly focused on their 'populist' dimensions, that is, their understanding of civil society and the State as inseparable, which sheds doubts on their ability to strengthen civil society (Waisbord 2011) or truly represent 'the people' (De la Torre 2013, Rincón 2008). Martín-Barbero (2006) also problematises on states confusing their own need for stability with collective rights, under the claims to communication as a 'public service' (p.288).

So, in a context where liberal-democracy never really functioned, and in which many sectors of society have been systematically excluded from political life, populism has continually
resurfaced as an alternative of popular mobilisation, albeit with explicit disregard for liberal-democracy. Is it possible, in this sense, to understand it as a democratic possibility?

4. Constructing the 'people'

The tensions between liberalism and populism, as we have seen, around around their different understandings of the State and the people. Laclau (2007) understands the dismissal of populism as part of a 'political prejudice', belonging to a discursive construction of liberal normality and political asceticism, which seeks to exclude any defying logic (p.19). Chantal Mouffe (2005) adds that the articulation between liberalism and democracy is merely contingent (p.33), by which other forms of democracy, through other contingent articulations, are possible (Laclau 2007, p.167). Following this logic, and considering Latin America's background, I will suggest populism and democracy can be understood as a contingent articulation in the region.

Post-marxism emerged as an intent to recover the left's struggles, surpassing marxism's 'essentialist' notions (Howarth 2000). Influenced by his own Latin American background, Laclau (2014) set out to transcend the marxist concept of 'class', which fell short of encompassing all social struggles (p.2). He thus developed a 'populist' theory that advances the notion of constituting a 'people' as “the political logic of democracy” (Simons 2011, p.201). Connected to his 'discourse theory' rationale, the populist formation of a 'people' happens when, on the one hand, a political frontier is drawn between the people and hegemonic power, that is, through antagonising with the powers-that-be; and, on the other hand, when a series of demands are articulated (Laclau 2007, p.74). This articulation of demands takes placethrough the formation of an 'empty signifier' that constitutes a collective will with which people identify (p.166). Yet, this empty signifier goes beyond a simple 'representation' of all the demands, it constitutes their 'totality'; in this sense, representation itself is unmasked as constituting social objectivity (p.163). Constructing a 'people' also requires a plebs, a section of the community, to claim it constitutes the entire community, the populus (p.81). Simons (2011) further points to the crucial role of the media in the constitution of a 'people', given today's mass-mediated publics (p.215).
The antagonising aspect of populism, according to Phelan and Dahlberg (2011), is what predominates and makes it so powerful (30), that is, creating an aligned opposition towards a power, clearly demarcating an 'us' from a 'them'/enemy', which enables 'ideological closure' (p.27). This also points to one of the weaknesses of populism: its 'double of face', or tension between the counter-hegemonic rupture and the moment of hegemonic reconstruction (Laclau 2007, p.177). Hence, if the populist 'appeal' is related to its subversive quality, when it establishes a new order, it will need new fractures in the institutional system to sustain that appeal (p.177). Though, in the case of a major 'organic crisis' [like in Ecuador], Laclau believes the reconstructive task prevails over the subversive one (p.178). Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of hegemony is central here, that is, as a contingent formation that has to be constantly fought over and thus is always vulnerable to change (Gaonkar 2012, p.189). In this sense, populism can go also either way; its “potential for radical democracy was taken up the Right to make an 'authoritarian popular'” (Bratich 2011, p.169). Moreover, under this model and considering today's social configurations, the more fractured a society, the emptier the signifier bringing it together will be, and thus the articulation will remain fragile (Gaonkar 2012, p.202). To which Arditi (2010) adds that, even if constructed as an empty signifier, the reliance on a leader to construct a 'people' can lead to a personality cult, which also threatens people's empowerment (p.490).

To sum up: while the democratic potential of populism, its capacity to constitute a 'people', is related to a counter-hegemonic drive in the face of an institutional crisis, once this populist project becomes hegemonic – state power -, how can its democratic quality be assured? Laclau and Mouffe propose radical democracy and an agonistic public sphere; the transition from one to the other, however, remains less clear.

5. An 'agonistic' democracy

If populism and democracy are, in fact, contingent in Latin America, what kind of democracy should be expected? Laclau and Mouffe bring forward the notion of radical democracy and agonistic pluralism, that challenge many liberal assumptions and the deliberative notion of public sphere.
Locating the flaws of today's democratic systems, Mouffe (2005) believes democracy should be radicalised. In the contingent articulation between liberalism and democracy, she finds an undecidable tension between liberal notions of 'pluralism, individualism and freedom', and democratic ones of 'unity, community and equality' (Torfing 1999, p.252). She understands power as constitutive of the social, thus as something that cannot be evacuated, by which any social order will be hegemonic; however, some forms can be more democratic than others (Mouffe in Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006, p.4). In that sense, the struggle over hegemony becomes a necessary and inevitable step towards democracy, as Laclau (2014) points out, by which movements aiming for social change should fight over state power (p.9). Here, hegemony is thus not understood in the 'Gramscian' terms of a commonsensical understanding of the world (Howarth 2000, p.89), but as the articulation into a common project of several identities (Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006, p.2).

For Mouffe (1999; 2005), notions such as consensus and reconciliation in fact negate the intrinsic 'conflictual dimension' of politics. She thus proposes an 'agonistic' pluralism, in which a confrontation between distinct hegemonic projects is possible, by acknowledging the 'other' as an 'adversary' rather than as 'enemy', in search of some sort of compromise. Thus a "democratic politics should create the conditions for the conflict to find its expression in agonistic terms, avoiding that it becomes antagonistic" (Mouffe in Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006, p.10). For this, however, legitimate demands must be identified from those that challenge the democratic institutions themselves (Mouffe 2005, p.120).

This approach challenges the 'Habermassian' deliberative public sphere, an assumed normative model for the media, in which deliberation through rational argument, on an equal basis, should lead to consensus (Curran and Park 2002). This model relies on a notion of universal rationality, which, for Laclau and Mouffe, can only exist under a hegemonic universality (Phelan and Dahlberg 2011, p.12). Though Habermas himself updated his model since then, acknowledging that a 'universally shared context' is unviable, the underlying premises of rationality and a search for common democratic norms prevails (Garnham 2007). For Laclau, concealing the radical tension between 'universalizing equivalences' and 'particular differences' leads to ideological masking; radical democracy thus emerges when this gap becomes visible, allowing excluded voices to be heard (Phelan and Dahlberg 2011,
p.30). Mouffe (1999) also contests the predominance of rationality, for she understands passion as a latent quality of politics, which should be mobilised towards building democracy, rather than suffocated (p.7). This affective dimension also relates to populism, and its mobilising potential, which for Chang and Glynos (2011) tend to be misunderstood and underestimated under rationalist frames of analysis (p.109).

So, building an 'agonistic' public sphere would imply avoiding the suppression of adversarial relations (Mouffe 2005), but also searching to overcome antagonistic relations that search to 'destroy' the enemy (p.5). This last point, however, clashes with the populist logic of equivalence. For Laclau (2007), crucial to the balance between populism and democracy is the relationship between autonomy – civil society – and hegemony – state power -, where the autonomy of social demands and their articulation must be – collectively – rethought, as well as the collective bodies to be constructed (p.250).

6. Conceptual framework and research objectives

Throughout this chapter I have tried to bring forth a series of assumptions for building up a thesis regarding the Ecuadorean government and its media strategies. To sum up, in a context where the media has not assured the protection of the public interest and where liberal-democracy has failed to properly integrate large sectors of the population, the government's media strategies emerge as part of a populist response, in the sense of a political project with massive support, opposing powers-that-be during a major institutional crisis. I have contended populism and democracy appear to be a contingent articulation in the region, in which the democratic potential of populism is understood, under Laclau's terms, as its capacity to constitute a 'people', for which the media plays a crucial role. Finally, I have suggested that, under post-marxism's own terms, if a populist project is to be deemed democratic, it should manage to make the transition towards an agonistic radical democracy.

My aim has not been to discuss if populism is a preferable model, nor which should be the best media system for the region, but rather to propose populism as the best-suited model to analyse the current processes, and as the ensuing normative framework to analyse their democratic potential. While most debates on the region's media have focused on more structural aspects of power relations, very little attention has been given, beyond aspects of
antagonism, to what is actually being discursively constructed through the media. So, considering the discursive grounding of Laclau and Mouffe's theories, my interest is to focus on discourse and what it can tell us about the current process.

President Correa's program Citizen Link – CL- appears as the most suitable object of analysis for several reasons. First, because it can be understood as a central element of the government’s media strategy, as a primary and constant space of enunciation, and because of its influence in setting the private media's agenda (Ayala and Cruz 2010). Secondly, a space of direct communication between the 'leader' – Correa – and the 'people' seems most suited for analysing a 'populist' discourse. And finally, for being part of the region's new 'tele-presidential' formats. My aim is thus to undertake a discourse theory analysis to test if, in fact, the program's discourse can be understood as fulfilling the democratic potential this theory offers. Rather than a thorough analysis of the political discourse as such, I shall focus on how political frontiers – us/them – are established, and what it can tell us about the populist construction of a 'people' and a new hegemonic order.

**Research questions**

The research questions and subquestions guiding my analysis will be:

- Following Laclau's populist theory, how does Ecuadorian president Correa's discourse construct a 'people' and a political frontier in his TV/radio program Citizen Link?
  - How are antagonisms and the 'them'/'enemy' constructed?
  - How are empty signifiers built to constitute a 'people'?
  - What does the political frontier tell us about the configuration of the political project and its new hegemonic order?

Which leads us to the normative question:

- What insights can this bring regarding the tension between counter-hegemony and hegemony, and the construction of an agonistic democracy?
I shall end up by reflecting on the contributions this empirical analysis could bring to Laclau's theory on populism.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1. Methodology rationale

Considering the theoretical framing and proposal, discourse theory (DT) comes forth as the logical method to analyse president Correa's discourse in the program CL. However, certain tools from critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be useful to support the implementation of this method.

Discourse theory and ‘populist reason’

Laclau and Mouffe understand discourse as an 'articulatory practice' organising social relations (Howarth 2000, p.102). Rather than analysing single battles over meaning, the aim of discourse analysis would be to reveal society's hegemonic relationships and struggles (Andersen 2003, p.55). Discourse should also be understood as the primary terrain where objectivity is constituted, by which it is broader than just speech and text, and is constituted through relations (Laclau 2007, p.68). In this sense, Correa's discourse should be understood as more than just rhetoric, but as a set of policies, ideas, actions, and power relations. These relations, moreover, are constituted by establishing political frontiers dividing 'insiders' from 'outsiders' (Howarth 2000, p.5). Social structures are also understood as “inherently ambiguous, incomplete and contingent systems of meaning” (Howarth 2000, p.4), by which meaning is not fixed, but rather becomes partially fixed by the construction of 'nodal points', that constantly shift through the discursive battle (Andersen 2003, p.51).

This notion on discourse is directly connected to Laclau's (2007) theory on populism; where a 'people' would be constituted through antagonism, by establishing chains of equivalence and difference. In the logic of difference, 'outsiders' - the opposition -, are established by identifying their differences from the 'people'; in the logic of equivalence, a heterogeneous social group will be brought together through their shared opposition to these 'outsiders', but also by linking their diverse political demands (Phelan and Dahlberg 2011, p.19). To link these demands, one of them has to become a 'tendentially empty signifier', thus a signifier
representing them all (Laclau 2007, 131), that will assume a universality which can only be a 'failed' totality (p.70). This operation by which a particular element acquires a 'universal' signification is what Laclau understands as hegemony (p.70). In order to construct a 'people', there will thus be a hegemonic dispute over the meaning of these empty signifiers, in which, if the political frontier is displaced, it will become a 'floating signifier' until its meaning is stabilised in a political camp (p.132-133). For instance, the notion of 'democracy' itself has different meanings among left-wing or right-wing discourses (Laclau 2014, p.20).

In this operation, 'naming' acquires a central role for unifying demands around an empty signifier (Laclau 2007, p.118). Populism emerges the moment it turns into a 'nodal point of sublimation' and the signifier gets detached from the signified – the name from the concept - (p.120). For instance, when Correa coined the term 'partidocracia' – *particracy* – all right-wing and left-wing traditional political parties were configured as one-and-the-same entity, representing all the ills of the past. This implies the language of populism will always be 'imprecise and fluctuating' (Laclau 2007, p.118), in which affect will play an important role. As a final point, 'sedimentation' occurs when a discursive form becomes common-sense, by which it contributes to 'concealing' the contingency of any social order (Phelan and Dahlberg 2011, p.23).

Parting from DT's premise that “there is no position outside of some kind of ideology” (Dahlgren 2011, p.239), DT should also be understood as an 'engaged' theory, which, Dahlberg (2011) points out, should promote a radical political economy, critical to the 'naturalized' form of global capitalism and the media system supporting it, by obscuring other alternatives, and should encourage the democratization of the media (p.56).

*Borrowing from Critical Discourse analysis*

As Phelan and Dahlberg (2011) suggest, though DT offers a strong theoretical grounding, it tends to be 'methodologically abstract', whereas CDA is much more method-led and can be very helpful in facilitating a 'thick description' (p.10-11). Without disregarding their conceptual differences, CDA can offer useful tools for implementing a discourse theory analysis.
CDA grounds its methodology on a focused and in-depth linguistic analysis (Phelan and Dahlberg 2011, p.9). The aim is to shift the focus from the way an account is constructed to the function it serves (Gill 1996, p.144), or, as Fairclough (1992b) puts it, from the signified (content) to the signifier (form), which constitute an “inseparable unity in the sign” (p.214). Yet CDA’s focus is not merely linguistic, but also intertextual (Fairclough 1992b, p.194). Nevertheless, text and context are usually set apart in the methodological implementation, tending towards a ‘reified and static’ understanding of context (Phelan and Dahlberg 2011, p.10). In this sense, a DT approach should be able to incorporate linguistic and extra-linguistic analyses (Dahlgren 2011, p.233), thus broadening the scope of discourse.

Another characteristic of CDA, as Fairclough (1992b) stresses, is to focus on how social control and domination are exerted through text, especially in the media (p.212); a central aim of discourse analysis is thus to uncover the mechanisms through which language and the construction of meaning allow those in power to “deceive and oppress the dominated” (Howarth 2000, p.4). In this sense, CDA can be understood as a more top-down approach to discourse, which can be suitable to analyse a presidential discourse, yet, will be pertinently complemented with DT, allowing for broader understandings of hegemony and political articulation.

**Limitations**

Some disadvantages of my methodological approach deserve to be mentioned, most of which have to do with centring the analysis on media texts. First, as no interviews are being performed, no data on the speaker’s intentionality will be produced. I would like to insist on the ethical implications of this point, for this research is in no way attempting to decode president Correa’s intentions. In this sense, I favour a Lacan-inspired ‘Foucauldian’ understanding of our relation to language, by which, ‘it’ speaks through us, rather than we speak through it (Andersen 2003, p.6). DT, which integrates elements from Foucault, post-structuralism and psychoanalysis, also points to an understanding of discourse as configuring the social, well beyond our rational intentionality (Howarth 2000).

Another limitation has to do with what Couldry (2004) calls media-centrism. By privileging media texts, on the one hand, no information will be provided on how audiences decode the
messages (Hall 2003); for this, an audience analysis will have to complement this research. On the other hand, while proposing discourse as broader than text, I will not be performing a thorough analysis of all of the Ecuadorian government's policies and actions; nor even its mediated communications. This study should thus be understood as a very partial analysis of its discourse. I am also focusing on its head figure, president Correa, yet clearly the government, and its political party, are composed by a wide range of diverse actors. Overall, no generalisations should be assumed from this study.

A final limitation concerns the program’s language, which is Spanish; for which I shall follow Fairclough’s (1992b, p.196) suggestion to perform the analysis in its original language, and then translate some of the sequences (see appendices 13-14).

2. Deployment

To operationalise my methodology, broadly speaking, I conducted three levels of analysis: first, a general thematic analysis from which I derived a sample of sequences; second, a critical discourse analysis of the sequences, using a linguistic approach; and third, a discourse theory analysis using Laclau’s ‘populist reason’ postulates.

Previous to the discourse analysis, to ground my research, I have situated Ecuador’s media and political context, and looked into a series of analyses on Ecuador’s private media content. All CL programs since 2010 are available online and previous programs can be requested through the Secretary of Communication.

**Sampling and thematic analysis:**

The first level of sampling consisted in selecting 15 programs from 2008 to 2014. After a pilot study focusing on electoral periods (see list in appendix 2), I concluded I needed to look into a broader spectre of political moments. I thus selected a series of key moments considered paradigm-changing for the government, and, most importantly creating tensions with either traditional political parties or social movements, which I complemented with some random programs, to have a broader scope (see appendix 1 for full list). As a media-practitioner living in Ecuador, I have also been watching the program regularly throughout the years and was already familiarised with many of its contents and key moments.
I then conducted a general thematic analysis of 5 programs. As for the pilot, I did not focus on the topics mentioned, but rather on what I identified as the recurrent discursive articulations, such as: critiques of the opposition, praise of the citizen revolution, references to the people, etc. (see complete coding in appendix 4). However, I simplified the pilot's code, to focus more on aspects of antagonism and constructing a 'we', rather than highlighting all the content. Looking into the highlighted moments, I sampled 7 short sequences where I identified a wider variety of elements in a shorter time, and which related, on the one hand, to the political moments I identified for my first sampling, and on the other hand to the construction of insiders and outsiders.

**Discourse analysis:**

I performed a linguistic CDA analysis of the sequences, by looking into the discursive structures and strategies. For this, I used two different sets of colour codings focusing on the building of 'insiders' – the people – 'outsiders' – the opposition –, the political process – the government – and Correa's own image and interactions (see appendices 5-11). I then used these findings to analyse DT's notions of differential and equivalential chains, to identify the formation of political frontiers; and of nodal points and empty signifiers to analyse the constructing of a 'people'. These elements would also throw light on the construction of a new hegemonic order through the discourse.
IV. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

For my interpretation, I will start by a brief overview of (1) the private media’s posture and discourse, to establish the setting in which CL emerged; as well as (2) the general aspects of the program. I shall then bring the three levels of analysis – thematic, CDA and DT – together and rather divide the interpretation by broad themes: (3) antagonisms and the construction of the 'other', (4) the construction of the 'people' and (5) the building of a new hegemonic order.

1. The media as opposition

When Correa came into power, the country had suffered a complete institutional meltdown: neoliberal policies had dismantled the productive sector and modest welfare state, with an ever-deepening corruption and governance crisis (Carriere 2001). Traditional parties had thus extensively lost credibility and votes, by which the media established themselves as a key oppositional actor (Reyes 2011, Ramos 2012); journalists and media owners themselves have overtly admitted to being compelled to assume that role (Reyes 2011). A crucial background element was the media’s direct links to governments and the financial sector: in the 1990s most TV channels were owned by bankers, who had direct ties to traditional political parties (Checa-Godoy 2012). For instance, during the 1990’s, frequencies were distributed at discretion among party leaders, excluding many other sectors requesting airwaves (p.15). This later created tension, as, when Ecuador went through a banking crisis in 1999-2000, where more than 30 financial institutions went bankrupt in the midst of government bailouts, media outlets alluded to regional conflicts to put the blame for the crisis on politicians (p.4). Previous analyses have also pointed to the media’s influential role on the political scene, for instance, in the overthrowing of presidents Bucaram and Gutierrez (de la Torre 1999, Reyes 2010). In this sense, despite claims to a watchdog model, Ecuador’s media system could be better understood as a 'corporatist' one with close ties to traditional powers. Nevertheless, this sector positioned itself as the 'sole defender of freedom of speech' and opposed any type of regulation (Reyes 2011).

5 The political scene was divided between political parties for the commercial sector of the coast and the landowning sector from the Andes.
Against this background, the first regulation proposed through the new Constitution, was to redistribute the air-waves among the private, public and communitarian sectors, and to forbid financial institutions from owning assets in other businesses, particularly the media (Checa-Godoy 2012). Ever since, the media have sustained massive orchestrated national and regional campaigns opposing any type of regulation, which managed to delay the completion of a communication law for years (Ramos 2012, p.71). With a tendency to 'editorialise' (Reyes 2011), as from the first year the media engaged in sustained frontal attacks, with a language that de-legitimises and disavows the government by calling the president a 'dictator' and 'authoritarian' (Ramos 2012); which some have understood as a tactic to build up a coup (Pinheiro in Ramos 2012, p.67). Coincidentally, days before the deadline for bankers to sell their media assets, a police uprising took place leading to the kidnapping of president Correa (Checa-Godoy 2012). Ever since, the media have constantly denied this was an attempted coup:

“Now the dictator understood he must retract from his phantasmal tale, I offer him a way out: it is not reprieve he must negotiate, but amnesty...” (E. Palacio, El Universo, 6 February 2011)

Up to this day, in a highly polarised atmosphere, and despite the series of regulations and regulatory bodies the government has put in place, the media have continued to discredit and disavow the government. Studies by academic institution in association with the Latin American Communication Observatory, have detected a sustained bias against the government in the private media coverage, as well as an inverted bias in public media. Interestingly, with the reconfiguration of the political scene, the private media have opened spaces for oppositional social movements and sectors from the left that did not have much voice in their outlets before, however, León (in Harnecker 2011) suggests these 'democratic' openings ought to be better exploited to advance political proposals, beyond feeding into the antagonising (p.192).

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6 Journalist Palacio wrote an article accusing the president of faking his own kidnapping and committing 'crimes against humanity', which led to a libel suit from Correa.

7 http://www.ciespal.net/mediaciones/
2. The program

When Alianza País came into power, it was an – almost improvised – newcomer movement, with no institutional grounding, and a strong anti-traditional-parties stance. Correa was thus immediately established as the main mobilizing force to start the process of change (Ramírez 2010). Moreover, he understood the media was the primary political adversary to beat (Ramos & Orlando 2012). As soon as he came into office, he launched a weekly radio program, which started broadcasting on television in 2008. The program, 'Enlace Ciudadano' – Citizen Link –, had a simpler presentation during the first years, usually shot in interiors with fewer cameras. Increasingly, the visuals have become more sophisticated: with more cameras, cranes, the use of a mountable stage with LED screens that render the programs visually homogeneous, and an increased use of power point presentations, videos, as well as songs and anthems. It has indeed become more 'spectacular'.

Many aspects of CL point to the government's sustained strategy to “get close to the regions” and “the people” (Suárez in Harnecker 2011, p.157). From the beginning, CL has been broadcast from different parts of the country, as part of the government's 'itinerary' cabinet meetings: every two weeks, the executive authorities meet in a different part of the country – covering very remote locations –, where the program sets up camp and broadcasts live in front of a local audience. CL is also simultaneously translated to five indigenous languages, for broadcast on regional radios, and an indigenous presenter closes each program delivering a summary in Kichwa language. There are no overall ratings figures available, but the program is transmitted on national and regional public channels, and open for broadcast by any private or community channel; by 2011, more than 300 radios and many local TV stations had subscribed (Ayala and Cruz 2010). To this, we must add thousands of viewings through official online channels.

CL basically consists in President Correa addressing his audience for two to three hours. Presented as a tool for government accountability, the core section is a recount of his weekly activities, explaining every policy and project the government is working on. Other sections have changed over time, in particular, CL incorporated a section to analyse – and refute –

what the private media are saying. Apart from these gradual changes, most programs follow a similar structure and have similar types of content. The program is mostly a monologue, but includes short videos and brief interventions from Ministers or other authorities Correa invites to expose on some project.

Correa's tone is informal, using a conversational style and language: he addresses the audience directly, using expressions such as “listen”, “you see?”, “as you know” (CL#239). He uses many sayings and proverbs, tells jokes, and always teases his Kichwa co-presenter. While narrating his weekly activities, sentences are structured in a conversational and improvised way, he often interrupts an idea to express another and inserts many anecdotes:

“At 8:30 we were having breakfast in Duran. A hug to all the people from Duran! To Mrs. Julia, [her] amazing 'manguera' soup. I found out that Mrs. Julia – where we always ate –...” (CL#84).

As in this quote, he intermittently addresses a particular sector of society or person – the people from Duran, Mrs. Julia – which helps create a closer bond with these sectors. When referring to an important event or tragedy, he will enunciate and repeat every single name, for example, mentioning all the dead and wounded people after the attempted coup in 2010 (CL#190). In each program, Correa also offers many technical or economic explanations of the policies and programs the government is running. For this, the tone is pedagogical, using repetitions, explaining sophisticated accounts with simple language and examples: in program #239 (appendix 13) he explains the political dimension of state budget allocations through the example of constructing a bridge in an upper class sector or a popular one.

Overall, while the program appears structured and with high production standards, Correa's discourse seems non-scripted, which not only gives a dimension of authenticity and spontaneity, but also of him controlling his own discourse. This is reinforced by moments of interaction between Correa and the technical team of the program, in which, live during the program, he asks for certain visuals, changes the order of the sections and criticises mistakes (appendix 5-6 code #13), thus appearing as if 'directing' the program. This feeds into his image of leadership, which we shall further analyse later.
3. Antagonism and 'othering'

Antagonism is undoubtedly a central aspect of the program. Secretary of Communication Fernando Alvarado has admitted the media strategy was to polarise, claiming the country's profound changes would have been impossible otherwise (Muñoz 2012). In every program, a considerable amount of time is devoted to antagonising oppositional actors. We can identify a dualistic construction of 'insiders' and 'outsiders', with a constant juxtaposition of 'positive' mentions of the government and the people and 'negative' ones of the opposition. This is clearly visible in the coding with the interspersed green and orange highlights (appendices 6-10). This contrast is often presented as a before/after opposition: “before, most of the state budget was for foreign debt [...] now, go and see; the smallest part for debt, a huge part for education, health, a lot for infrastructure...” (CL#239, appendix 13). Many expressions emphasize this break with the past: “a past that will never return” (CL#335). In this sense, the citizen revolution is constructed as a “historical” moment (CL#96-310), a break with the “long and sad neoliberal night” (CL#335).

Three main antagonists are mentioned in every viewed program, through their distinctive apppellations: the 'pelucones', 'the bigwigs' (elites); the 'partidocracia', 'particracy'; and the 'prensa corrupta', private 'corrupt' press. As we have seen, this process of 'naming' (Laclau 2007, p.118) allows grouping them as a sector and establishing them as 'outsiders'. Other antagonists correspond to determined circumstances, such as the police officers participating in the attempted coup (CL#190). Certain oppositional social movements are mentioned intermittently since 2008, such as indigenous organisations (CL#91), and over time, more and more oppositional organisations and individuals are antagonised. Without generalising, we can identify a slight evolution, which corresponds to that of the country's political landscape. For instance, in program #84 from 2008, apart from the three main antagonists, bankers, the 'golden bureaucracy' and the IMF are mentioned; while in program #378 this year, more than 30 minutes are dedicated to antagonising NGO's, an indigenous march and 'infantile' ecologists. Overall, with no precise characterization, antagonists appear to be anyone opposing the government or its reforms, which have affected not only certain elite privileges (Ramírez 2010), but also many long-standing clientelistic dynamics (Maldonado 2009).
Beyond the appellations, antagonists are also grouped through synecdoche and generalizations. This is very clear in CL #335, when Correa reviews a news article in which a lawyer defends his past interrelation with a domestic worker, based on exchange of favours rather than labour rights. After criticising the article, Correa goes through the lawyer's curriculum and associates his ideas to the whole sector he belongs to: “this is the people we confront every day, those who write in the papers, the owners of the press; this is their thinking” (CL#335). A second element is contraposition: in this example, the critique of the lawyer is constantly contrasted with normative ideas: a “modernising bourgeoisie” versus an “arrogant, excluding” one; or with 'the people's will': “Our people, our working class [...] don't need his hand-outs, they need him to comply with his duties and to respect their rights, the rights of these workers” (CL#335). As 'outsiders' are not always a clearly defined sector, they can be distinguished through certain characteristics attributed to them, using naming and contrasts: 'cool' versus 'tacky' social movements (CL#378), or the 'true' versus the 'infantile' left (CL#378), the 'professional' journalist versus the 'ill-intentioned' ones (CL#239), etc.

Opposition actors do not intervene during the program, yet Correa establishes a dialogue through a constant use of paraphrasing and hypotheticals, that attribute them voice and intent (appendices 5-12, code #21-22). They are also given voice through videos showing particular interventions. They can thus be constructed in certain ways: as not concerned about the country's needs, but mainly by their own interests: “These men who say they defend the water, all they want is to defend their ruling over the water councils” (CL#378, appendix 13). This also points to the government's logic of favouring the nation's interests over partial demands (Ramirez 2010); particular demands that do not adhere to the process seem to be dismissed from the equivalential chain. This is then contrasted to Correa's 'technical' or factual explanations: “[They say:] 'it's the need for dollars'; [...] we will only receive 10% of those funds...” (CL#335). A contrast between 'irrational' or 'ill-intentioned' antagonists is thus established against Correa's 'expertise' and facts. In this way, antagonists are minimised and ridiculed, reinforced by the use of epithets and ironies: 'good-will exploiters' (CL#335), 'clumsy and dumb' bourgeoisie (CL#335). In this process of 'othering', the political frontier between insiders and outsiders starts to be clearly delineated (Carpentier and Cammaerts 2006, p.2).
Moreover, by invoking the people 'not to vote for them' (CL#84), to 'reject and repudiate' them (CL#378), not to listen to them (CL#378), etc., there is a call for these outsiders to stop being relevant in the public sphere, under the premise they do not represent anyone but their own private interests. There is also a use of language that puts them out of a legal/democratic framework: for example, by saying the prosecutor is “assassinating the truth” (CL#84); that journalists “interrogate and torture” instead of interviewing (CL#239), telling environmentalists that “what is criminal, is children dying of diarrhoea” and not oil exploitation (CL#335), or by accusing institutions, such as NGOs (CL#226), of destabilizing democracy. There is thus a justification for exclusion, that resonates with Mouffe’s (2005) notion of discriminating legitimate demands from those who challenge the democratic framework, to be part of the agonistic public sphere (p.120). In Correa’s argumentation, the notion of democratic representation is heavily grounded on the elections; he dismisses oppositional postures as not being validated through elections: “they want to impose their policies without being approved in the ballot” (CL#378), “they can't even win elections [...] and then they pressure and distort...” (CL#94). The discourse here alludes to a 'populist' construction of the people in the notion of a 'plebs' – the electoral majority – standing in for the 'populus' – the entire population – (Laclau 2007, p.107); which in a way legitimises those who voted for the Citizen Revolution as constituting the whole 'people'.

Overall, the discourse towards the opposition seems to be one of disavowal, thus following the private press's approach of denial and delegitimisation, feeding into the climate of polarisation. We can detect a first contradiction in the path towards an agonistic public sphere. In the construction of the equivalential chain, by establishing a political frontier between two camps (Phelan and Dahlberg 2011 p.27), traditional – hegemonic – powers seem to be put on the same level as other oppositional organizations, such as social movements. In this sense, the political frontier seems to be drawn, not exclusively in opposition to a previous hegemonic power, but between the camp of those supporting the government and those opposing it. We can start to see how insiders are built, in contraposition to outsiders, yet, how are the empty signifiers established to constitute a 'people'?
4. Constructing the 'people'

Throughout the program, 'insiders' are evoked, on the one hand, by being included in the dialogue as addressees: as we have seen, Correa talks to the people directly in conversational mode, he also greets the local populations from the audience several times during each program, he salutes migrants living abroad, the people he met during his weekly activities, etc. On the other hand, the notions of 'the government', the 'Citizen Revolution' and also 'the president' are constructed around that of 'the people' – el pueblo –. The people are announced as the centre of the process: “the human over capital” (CL#263), “now the Ecuadorian people rules” (CL#239-310-335), also naming specific sectors: “we are with the farmers” (CL#84). Moreover, Correa/the government and 'the people' are discursively construed as interchangeable in many ways. The 'will' of the people is invoked to justify the government's actions: “the Ecuadorian people will not allow [our weekly report] to disappear” (CL#310). This 'will' thus corresponds to the government's postures, most evident when antagonising the opposition: “citizens are losing fear of the corrupt press” (CL#263) “[the parties] are rejected by the Ecuadorian people” (CL#378). In the discursive structure, we can see how the 'people's will' and the government's actions are frequently interspersed (appendices 5-12, codes #1-2), whereby the first is used to explain the latter. This can be read as double articulation, on the one hand, empowering the people, making them feel they lead the process, and on the other, legitimizing the government through the people's 'will'.

By expressing this 'will', Correa is in fact speaking for the people: “the people believe in the Citizen Revolution” (CL#188). As he is monologuing, to keep a conversational tone he constantly asks questions, particularly for pedagogical explanations. Yet these can function as paraphrases expressing the audience's questions, to which Correa brings answers:

“[What] is the instrument that reflects the allocation of resources? This, I insist, depends on power relations; power relations determine the allocation of social resources. And where is this allocation of resources reflected? Mostly in the state budget...” (CL#239, appendix 13)

By speaking for the people, Correa is constructed as both part of it and as its representative. Also, coming from a middle-class background, his self-image is built as being close to the popular culture, and distant from the elites: “this president has never been in the Union Club,
in cocktails with bankers... but he is here in Yaguachi” (CL#84). When recounting his weekly activities he mentions the popular dishes he has eaten: in program #84 he remembers the places where he ate popular food in his youth, because his father taught him to “love what is ours”, which he then contrasts to the elites who only “know the Bay Side in Miami” and “don't represent anyone”. This, on the one hand, situates him as close to the people, and on the other, brings value to popular culture, which had been historically minimised, given the region’s 'coloniality of power' background (Quijano 2005). It thus points to a sense of empowering and nation-building, which I will further analyse later. Another element bringing him 'close to the people' is an 'impassioned' style, with a constant use of expressions denoting emotion (appendices 5-12 code #4).

A second characteristic in the building of Correa's image is that of a servant: “don't thank me, the money belongs to the people” (CL#84) “I have never wanted anything for myself, just to serve my people” (CL#378). This is reinforced by references to the people as the 'real rulers' – the 'mandantes' –, in which Correa's role would be to execute their will. For this task, he is also depicted as an expert, constantly using facts and numbers in his explanations: “As you know, I have the bad habit of being an economist” (CL#239). Then a third characteristic is that of leadership: “I have ordered works” (CL#84), “under this government, that will never happen” (CL#190). Correa reprimands Ministers or public servants live on air when a project is not working (CL#335), by which he appears as the direct link between the people and the whole state apparatus. To sum up, Correa is constructed as a driving force of the process and the legitimate representative of the people. Moreover, distinct from the tendency among 'celebrity' politicians (Marsh et al. 2010), there is very little mention of his personal life – his family remains distant from the media –, by which his whole life appears to be imbedded in his function: his reason for being is to work for the people. President Correa is thus constructed as the empty signifier that links the people’s demands (Laclau 2007, p.131), representing – embodying – the whole political process and the people's will.

Under this authority, Correa repeatedly appeals to the audience, or certain sectors of the population, for action or participation (appendices 5-12, code #2): “prepare yourselves, young people of Vicente”, “farmers of my motherland: plant, plant and plant!” (CL#84). Some of these calls are with a sense of empowerment, to participate in the process or claim social
rights: “organize yourselves! […] housing is not a commodity, it's a human right” (CL#84). Yet, other calls, more salient in recent years, are to support the government: by voting (CL#84), by marching or manifesting (CL#263), by tweeting (CL#378), etc. In this sense, while the people are presented as the centre – the ‘rulers’ – of the process, in terms of taking action, there is a contradiction between an empowering sense of participation and a notion of critical mass or ‘mob’, whose main function is to defend the process. Here again, the political frontier is reinforced in terms of 'supporters' and 'opponents' of the Citizen Revolution, thus the notion of a 'plebs' standing in for a 'populus' (Laclau 2007, p.107). In this sense, those who support the process are the 'people', hence the process represents all the 'people'. This understanding of the State and the people as equals, as we have seen, is the point that raises the most critiques against populism, questioning the State’s capacity to truly represent – all– the people (De la Torre 2013, Waisbord 2011, Rincón 2008).

5. The building of a new hegemonic order

After 7 years in power and ten victorious elections, clearly the Citizen Revolution has become hegemonic. In the discursive construction of this new order, we can identify many contradictions and tensions, which respond to the 'double face' of populism that Laclau (2007) mentions, thus the tension between a subversive moment of rupture and the rebuilding of a new order (p.177).

The Citizen Revolution, as we have seen, is built through before/after dichotomies, around the notion of a historical rupture with past: “one of the greatest changes in the country's history” (CL#378). This is reinforced by the political frontier creating a rupture with all the signifiers that incarnate the past:

“Here, bankers don't rule anymore, the 'particracy' doesn't rule anymore, media power doesn’t rule anymore, the IMF, the international bureaucracy don't rule anymore […] it is you who rule here, the Ecuadorian people […] that is the path of the revolution” (CL#310)

This demarcation from the past, and all the hegemonic powers that 'don't rule anymore', establish the identification of a new ruling order, thus a new hegemony. However, this rupture is constructed as an ongoing 'process', with a frequent use of gerunds: “we are preparing”
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(CL#239), “we are working [...] for the future” (CL#378), and acknowledging the complexities of a project of change: “governing implies decisions, problems...” (CL#378). There is a first contradiction between the affirmation of a clear rupture with the past, as in the quote, and the notion of incompleteness and temporality.

This new hegemonic order is constructed, as we have seen, around the 'people' and the process, yet heavily grounded on the notion of the nation-state, that is, the hegemonic institution sustaining the process. Given the previous institutional crisis and ensuing mistrust, since the first years, a strong emphasis in re-building confidence in the State and public institutions comes forth, with recurring expressions such as: “[the State] managed with clean hands” (CL#91-96-101-378) and notions of quality and efficiency, “public services can be of excellent quality” (CL#101). This also relates to the calls to participate and build civic culture, as already mentioned, in a context where citizenship and involvement in the State were weak. Even more emphasis is given to nation-building, with a nationalist rhetoric constantly alluding to 'the motherland', starting with the process's slogan: “the motherland now belongs to all". There are references to historical symbols and 'heroes', such as the liberal leader Eloy Alfaro and leaders from the republican independence. Yet a stronger emphasis is given to popular culture; Correa constantly praises the popular dishes from each region, and mentions features from the places he visits and the region from which the program is being broadcast. Finally, there is a recurrent affirmation of sovereignty, particularly regarding external powers: “we must seek our own solutions, with our achievements and mistakes, but our own, not those imposed from abroad” (CL#378). These nation-building elements point to what Billig (1995) understands as an ideology that shapes a common-sense understanding of the world as nation-states; to legitimize the nation-state which sustains the institutional power. Thus, struggles for political power imply disputes over narratives about the nation and historical memory, which he calls a 'flagging' of the nation.

This grounding on the nation-state points to another tension. On the one hand, given the region's background of 'coloniality' – by which, for instance, indigenous organizations view the nation-state as a colonial heritage – (Quijano 2005), social movements in the region had developed 'post-liberal' postures and discourses, some of which had been included in the new Constitution, such as plurinationality (Escobar 2010). Yet, on the other hand, after the
neoliberal weakening of States, the region's new political processes have strongly focused on recovering and reaffirming the State (Beasley-Murray et al. 2009). The emphasis on nation-building, in this sense, can be understood as the fixing of nodal points in the building of new signifiers of identity and of a new common-sense, in rupture with the neoliberal imaginary of the State, but which generates many tensions with certain social movements⁹.

The third contradiction relates to our previous analyses of the political frontier, and is clearly located in the tension between subversion and hegemony. Given the consolidation of the State and a new hegemonic order, the subversive character of the populist discourse seems to have lost ground. Without disregarding that there are still many tensions with certain global and factual powers, the antagonising in CL seems to focus more and more on any kind of opposition. As we have seen, the political frontier is drawn, not exclusively against hegemonic powers, but between the process's supporters and detractors. There is thus a tension between the ongoing antagonising, the 'populist appeal' (Laclau 2007, p.177), and the affirmation of a new hegemony, which could call for an agonistic form of politics. Moreover, with a language of disavowal towards opponents, the possibility of a space for dialogue and confrontation becomes extremely difficult. An agonistic public sphere seems remote.

Social structures are “inherently ambiguous, incomplete and contingent systems of meaning” (Howarth 2000 p.4). Their formation thus leads to a series of contradictions, tensions and constant shiftings. As already mentioned, this is a partial analysis that does not contemplate all of the government's facets, so cannot be generalised. Moreover, the analysis has pointed to a methodological bias focused on the antagonising aspect of discourse, at the expense of others. However, it has shed light on many aspects of the building of a discursive political frontier, which points to a series of contradictions and fragilities of the Ecuadorian process: (1) the constitution of a 'people' around the empty signifier of Correa, points to a high reliance and centralism on the figure of the president, which as Arditi (2010) suggests, can jeopardize empowerment. (2) Antagonising feeds into the very polarised mediascape and does not facilitate the consolidation of an agonistic public sphere. Mouffe (2014) considers an agonistic relation with the opposition in the region is complicated, given that the traditional powers,

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⁹ There are many other tensions relating to the government's development model and its ecological implications, but these are not the focus of this analysis.
including the media, have maintained a posture of disavowal and de-legitimisation towards governments. However, the main problem relates to antagonising non-hegemonic powers, which comes into view as an abuse of power. (3) A participatory process seems to be lacking. As León (in Harnecker 2011) suggests, there is not a communication policy in accordance with a participative vision of citizenship (p.171). A media strategy highly relying on the figure of Correa seems to be favoured over the articulation of a social fabric. Santos (2013) thus wonders if the Citizen Revolution 'has someone to defend it'. Finally, (4) this points to the dilemma raised in the theoretical discussion on how to transition from a counter-hegemonic populist process of rupture, to the consolidation of a new hegemonic order; a gap that seems to be missing also in Laclau and Mouffe's post-marxist theory.

V. CONCLUSION

A direct communication format such as CL has most certainly helped the Ecuadorian government build legitimacy to embark upon a thorough State reform process, around the image and charisma of president Correa. However, the antagonistic dimension, beyond its capacity for 'appeal', remains problematic – and polemic – at a moment when the process has become hegemonic. With private media showing little capacity to protect the public interest, and the unlikeliness of a public service model, given the polarised context, democratising the media seems to rely more than ever on civil society. With the redistribution of frequencies due for this year and certain conquests in the new communication law, certain changes can be expected.

Many other aspects from the program still remain to be explored, however, namely, its ideological and pedagogical dimensions, and its impacts on cultural and political change. To fully understand its outreach, an audience research would be essential, which could consider some key aspects deriving from this analysis. For instance, what drives Correa's massive support and what elements from CL play a role in this? Hence, to what extent do the government's policies validate its discourse and vice-versa? This could lead to a further inquiry into cultural changes and the building of a new common sense, regarding, for example, national imaginaries, social rights, political culture, etc.
The central aspect of this research, however, relates to a pivotal issue regarding the region's processes. As Laclau (2014) stresses, one of today's greatest challenges towards a democratic future is the articulation of the horizontal dimension of autonomy – social movements – and the vertical dimension of hegemony – State power –, for autonomy alone cannot sustain change, and, most of all, hegemony without strong civil involvement leads to a 'bureaucratism' that can easily be colonized by 'forces of the status quo' (p.9). Ecuador's process could be leaning that way if a more participative process is not fostered. Yet civil society and social movements also need to further develop a culture of 'being of the State'.

Europe has tended to be more prejudiced with the notion of populism, as Laclau (2007) himself points out, probably due to its very different history. Nevertheless, these tools of analysis seem to become useful in today's shifting political environment. For instance, a very interesting subject of analysis is the new political movement *Podemos*, rapidly growing amid Spain's current institutional crisis. Looking into Latin America's 'left turn', *Podemos* has borrowed many of its discourses and practices, for instance, calling the traditional parties a 'cast', thus stirring up the scene of the political – nearly – two-party system. This movement is searching for ways to establish participative platforms using information technologies. Though the extent of their electoral success is still to be seen, they most probably have been learning from the missteps from the Latin American processes.

While lacking a notion of 'the popular', Europe has been looking into possible links between popular culture and politics. Coleman stresses political disengagement has to do with a too narrow view on politics that disregards popular culture (Dahlgren 2009, p.140), an idea that resonates with Laclau's (2007) “denigration of the masses” (p.63). Thus, both celebrity politics and populist theory have approached the notion of affect and enjoyment as a potential for engagement (Dahlgren 2009, Glynos 2011). There appears to be a dichotomy between a notion of 'celebritization' that leads to de-politicisation and one that can generate engagement (Marsh et al. 2010). In my view, the second one could be better understood in terms of populism; such as with Russell Brand's 'anarco-populism' (Gerbaudo 2013). Laclau's populist theory can thus be a valuable tool for celebrity politics theories, to better understand the construction of empty signifiers leading to an identification and populist's 'shock value' appeal.
Bibliography:


De la Torre, C. (1999) Neopopulism in Contemporary Ecuador: The Case of Bucaram’s Use of


APPENDICES:

Appendix 1

First sampling of programs, and corresponding key moments:

- Program #84, 30/08/2008, broadcast from Yaguachi; random
- Program #91, 18/10/2008, broadcast from Cuenca; after constitutional referendum
- Program #96, 22/11/2008, broadcast from Manta; announcement debt audit
- Program #101, 27/12/2008, broadcast from Manta; results of debt audit
- Program #124, 13/06/2009, broadcast from Latacunga; end of debt liquidation
- Program #188, 18/09/2010, broadcast from Rocafuerte, random
- Program #190, 02/10/10, broadcast from Quito, 2 days after attempted coup
- Program #198, 27/11/2010, broadcast from Villaflora; end of oil rent renegotiation
- Program #226, 25/06/2011, broadcast from Quito; launching of Celac
- Program #239, 24/11/2011, broadcast from Queens NY, USA; random (from abroad)
- Program #263, 17/05/2012, broadcast from Spain; 1st indigenous 'water march'
- Program #310, 23/02/2013, broadcast from Naranjal; after presidential elections
- Program #335, 17/08/2013, broadcast from Checa; liquidation of project Yasuni ITT
- Program #363, 02/03/2014, broadcast from Cutuglagua; after municipal elections
- Program #378, 21/06/2014, broadcast from Tambillo; random (most recent)

Appendix 2

List of sequences analysed for the pilot study:

- Program #190, 02/10/2010, 1:22:56 – 1:27:12; attempted coup
- Program #310, 23/02/2013, 0:33:15 – 0:36:36; presidential elections
- Program #363, 02/03/2014, 1:14:37 – 1:19:27; municipal elections

Appendix 3

List of sequences analysed:

- Program #84, 30/08/2008, 1:32:28 – 1:39:18
- Program #239 24/09/2011, 1:06:05 – 1:09:59
- Program #239 24/09/2011, 1:16:55 – 1:18:58
- Program #335 17/08/2013, 2:52:30 – 2:58:40
- Program #335 17/08/2013, 1:57:00 – 2:03:00
- Program #378 21/06/2014, 0:11:40 – 0:16:32
- Program #378 21/06/2014, 0:54:00 – 0:57:26
Appendix 4

Thematic analysis code: list of themes selected and corresponding colour code

- Account of presidential activities
- CR advancements and projects
- Ecuador’s great qualities
- Call for union, supporters of CR
- Problems in government (bureaucracy, delays...)
- Critiques to opposition press
- Critiques to opposition
- Historical references, before/after comparisons
- Economic/administrative explanations
- Regional integration, international support
- Technical complaints to program staff
- Correa’s personal, family life

Appendix 5

CDA analysis code: list of themes selected and corresponding colour code

1. The people, the people’s will,
2. Government’s achievements, good will
3. Call for action, duty
4. Correa: self, emotions
5. Call of Unity
6. Normative affirmations...
7. Tradition, family values
8. Country's qualities
9. Economic/administrative explanations
10. Opposition/before: negative features
11. Opposition press: negative features
12. Complaints to bureaucracy, Ministers...
13. Address/complaint technical staff...
14. Addresses colleagues
15. Interpellations to the people
16. Hypotheticals, attributes motives
17. Paraphrasing
Appendix 6

Analysis of program #84, 30/08/2008, 1:32:28 – 1:39:18

A las 8:30 estábamos desayunando en Durán. Un abrazo a toda la gente de Durán, a la señora Julia, tremendo caldo de manguera. Me enteré que la señora Rosita, donde íbamos siempre a comer con mi familia, con mi padre... Una de las cosas buenas que tuvo mi padre es que siempre nos enseñó a querer lo nuestro, a visitar, a amar nuestro país, amar su comida, etc. Entonces nuestros paseos los domingos era a Durán a tomar caldo de manguera o a Playas a comer pescado frito. La señora Rosa, se llamaba, vendía caldo de manguera sábado y domingo, y era de la sierra pero se instaló en Durán. Por vendía caldo de manguera riquísimo pero con mote. Nosotros le decíamos “sabe, no me ponga el mote, déjeme nomás el caldito” De lunes a viernes era una zapatería y sábado y domingo sacaba su mesita, su ollita para vender caldo de manguera y era delicioso. Quisier a visitarle y me enteré que había fallecido hace dos años. Y a los familiares de doña Rosi... Ella nos conoce desde los siete, ocho años, ya cuando éramos mayores, doce, catorce, quince años nos íbamos en bicicleta con los amigos a tomar caldo de manguera donde la señora Rosita, era espectacular ese caldo. Kabil? Contigo alguna vez fuimos? A Durán también? Con Kabil, mi pana del barrio también íbamos en bicicleta por el puente de la Unidad Nacional o en lancha también, verdad? A tomar caldo de manguera donde la señora Rosita. Entonces, un abrazo a todos sus familiares; ya no está, pero bueno. Ella nos conoce desde los siete u ocho años, nos atendió con mucho cariño, Doña Julia, y también un caldo de manguera espectacular. Así es que desayunamos en Durán, como siempre lo hemos hecho. Para nosotros estas cosas no son artificiales compañeros. Aquí tengo un amigo de la infancia, no? Compañero de colegio, compañero de barrio. Pregúntenle también donde Yulan, los cebiches en el mercado norte, acá en Mi romance el caldo de manguera. Ah? Baquerizo Moreno y Loja, eso es Mi romance, es espectacular también. Los bollos de pescado frente a la empresa eléctrica con ensalada de fruta, los pescados fritos donde ahora es el Palacio de Cristal, que era el mercado Sur era, no? Entonces ahí, era el arroz con pescado frito. Bueno, cocinaban rico. La Plazita, te acuerdas? Y hay pelucones que me quieren enseñar a mí a ser guayaquileño! Por favor! Por favor compañeros! En bicicleta nos íbamos a Durán a tomar caldo de manguera. ¡Qué va a conocer! Conoce el Bay Site Miami o el ceviche pero en el Club de la Unión. Pelucones que se creen dueños del mundo y no representan a nadie, pero así es la prepotencia. Nuestra respuesta! Los votos! Aplastémoslos con el Sí en la próxima elección.

Público: ¡Sí, si, sí! ¡Mil veces sí!

Así es que un inmenso abrazo a los compañeros de Durán y a las 10 de la mañana ya estamos aquí, en este queridísimo cantón, queridísima ciudad de Yaguachi, con todos ustedes compas, rindiendo ese informe de labores, un inmenso abrazo a todos los presentes en este auditorio que está repleto, a los compañeros que están afuera y no pudieron entrar y a todo el Ecuador que nos sigue.

Algunas cosas importantes, hoy de tarde nos han invitado a las jornadas vicentinas, a la fiesta de... por aquí tenía la invitación. La tienes tú Leonardo? Acá está. La invitación al Festival deportivo Vicentino donde me quieren dar la presea de gratitud vicentina porque este gobierno ha arreglado los 16 colegios más emblemáticos y más grandes, colegios fiscales de Guayaquil y estamos construyendo... En 20 años no se había construido un solo colegio en Guayaquil. En las próximas semanas ya inauguramos al norte la Unidad...
del Milenio, un colegio espectacular que va desde guardería hasta bachillerato, **verdad?**

Entonces **un inmenso abrazo a todos los compañeros vicentinos pero, les insisto, no tienen nada que agradecer.** Con todo cariño, se los agradezco de corazón, pero a mi no me gustan estas cosas, **¿por qué?** Porque sinceramente creo que no las merezco, esas cosas se ha hecho con dinero ecuatoriano, no con dinero de Rafael Correa y por último lo ha ejecutado ese extraordinario ministro de educación que es Raúl Vallejo.

Entonces **compañeros,** señor rector, señores padres de familia, señores alumnos, gracias por la invitación pero la mejor manera, si quieren agradecernos de alguna forma esto, es estudiando, enseñando con alma, corazón y vida, sacándole el jugo a ese esfuerzo que están haciendo todos los ciudadanos ecuatorianos para brindarles los medios para que puedan educarse. **Así es que a prepararse, juventud vicentina para que muy pronto ustedes puedan tomar la posta y sigan sacando adelante a la patria.**

Así es que les agradezco la invitación compas pero no hay nada que agradecer, mandaré mi representación al señor gobernador como ya lo dijimos por carta el 27 de agosto. Lo que si quería decirles es que **ha habido denuncias de que en los colegios se está haciendo propaganda política, eso no puede suceder, compañeros.** Seamos los primeros en respetar las reglas de juego. Dentro de los colegios no se puede hacer propaganda política. No caigamos en los errores de la partidocracia, esa doble moral, esa hipocresía, esa corrupción. **Así que por favor,** los que estén a favor del sí, apoyando al gobierno, cero publicidad en los colegios, ahí los chicos tienen que ir a estudiar, tienen que ir a aprender, tienen que ir vivir en una comunidad del saber. Lo que si estamos haciendo es repartiendo Constituciones a los maestros para que lo estudien con los chicos. **Eso si, tienen que estar concientes del momento actual.** No sólo eso. La nueva Constitución confía tanto en los jóvenes, porque nosotros realmente confiamos en los jóvenes, que el voto va a ser optativo desde los 16 años y esos muchachos de 16 años deben de estar informados y concientes del acontecer nacional. Entonces lo que si hay que hacer es estudiar esa Constitución. Se han repartido centenás de miles de Constituciones en los diferentes colegios para que la estudien con sus maestros de la forma más abierta, más crítica, más transparente. **Pero por favor,** cero propaganda en los planteles educativos, eso no está permitido y nuestros jóvenes no deben ser parte de una campaña electoral, deben ir a estudiar. Felicitaciones por ese Festival vicentino, mucha suerte señor rector y cuidado, cuidado, los mismo de siempre quieren crear desmanes, quieren crear incidentes como ya pasó hace dos semanas en la Católica. Así es que mucho ojo señor rector, esta gente está buscando, está desesperada, está buscando cualquier ocasión para crear problemas. **Así que estén muy atentos** pero que sea una jornada de alegría, de hermandad y **un inmenso abrazo a toda esa juventud vicentina, orgullo de mi ciudad natal Guayaquil y de todo el Ecuador.**

**Appendix 7**

**Analysis of program 239, 24/09/2011, 1:06:05 – 1:09:59**

Bien, luego de recorrer el cuarto puente que está espectacular, regresamos a Quito. A las 3h15 me esperaban los medios de comunicación. Oigan, **impresionante. Fíjense,** es que... yo no sé si estoy loco pero creo que sinceramente, no es que estoy loco sino que estoy más atento a la realidad y conozco un poco la historia de América Latina. He vivido en Estados Unidos, Europa y sé como son sociedades más desarrolladas sin estos poderes fácticos, al menos tan descarados, **¿no?** **Créanme que ni cuando gané la presidencia, en el 2006, había tanto periodista esperándome en Quito, estaba repleta, no pudimos hacer la rueda de prensa por lo del juicio al Universo en el salón donde siempre
se hace rueda de prensa, tuvimos que prestar el casino de oficiales porque no entraban donde siempre hacemos las ruedas de prensa. ¿Por qué? Por haberle ganado un juicio a los que se creyeron siempre intocables, ¿verdad? Y también, reflexionen esto compañeros, todo lo que han hecho: el ataque al pobre juez, que clonar el disco duro, que investigar 'Chuki seven', 'Chuki eight', 'Harry Potter' y que sé otras historias que se han inventado. Todo lo que han hecho ¿cuándo lo han hecho antes? ¿cuándo se hizo eso con los jueces corruptos que liberaban a los banqueros que nos quebraron? ¿cuándo se ha hecho eso contra tanta gente que robó al país, en casos de corrupción clamorosos que se dejaron en la impunidad? ¿cuándo han hecho eso con las transnacionales que nos demandan en los centros de arbitrajes donde siempre se le da la razón a las transnacionales y no a los Estados? ¿cuándo esta prensa ha ordenado investigar a esos jueces? ¿se dan cuenta? ¿cuándo han ordenado investigar a Chevron con los wikileaks? Que acaba de decir los wikileaks de las presiones de Chevron ante la embajada para que ahí sí, metiendo las manos en la justicia se pare el juicio, presionando al gobierno de turno que se pare el juicio que los indígenas amazónicos le pusieron a Chevron ¿cuándo se ha investigado eso? Y por supuesto, para mala suerte de Chevron el gobierno de turno fuimos nosotros y la embajada ni siquiera se les ocurrió mencionarnos el caso porque sabían que iban a tener la respuesta que correspondía, ¿verdad? ¿pero cuando ha investigado eso la prensa? Pero, como es un juicio contra diario El Universo: chuki seven, que "juez corrupto", que "Correa manipula la justicia", que saca el disco duro, que allana la oficina, que allana la casa, que manda a investigar a Sherlock Holmes. Ojala que se den cuenta que nos están dando la razón de precisamente contra qué estamos combatiendo, contra ese poder que se creyó omnímodo y que ahora está siendo utilizado ilegítimamente. Nunca utilizaron ese poder para defender el bien común, lo están usando para defender sus intereses. Reflexionen sobre eso queridos compañeros.

Bueno, luego del diálogo con los medios de comunicación, ahí me quedé en la casa pero también para preparar los discursos, esa noche crean que no dormí, me quedé toda la noche preparando.

Miércoles 21 de septiembre, 8h00 de la mañana: entrevista con The Miami Herald, es un periódico de Miami que tradicionalmente está contra nosotros, se lo identifica como un periódico de derecha, pero honestamente el entrevistador James Wees muy bueno, muy bueno, muy respetuoso, muy profesional. No es de esos entrevistadores con mala fe que no entrevistan; interrogan, y sino logran nada con la interrogación; torturan, hasta que el torturado confiese lo que quieren escuchar, ¿verdad? Y eso le llaman periodismo libre e independiente. No, UN VERDADERO PERIODISTA entrevista para escuchar al entrevistado no para escuchar lo que él quiere escuchar o escucharse a sí mismo. Entonces tengo que reconocer que tuve una muy grata impresión. Yo normalmente doy entrevista a todos los medios que me piden. Y bueno, no tenía una muy buena impresión del Miami Herald, pero este entrevistador, tengo que decirlo, muy bueno, muy profesional.

### Appendix 8

**Analysis of program #239, 24/09/2011, 1:16:55 – 1:18:58**

Miércoles 21 de septiembre, seguimos, 10h de la mañana: después dialogo con la prensa, en las afueras de EcuadorTV. 10H30: reunión previa a la revisión del presupuesto general del Estado 2012. Ya estamos preparando, hay que preparar el presupuesto en octubre. Como nunca, un gobierno responsable, empezando por el presidente, porque ustedes...
saben que tengo la mala costumbre de ser economista. Revisamos en detalle ese presupuesto. Esto es muy importante, la asignación de recursos sociales ¿cuánto se manda a educación, salud? No es una cuestión técnica, como nos hicieron creer, es una cuestión política. Ya les di el ejemplo del puente ¿verdad? ¿Dónde enviar plata: al puente Samborondón – Guayaquil; o al puente Durán – Samborondón? Es una decisión política y depende de la relación de poder. Quiere decir que las élites que viven en Samborondón tiene mucho más poder, son los dueños de los medios de comunicación, son dirigentes políticos, etc. y tienen más poder que el pueblo sencillo y llano que vive en Durán. Eso es todo. Refleja eso las relaciones de poder ¿cómo es el instrumento que a su vez refleja la asignación de recursos? Que, insisto, en su turno depende de las relaciones de poder. Las relaciones de poder determina la asignación de recursos sociales y ¿dónde se refleja esa asignación de recursos sociales? Sobre todo en el presupuesto del Estado. No únicamente, sobre todo, la forma más clara, presupuesto del Estado. Y vean, pues el cambio en la relación de fuerzas que ha habido con la revolución ciudadana. ANTES, la mayor parte del presupuesto: al pago de deuda externa; y lo que sobraba por ahí, educación, salud, carreteras... nada porque, ¿la gente no necesita carreteras, vivienda? Nada. Ahora vayan y vean: la PARTECITA más pequeña para servicio de deuda; una inmensa parte: educación, salud, muchísimo para infraestructura, cuatro veces más que lo que invertían gobiernos anteriores, más de 200 mil viviendas construidas, etc. Entonces eso demuestra el cambio en la relación de fuerza que había en el país. Ya no manda la 'peluconería', ahora mandan las grandes mayorías, el pueblo ecuatoriano.

Appendix 9

Analysis of program #378, 21/06/2014, 11:40 – 16:32

El día sábado de mañana viajábamos a Bolivia donde se realizaba un evento sumamente importante: el G77. El G77, que en verdad son ahora más de 130 países más China, fue un grupo que se creó dentro de Naciones Unidas a principios de los 60 para dar voto, para dar voz a los que no tenían voz, a los países del tercer mundo, subdesarrollados, en vías de desarrollo. Y al inicio fueron 77 países por eso se llama el G77. Ha tenido importante incidencia dentro de la ONU, este grupo; se han alcanzado importantes espacios para el desarrollo industrial, para cooperación para el desarrollo, etc. Y ahora este grupo lo lidera, tiene la presidencia, nuestro querido Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, al mando de ese extraordinario compañero indígena Evo Morales Ayma. Así, como se pasaba, recibía la presidencia pro-tempore Bolivia, se realizó esta cumbre -bueno, correspondía la cumbre- en Santa Cruz. Como les decía, nuestra querida Bolivia, y ahí asistimos. La verdad es que la mayor parte de las actividades se realizaban el día domingo 15 de junio pero se le escapó a Evo que el 15 de junio, domingo, era el día del padre en la mayor parte de Latinoamérica, no en Bolivia, por eso se le escapó, pero si en la mayor parte de Latinoamérica, así es que muchos tuvimos que regresar para pasar con nuestras familias, o sea, hay que poner prioridades compañeros. Entonces teníamos que estar con nuestras familias pero al menos pudimos participar en un evento muy emotivo: el encuentro con organizaciones sociales, son organizaciones sociales 'pepa', no las 'chimbas'; las pepa, es decir, esos compañeros que día a día están en la lucha social para mejorar el nivel de vida de esos trabajadores mineros, de esos agricultores, de esos pueblos indígenas, de esas mujeres y que financian sus organizaciones con la platita que con tanto sacrificio aporta cada uno. No con la plata que le manda la derecha de Estados Unidos a ciertas organizaciones allá en Bolivia y acá en Ecuador. Porque que a nadie le...
quepa la menor duda, una de las formas de infiltrar nuestros países, de proteger sus intereses, desestabilizar a gobiernos progresistas, es este ONGismo que, TOMÁNDOSE EL NOMBRE DE LA SOCIEDAD CIVIL, lo que quieren [es] hacer política sin el derecho de haber ganado en las urnas. Bueno, todo el mundo tiene derecho a hacer política, quieren imponer su programa de gobierno sin que haya sido aprobado en las urnas. Como bien lo dice el propio vicepresidente de Bolivia, estas ONGs, no es que son organizaciones no gubernamentales, no; son organizaciones “de otros gobiernos trabajando en nuestros países, en nuestros territorios, y tratando de hacernos funcionales a sus intereses”. Por ejemplo, ellos no firman Kyoto y pueden seguir contaminando, destruyendo el planeta. Y nosotros, que todavía no logramos superar a la pobreza, esas ONGs le vienen a decir a nuestros pueblos indígenas -dan planta a los dirigentes- para que no toquen el bosque, no se explote petróleo, no se explote minería, para producir medio ambiente que ellos siguen destrozando sin ni siquiera firmar Kyoto. A no ser tontos útiles, compañeros, a buscar nuestras propias soluciones con nuestros aciertos y errores, pero propios, no impuestas del extranjero, así se llamen ONGs, así tengan nombre bonitos. Vayan y vean el daño que está haciendo ese ONGismo en la amazonía ecuatoriana, boliviana. Álvaro García Linera, vicepresidente de Bolivia, tiene todo un libro al respecto, se llama, me parece, ‘Geopolítica de la Amazonía’. Pero lo que vienen es a repartir plata por todos lados, mucha dirigencia indígena vive de esa plata. Entonces claro, ellos con la panza bien llena de esa plata que reciben del extranjero: ‘no exploten’, ‘no extraigan’, ‘no hagan nada’ y que el resto se muera de hambre. Y nosotros produzcamos bienes ambientales para que los otros sigan consumiendo gratuitamente y sigan destrozando el planeta. A tener clara la visión, a saber lo que buscamos, a responder a nuestras realidades y nuestras necesidades y a evitar estas formas que también son formas de neocolonialismo, compatriotas. Entonces tuvimos la reunión con esas organizaciones sociales autenticas, reales. Se les advirtió de estos problemas. Realmente un espectáculo, un evento sumamente emocionante. Veamos extractos de la intervención, primero hablé yo, así es que primero el presidente Rafael Correa, –así es que pueden cambiar el orden de presentación– y al final pues cerró el acto ese querido compañero Evo Morales, presidente de Bolivia.

Appendix 10

Analysis of program #378, 21/06/2014, 54:00 – 57:26

Cada vez tienen mayor rechazo del pueblo ecuatoriano, pero un signo de desarrollo será cuando esta gente no tenga ninguna cabida: democráticamente tengan el REPUDIO, EL RECHAZO POPULAR porque son, créanme, lo peor; estos se llaman de izquierda y son el partido más conservador del país. ¿Qué es el conservadurismo? El que no quiere que cambie nada. Estos se oponen a todo, todo el tiempo ¿y por qué? No se engañen. Por defender sus espacios de poder. Al MPD LE QUITAMOS el dominio que tenía en las universidades, colegios, la UNE, hospitales ¿o ya se olvidaron? O se olvidaron que cada año, antes de inicio de clase había el paro de la UNE. Ya no existe eso. ¿Verdad? Porque ya no tienen ese poder el MPD y por eso sangra por la herida. Estos señores que dicen defender el agua, lo que quieren es defender su dominio sobre las juntas de agua y así pues manejan sus cacicazgos. No pasarán, compatriotas. Y la mejor manera de demostrar como esta gente carece de argumentos es que le mienten a las comunidades. Lo que busca la ley, concordantemente con la Constitución, es evitar toda forma de privatización del agua, y les van a decir a las comunidades que se les va a privatizar el agua. Como eso tampoco les ha funcionado, ahora están diciendo que van a alzar el gas. 

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Eso también lo dijeron en el 2011. Oponiéndose a unos de los cambios más grandes de la historia del país en cuanto a estructura de consumo, estructura energética en el Ecuador, que es el cambio de cocinas de inducción por cocinas de gas. Pero esa es la mediocridad, esa es la politiquería. Nadie les hace caso. Pero un signo de desarrollo será cuando ni entre ellos mismos se hagan caso, compañeros. Que sea gente totalmente aislada de una sociedad motivada, viendo hacia el futuro, sin caer en la mediocridad, en la violencia, en las mentiras de esta gente, que cuando va a las urnas no saca ni el 3% de los votos.

Pero compañeros, no es sólo la ley de aguas, como decía el video. Ya les insisto, uno no sabe si reír o llorar. Vean la proclama de la marcha y de la Conaie -¿la tienen o no?- Por todos los que están marchando. En el 2017 seguirán marchando pero en las urnas. Pero cada vez es mayor el rechazo ciudadano a estas posturas. Son los mejores aliados de la derecha y se unen, se unen ¿de donde creen que sacan el financiamiento para esas cosas? Y conversan entre ellos y todo. Todo para derrotar a la revolución ciudadana y seguirse repartiendo el pastel como lo hicieron históricamente -¿falta todavía un poco? busquenme-. Veamos como ya la prensa corrupta se enanca en estas protestas para ver si hay otro 30S, si hay un muerto, hacerle daños al gobierno. Y sus 'brillantes' ¿no?, 'profundos' análisis: "es Correa el que no va a soltar el agua". Esta es la prensa que tiene el país! Y un signo de desarrollo también será cuando esta prensa mediocre, por el rechazo del pueblo ecuatoriano, porque ya nadie les cree, nadie les escuche, DEJE DE EXISTIR. Porque ESTA ES UNA DE LAS PRINCIPALES ANCLAS PARA EL BUEN VIVIR: UNA PRENSA CORRUPTA, mediocre, deshonesta, mentirosa. Veamos ya la campaña de cierta prensa para meter cizaña y ver si tenemos otro 30S.

(video prensa)

Appendix 11

Analysis of program #335, 17/08/2013, 2:52:30 – 2:58:43

Program's specific code:

<table>
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<th>THEM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The people, the people's will</td>
<td>Opposition: negative features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government's achievements, good will</td>
<td>Generalizations of negative features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for action, unity</td>
<td>Ironizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative affirmations</td>
<td>Interpellation to opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correa: self, emotions</td>
<td>Contrast to good -normative- attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government/Correa mistake</td>
<td>Hypotheticals, attributes motives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpellations to the people</td>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¡Esto si que es increíble! Como les decía hace un momento, lo peor que tiene Latinoamérica es su burguesía torpe, limitada, prepotente, excluyente... Porque hay burguesía modernizadora, hay procesos históricos donde la propia clase burguesa promovió modernización, distribuyó los frutos del progreso. No, aquí en América Latina promovió el retraso y el poco progreso que se daba era para su propio beneficio, no para el resto, no. Que si había boom del cacao; no era para mejorar los salarios de sus peones, sus condiciones de vida, no, era para ir ellos a vivir a París, como el gran cacao.
Esa ha sido la historia de la burguesía latinoamericana. ¡Es impresionante! Y aquí tenemos una antología de lo que es nuestra burguesía.

Veamos: “El país de mis hijos” de Pedro Valverde Rivera. Este creo que es abogado del diario El Universo. Mire lo que escribe este editorialista, creo que es abogado. Cuenta como antes todo era mejor en el país, ahora es que estamos mal, antes era mejor ¿y por qué era mejor? “Ellos nacieron en un país con diferencias sociales y desigualdades ¿hay acaso un país que no las tenga?”. Como todo el mundo los tiene, nosotros no debemos luchar por un país más igualitario ¿verdad? Mal de muchos consuelo de tontos. “Pese a que esas diferencias eran dolorosas, nunca nos sentimos culpables de que existan”. Claro, si el problema no es la carencia del golpe de pecho, todo el mundo se va a dar golpe de pecho los domingos en América Latina, el problema es el pellejo demasiado duro de la burguesía, porque no siente nada. “Porque jamás hicimos nada para ahondarla”. Y vamos a ver que no ha hecho nada para ahondarla. Él no ha hecho nada para ahondarla. Habla de su niñera, la niñera es feliz, gracias a sus hijos que tuvieron una niñera. “Debo decir además, que la niñera que ha cuidado a todos mis hijos es una mujer maravillosa, dulce y servicial”. Qué buen corazón tiene este tipo. “Nunca llevó cuenta de las horas extras”. Claro, si el que tenía que llevar cuenta de horas extras es el empleador para pagarle, pues, y no un explotador, sinvergüenza que explotó su niñera, a su trabajadora doméstica. “Nunca llevó las horas extras que nos regalaba con una sonrisa cuando alguno se enfermaba”. Qué buen corazón, cómo estima su niñera que nunca les cobró horas extras por las horas extras que trabajó ¿se dan cuenta? Es que este tipo es el fiel reflejo de lo que es nuestra burguesía: Margarita Arosemena, que también tiene su fundación para dar caridad a los pobres, pero no deja entrar a un pobre a su casa. Esta es la burguesía ecuatoriana. “Nunca llevó cuentas de las horas extras que nos regalaba con una sonrisa cuando alguno se enfermaba.” ¿Qué buena gente! porque no nos cobraba las horas extras. “Por lo cual, con inmenso cariño, nosotros tampoco llevamos cuentas de los permisos, préstamos y ayudas que le hemos dado durante tantos años” O sea, ellos daban caridad, como que si lo que necesita la gente es caridad y no derechos, el derecho a las horas extras, no es medio centavo de caridad, no le regale nada, paguele las horas extras, que es su derecho y su deber como empleador ¿qué tiene este señor en la cabeza?

Este es abogado y abogado de diario El Universo. “Ella es y siempre ha sido parte de nuestra familia” ¡qué explotador más bondadoso! ¡que negro más humano! “…aunque no lo hubieran dicho el IESS ni la ley.” O sea, tampoco le afilió al IESS ¡Qué barbaridad! ¿se dan cuenta lo que está escribiendo este tipo? ¡Pobre hombre! Y este es la burguesía ecuatoriana, y este es editorialista, y este es abogado. No es que alguien sin formación, es abogado de diario El Universo, pero fiel reflejo de lo que es nuestra burguesía. Los explotadores, los negreros pero con tan buen corazón que de repente dan caridad a sus explotados. Este es el país que debemos superar inmediatamente compatriotas.

¡Miren que perlas más ricas! Pedro Javier Valverde Rivera, estudios primarios, Claretiano Espíritu Santo; estudios secundarios, Colegio Javier de la Compañía de Jesús. O sea, formación Católica por todos lados, todos los domingos golpes de pecho, pero no se siente culpable de las desigualdades pese a que no afiliaba al IESS a su empleada, pese a que no le pagaba horas extras. Insisto, el problema no es la carencia de golpe de pecho sino la abundancia de pellejo demasiado duro de nuestra burguesía. Asesor jurídico de la Cámara de Comercio Ecuatoriana Americana en Guayaquil. Para que vean lo que son estos estamentos, los grupos que enfrentamos, esto es lo que enfrentamos.
además están convencidos que ellos son los buenos y nosotros somos los malos ¿verdad? Explotadores de buen corazón. No le pagamos horas extras, no le afiliamos al IESS pero si le regalamos plata de vez en cuando. No regalen nada. Nuestra gente, nuestra clase trabajadora, trabajadoras domésticas, no necesitan su limosna, necesitan que cumplan con su deber y se respete sus derechos, los derechos de esos trabajadores. Asistió a múltiples cursos y seminarios en temas como arbitrajes y otros. Este es arbitro, imagínense. Desde enero del 2003 hasta diciembre 2009, director ejecutivo de la Asociación Ecuatoriana de Editores de Periódicos AEDEP. Estos son los miembros de AEDEP. Se dan cuenta, los que nos dan cátedra de moral, buenas costumbres. Actualmente asesor jurídico de la AEDEP, Asociación Ecuatoriana de Editores de Periódicos, y articulista. Entonces no ha sido asesor jurídico de El Universo, sino peor, de la AEDEP. Esta es la gente que enfrentamos día a día. Estos son los que escriben en los diarios, los dueños de los diarios. Esta es la mentalidad. Explotadores de buen corazón. ¿Qué buenos negreros, no? ¡Esclavitud! “Dale 20 latigazos al pobre esclavo”; “sólo le di 15”: qué buen corazón que tengo ¿no? Y después le curé las heridas: ¡qué gentil que soy, Dios mío! ¡deberían elevarme a los altares! Y gracias a ellos mis hijos crecieron felices. ¿qué alguna vez se preguntó si los hijos de su niñera crecieron felices? ¿Con suficiente comida, con buena nutrición, con buena educación, con buena salud? ¿Qué alguna vez los hijos de su niñera fueron a los colegios de los hijos suyos, o no tenemos los mismos derechos? ¡Que barbaridad! Y articulista de diarios El Universo y fue uno de los abogados en el caso por difamación contra Emilio Palacio. Esta es la gente que enfrentamos, sobran las palabras. Lean ese artículo para que vean la calidad de burguesía que tenemos, que estamos enfrentando y que gracias a Dios, estamos venciendo y serán parte de un pasado que jamás volverá compatriotas. Los negreros de buen corazón.

Appendix 12

Analysis of program #335, 17/08/2013, 1:57:00 – 2:03:00

Les insisto, compañeros: la Iniciativa fue un fracaso financiero pero ha sido un éxito en muchas otras dimensiones. Una propuesta de ruptura, una propuesta de avanzada, probablemente por eso fracasó en la parte financiera. Una propuesta que ha ayudado a despertar una conciencia impresionante, ecológica, en nuestros jóvenes. Miren toda esta discusión ¡Que maravilla! ¡Esto es éxito! Éxito de la revolución. La conciencia ecológica de nuestro pueblo y particularmente de nuestros jóvenes. Sí, atentos jóvenes queridos, atentos a los oportunistas, a los niños sesentones que hablan cualquier tontería. Ya salió un ex candidato diciendo que por qué no trajimos el turismo al Parque. Que faltó por ejemplo esa actividad ¿cuánto nos hubiera dado? Un millón, diez millones, cien millones. Es mentira. Con eso no se iba a alcanzar los fondos necesarios, no se iba a solucionar la pobreza del país, es mentira, nos están mintiendo. Además, que empezábamos a promocionar el turismo nos iban a criticar de poner en peligro el Yasuní por la carga turística. O sea, es palo por que bogas, palo por que no bogas. Entonces no caigan tampoco en la trampa de los charlatanes, de los oportunistas, que los hay y los pueden manipular. Confíen en el presidente.

Discutamos abiertamente en base a la verdad. No tenemos miedo de dar la cara y decir la verdad. Estamos tristísimos, pero tenemos la conciencia absolutamente tranquila porque creo que hemos tomado la decisión correcta en función de las futuras generaciones. Ya empezaron las mentiras, como les decía hace un momento, y se las repito, porque
atentan contra cualquier lógica. Pero ese es el nivel de debate político en el país, el nivel de debate mediático: decir cualquier tontería y el medio es tan mediocre que seguirán opinando y seguirán siendo periodistas. Pero atentan a la lógica.

"Que siempre se tuvo el Plan B": entonces, ¿para qué plantear el Plan A? En primer lugar, ¿para qué esperar seis años? Que es la necesidad de dólares. Informaremos al país, lo hice el día jueves. La inmensa mayoría... -creo que sólo recibiremos en este periodo 10% de los ingresos, menos todavía-, la inmensa mayoría de los recursos es para el futuro. Estamos trabajando por ustedes señores alcaldes, por los próximos gobiernos. Estamos trabajando no por las próximas elecciones; por el futuro del país, asumiendo costos políticos muy grandes pero en función de nuestra responsabilidad con la historia. Es mentira que mañana vamos a ir al dólar. Alguien dijo que esto es porque tenemos que pagar las campañas publicitarias del gobierno. O sea, las campañas publicitarias del gobierno valen 19 mil millones, que lo vamos a ver en los próximos 20 años dicho sea de paso. O sea, estamos financiando la campaña publicitaria en 20 años. Hay que ya tener enfermo el corazón para hablar tanta tontería.

"Que es entrega transnacional". Les insisto, el Yasuní va a ser explotado por la estatal petrolera Petroamazonas. Que tengo alma de mercader y no de estadista, no. Las boberías de los niños sesentones, el infantilismo de los niños de 60 años. ¡Mercader! Si esa plata irá hasta el último centavo para agua potable, alcantarillado, remediar la contaminación ambiental de la Amazonía, superar la pobreza, empezando por nuestra Amazonía. Porque lo criminal es niños que se nos muera de diarreita en el siglo XXI, compañeros.

"Que es la necesidad de la refinería". ¿Les puedo anticipar, Jorge, lo que ya está decidido, o no? Compañeros, hace rato la refinería ha sido rescalada de 300 mil barriles a 200 mil barriles, no se necesitan, nunca se necesitaron, teníamos por eso convenio con Venezuela. En caso de que falte petróleo nacional, nos daba petróleo Venezuela para refinar. Nunca fue necesario porque la refinería, como encontramos ya un socio que la financie, nos pidió que empecemos con una refinería de 200 mil barriles. En el futuro ver si se puede ampliar 100 mil barriles más. Todas son mentiras queridos jóvenes. Y recuerden, el dilema no es como se lo plantean, porque dicen: ¡Ah! Las encuestas: 90% apoya la iniciativa Yasuní ITT. No entiendo como no era el 100%, todos apoyamos la iniciativa Yasuní ITT. 63% se opone a la explotación pero por supuesto, si le dicen. Yasuní o petróleo. Yo también me opongo a la explotación, pero es mentira, es falso. No es Yasuní o petróleo, no. Es 100% el Yasuní y cero dólares para agua potable, alcantarillado, combatir la desnutrición infantil, escuelas, hospitales, vencer la miseria, vivienda, sobre todo de nuestra amazonía; o -cometí un error aqui- 99% Yasuní prístino, intacto, brillante como siempre, y 19 mil millones de dólares, de los cuales, a los gobiernos locales de la Amazonía le irán cerca de 2 mil millones, con lo cual se podrá dotar de servicios básicos a toda la Amazonía y en general a todo el país. Y podemos ser el primer país de América Latina en tener todo el territorio atendido con esos servicios básicos, con lo cual se evita la mortalidad infantil, morbilidad, etc. Ese es el dilema, y cometí un error compañeros, yo dije, siempre yo tengo problemas con los ceros, y dije que se afectará menos del 1%, debí decir: se afectará menos del uno por mil del Yasuní. Para que no queden dudas de esto, en este momento procedo a rectificar el decreto que estoy enviando a la Asamblea comprometiéndonos a que la explotación petrolera responsable en el Yasuní afectará a menos del uno por mil del Parque Nacional.

[firma decreto]
Appendix 13
Translation of sequence program #239, 1:16:55 – 1:18:58

Wednesday the 21st of September, we continue: at 10:00 am: later, a dialogue with the press outside Ecuador TV. At 10.30: a meeting previous to the revision of the general state budget of 2012. We are already preparing, we have to prepare the budget in October. As never before, a responsible government, starting with the President, because as you know, I have the bad habit of being an economist. So we revise in detail that Budget. The allocation of social resources is very important, how much is designated for education, health? It is not a technical issue, as we have been led to believe, but a political one. I have already given you the example of the bridge: Where to send money: to Samborondon bridge – Guayaquil? Or to the bridge of Duran – Samorondon? It is a political decision and it depends on power relations. It means that the elites that live in Samborondon have a lot more power, they are the owners of the media, they are in political leadership positions, etc., they have more power than the ordinary people that live in Duran. That is all. That is what the power relations reflect. This, I insist, depends on power relations; power relations determine the allocation of social resources. And where is this allocation of resources reflected? Mostly in the state budget. And so, you can see the change in the relations of forces that have occurred with the citizen revolution. Before, most of the state budget was for foreign debt and what was left, a little for education, health... and for roads: nothing because, people don’t need roads. Housing? Nothing. Now, go and see; the smallest part for debt, a huge part for education, health, a lot for infrastructure, four times more than what previous governments invested, 200 thousand homes built, etc. Therefore, this demonstrates the change in the power relations in the country. The elite no longer give orders, now it is the masses, the people of Ecuador, who rule.

Appendix 14
Translation of sequence program #378, 0:54:00 – 0:57:26

There is more and more rejection from the Ecuadorian people, but a sign of development will be when these people have no place, democratically, they have the disavowal, the popular rejection, because they are, believe me, the worst, they call themselves left wing and they are the most conservative party of the country. What is conservatism? Those who don’t want anything to change. They oppose everything, all the time. And why? Do not be fooled. To defend their space of power. We took away from the MPD their domain over the universities, schools, the teacher’s union, hospitals. Or have you already forgotten? Or have you forgotten that every year before the beginning of classes there was a strike by the teachers union, UNE. This no longer exists. True? Because they no longer have this power, the MPD, and for this reason it bleeds from its wounds. These men who say they defend the water, all they want is to defend their ruling over the water councils, and that way they can maintain their feudal control. This will not happen, compatriots. Now the best way of demonstrating how these people lack arguments is that they lie to the communities. What the law seeks, in accordance with the Constitution, is to avoid all form of privatization of water, whilst they tell the communities that their water will be privatized. Since this tactic hasn’t worked, now they are saying that the cost of gas will increase. They said this also in 2011. Opposing one of the greatest changes in the country’s history in terms of the structure of consumption, the energetic structure of Ecuador. This is the change from gas cookers to electric induction cookers. But that is the mediocrity, the political games.
Nobody takes any notice. But a sign of development will be when even among even themselves, they don’t pay any attention, that is it comrades. When they become people completely isolated from a motivated society, looking to the future, without falling for mediocrity, into violence, for the lies of these people, that during the elections obtain less than 3% of the votes.

But comrades, it is not only the law on water, as I said in the video. I will not insist any further, one doesn’t know if we must laugh or cry. See the proclamation of the march of the CONAIE. - You have it, don’t you? - For all of those that they are marching for. In 2012 they will continue to march, but only in the turnout. But more and more, the rejection of these marches by the people is greater. They are the greatest allies of the right and they come together. Where do you think they obtain the funds for those types of things? They keep everything for themselves. All to destroy the citizen revolution and to continue to split up the cake as they have done historically. -have you found it already? Do tell me-. Lets see how the corrupt press engages with these protests, to see if there is another 30S, if there is a dead person, inflict hurt on the government. And their 'brilliant', -no?- their 'profound' analysis: Correa is the one who won’t let go of the water. This is the press this country has. Another sign of development will be when this mediocre press – thanks to the rejection of the Ecuadorian people, because no one believes in them anymore – stops being listened to and ceases to exist. Because this is one of the obstacles for a 'good living': a corrupt press, mediocre, dishonest and lying. Let us see the campaign of a certain press to twist things and see if we have another 30S.