THE CONSTRUCTION OF RAFAEL CORREA’S IMAGE IN POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

Candidate

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, the personal life of political leaders has appeared to arouse interest of public opinion and media more than their political trajectories or their party’s affiliation. This situation has led some of the aspiring politicians to invest more effort and resources in political advertisements and media coverage, in order to obtain social support for their political projects (Ridout et al., 2012). Alongside, politicians have become more aware of the importance of constructing personal images with regards to the desires and interests of the audiences (Castells, 2009). This tendency is present not only in the political culture of advanced democracies, but also in the context of relatively young democracies, such as Latin American countries, where candidates for political functions put a lot of effort in constructing and developing tools of communication to connect directly with the public. The examples of styles of communication performed by politicians such as Fernando Collor de Mello and Lula Da Silva in Brazil, Carlos Menem and the Kirchners in Argentina, Carlos Salinas in Mexico, and Hugo Chavez, Evo Morales and Rafael Correa in the Andean region, suggest that this shift of focus from political parties to the individual features of politicians, is a common phenomena in the whole continent.

These tendencies to focus on the individual attributes and personal features of politicians, especially in the context of electoral process, have been acknowledged by scholars, who have explored this phenomenon, especially in the cases of the United States and Western Europe (Garzia, 2011; Holtz-Bacha, 2014). Although the conclusions brought by them were incompatible in many aspects, most of the authors have agreed that this phenomenon is related to the decay of political parties, to the appearance of technological innovation in the communication industry and to the development of marketing techniques in electoral process (Garzi, 2011; Holtz-Bacha, 1994; McAllister, 2007; Castells, 2009). Some studies have suggested that this transformation have transform politicians into manufactured images, due to blurring the distance between themselves and the public and increasing the symbolic proximity of the leaders and the masses (Castells, 2009; Garzi, 2011; Newman, 1999, Barisioner, 2009). However, despite many contributions to theses studies, they seemed to overlook several issues. Firstly, they focus rather on the
similarities, than on the differences of these cases, often overlooking the circumstances (i.e. political culture, political system, electoral system) that make each case of political communication different (Holtz-Bacha, 1994). Secondly, the majority the literature doesn't provide empirical evidence of this phenomenon in non-western democracies, such as South America. Moreover, many scholars seem to disregard the relation of this phenomenon with the political culture. This tendency overlooks the fact that in Latin America such a type of political communication is deeply enrooted in political and cultural practices of this region.

Various authors have been pointing out to the fact that political culture of South America has been always dominated by the figures of leaders (Castells, 2009; Sandbrook, 2014; and Krauze, 2014). Moreover, individual candidates have been always more influential than political parties in obtaining social support by creating forms of symbolic identification and notions of emotional proximity with the masses (Philip, 1998; Martz, 1983). However, what appears to be a new phenomenon, is the intensive application of public communication techniques and marketing strategies to directly the audiences with the leader. This tendency is especially strong in the political context of Andean Region (Canaghan and De la Torre, 2008). In these territories, the new generations of presidents have developed direct channels of communication with the audiences in order to shape public opinion in their favour. In fact, in Ecuador, the current president Rafael Correa – who had no history of party membership - use the tools of communication with the public to such an extent, that he stars a weekly show in television. Moreover, he decided to refound public media and significantly increased the use of TV and radio for the purpose of political campaign (Montúfar, 2013). As the phenomenon of creating and manufacturing Latin American politicians' images in media has been not described with the use empirical evidence, this research aims to explore how the process of creating symbolic representation and notion of proximity with masses through the media is performed in Latin America.

In order to analyse the theoretical and methodological gaps mentioned above and to contribute to the studies on the relations between political advertisement and creating political image in the context of Latin America, the following empirical study explores how personal features of politicians are manufactured in the media in Ecuador,
investigating how the image of the president constructed during electoral process has transformed from 2006 to 2013. The research aims to explore the changes that occurred in presenting the personal qualities of the candidate, and it attempts to answer for a question, how the use of symbolic references, messages and figures of political opponents evoked in political advertisement can reveal political project of Rafael Correa and the process of personalization of politics in Ecuador.

The research argues that the introduction of communication apparatus and marketing techniques seem to strengthen the tendency to focusing the politiacal message on the charismatic abilities of the leader. Although the case of Rafael Correa it is not exceptional, it provides an example of constructing a particularly strong cult of the leader, as the politician managed to achieve and maintain his status without the support of political parties or grassroots movements, basing almost solely on his personality.

We begin with an analysis of the literature on “personalization in politics” in the context of electoral campaigns. Our review continues by looking at the construction of personality in political advertisements. Then, our focus moves on to “personalization in politics” in Latin America and particularly how it has evolved in Ecuador. Finally, we introduce the case of Rafael Correa – the current Ecuadorean President.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THE CONSTRUCTION OF POLICIANS AS MANUFACTURED IMAGES

The causes of the construction of politicians as manufactured images are related to three main changes: technological innovations in political communication, the erosion of political parties, and the professionalization of political campaigns. First, radio and television have altered the way that political messages are transmitted. These devices allow individual candidates to communicate directly with the voters and to capture a wider audience, transforming how people engage with the political process and the public expectations towards the leader. The perception of closeness between the candidate and the public has evaporated the distance between the candidate and the followers (Barisioner, 2009). Furthermore, political identities have lost their previous importance in creating grass root movements and base organizations. The similarity of goals across political parties (Garzia, 2011) and the decline of traditional solidarities (e.g. class, religion and family) have encouraged voters to support candidates for their individual traits rather than their ideological and political trajectories (Garzia, 2011; Holtz-Bacha, 2014, Bauman, 2001). Finally, the necessity to persuade wider masses to vote for a candidate and the emphasis on the media coverage to highlight the individual qualities of the candidate have motivated the introduction of marketing techniques during campaigns. At the same time, the use of polls has also become a popular strategy in order to reveal information about the mood of the electorate and their preferences (Garzia, 2011)

The transformations mentioned in the last paragraph suggest that the preferences of the audience to become closer to the candidates, the decline of the parties’ influence to obtain political power, and the introduction of marketing techniques has lead candidates to actively manufacture their personality to create symbolic closeness to the masses (Barisioner, 2009). According to Fletcher (2000), the same strategies applied to convince consumers are employed to capture voters. Moreover, he argues that persuasive communication has always been the essence of politics. On the other hand, Castells (2009) finds that the use of marketing techniques has changed the political game in so far as it
integrates the electoral process into a chain of marketing practices, whose traditional role is to connect individuals with a process of consumption. Moreover some author suggest that “winning parliamentary or presidential elections without marketing is nearly impossible” (Cwalina et al., 2008: 1). In this logic of persuasion and attraction, this authors interestingly enough agree in suggesting that personalization in politics has produced that the electoral process is based on the creation of mechanism of identification between the leaders and the followers.

Although the demand of forms of identification between he leader and the masses is continuously evoked as a current phenomenon, some studies suggest that it is not entirely new in some regions of the world (Castells, 2009). Moreover, it appears to take different forms according to both the political system and the political culture of each country (Holtz-Bacha, 2014). Castells (2009) remarks that parties have never been the principal player to conquer voters in the U.S. and South America. On the contrary, political campaigns have always been deeply related to a candidate’s ability to create social support. In fact, the raise of leaders that create symbolic closeness to the masses has been a primary characteristic of the political culture in these regions. Some authors argue that it is the case because political parties have never been able to generate social loyalties without a charismatic leader (Martz, 1983; De La Torre, 2013). However, what seems to have appeared only recently in these regions is the increasing use of communicational apparatus by presidents as a powerful tool to connect themselves directly with the audiences. Hugo Chavez and Rafael Correa weekly Televised programs are clear examples. In those programs, the leaders talks about their personal life and use popular convention in order to create symbolic closeness with the masses.

2.2 THE CONSTRUCTION OF PERSONALITY IN POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS

As introduced above, it is argued that personalization in political communication has triggered the active manufacture of candidate personalities in the media (Castells, 2005; Newman, 1999). Advertisement has become a powerful tool in electoral campaigns to
achieve this purpose. Various studies suggest that political advertisements have an impact in encouraging existing followers, holding on historical supporters, and winning back deserters (Fletcher, 2000; Wicks, et al. 2014; Holtz-Bacha et al, 1995). Moreover, the amount of resources that politicians invest in these advertisements and spaces on radio, television, and Internet appears to increase in every election (Ridout et al., 2012). That is, if a candidate does not exist in the media, then it does not exist in the public imagination (Castells, 2009). However, the influence of political advertisements on public opinion appears to be somewhat narrow. Indeed, Fletcher (2000) suggests that the impact of these visual materials affects principally those who share the same ideology. In fact, Castells (2009) goes even further when he claims that the principal goal of advertisements is not to change political positions. On the contrary, advertisements attempt to both connect the personality of the candidate with existing beliefs and values of the audience, and to create some form of symbolic identification. Thus, both authors imply that the techniques of persuasion used in political advertisements catch public attention because they address cultural, social and ideological knowledge present in the political culture.

At this point, it is worth analysing how candidates create their personalities through advertisements, which use experiences and cultural convention already present in the society. For some authors, the production of personalities responds to what culture honours with respect to a leader (Kiner et al., 1980; Nisbett and Wilson's 1977)). This theoretical position suggests that people should be more easily persuaded to vote for a "Superman"; in other words, a person with superior capacities regarding to the culture (Garzia, 2011). On the contrary, Meyrowitz (1985) claims that candidates should be brought to same the level as the public in order to create a symbolic form of identification. People tend to support candidates that face the same daily difficulties. However, politicians are expected to have personal capabilities that are more favourable to overcome problems than those of the common people. Although these two positions have some differences, it is interesting that they coincide in suggesting that the candidate personality should reflect, to a greater or lesser extent, the image of a hero, given his/her particular social experience and cultural context.
According to Castells (2009), all narratives about heroes require victims and enemies to justify their existence, and the political message broadcasted through advertisements is no exception. Images need to motivate people to conceive politics through the eyes of their candidate while rejecting the political opponents. Various empirical studies suggest that a common strategy to arouse social engagement for a particular candidate is to emphasise the negatives qualities of his contenders (Lau, 2007; Fridkin and Kenney, 2011). Moreover, voters are also transformed into victims that need to be rescued or saved. As a result, this type of strategies tends to polarize the electorate. As a consequence — instead of promoting social solidarity or integration — the constant search for villains and victims reduce complex problems in simple ones, disregarding the real causes behind social conflicts. Irrespective of the negative effects on the electorate, the use of advertisements to persuade voters to reject a candidate is popular.

The third strategy used to manufacture the personality of a politician in the media is the reduction of political projects into simple and emotional messages based on popular conventions. Some authors suggest that the constant appeal to emotion in advertisements is due to the fact that feelings shape citizen's decisions more deeply than their interest and rational choices do (Castells, 2009). Such an emotional response results from the reconfiguration of shared experiences regarding the dominant values, beliefs, and attitudes of each society and culture (Kim, 2005; Castells, 2009). To illustrate this point, Schwartz (1973) claims that political messages in the media work by associating own/initial positions about political issues with values and meaningful images. This suggests that meanings are shaped, rather than created in the medias. This theoretical point of view is of interest since it considers that media cannot create new meanings or simply manipulates the public, as Adorno (2001) suggests. On the contrary, it recognizes that previous knowledge and preexisting perception in the society are evoked and accentuated by communicational instruments.

Nevertheless, the problem with this technique the media use stereotypical representations of social life. Social groups and conflicts tend to be excluded of political advertisements (Catells, 2009), which favours the interest of the candidates and creates
misconception about realities. In other words, they are not neutral messages. On the contrary, relations of power and particular purposes frame them (Castells, 2005). In this logic of persuasion and attraction (Leiss et al., 2005), the elaboration of messages and the production of images serving the interest of a particular group are embedded (Castells, 2009). Moreover, technological innovations appear to intensify a tendency already present in the democratic and electoral game. In the cases that democracies have fragile institution (e.g. South America), the introduction of communicational apparatus appear to accentuate principally a disposition. So, it is clear that advertisements not only embed cultural beliefs and social values, but they also reflect relation of power and stereotypes, generating forms of symbolic violence against diverse ethical, cultural and gender minorities, while disregarding social conflicts.

Finally the exploration of the strategies used to construct the personality of the candidates in political advertisements can help in two respects. First, it allows to analyse how a common political phenomenon for Western democracies, such as the rise of manufacturing personalities in politics, takes different forms, contents and styles depending on the political system and electoral process in which it is produced. Second, it can also unfold aspects of the political culture by looking at the attributes and personal qualities that society consider valuable to support a leader and reject a candidate, and how attributes and personal qualities change over time.

2.3 THE CONSTRUCTION OF POLITICAL PERSONALITIES THROUGH THE MEDIA IN ECUADOR

The personalization of politics in South America is not a new phenomenon. On the contrary, various studies have analysed the relation between charismatic leaders and massive social support to promote political projects in this region (Martz, 1983; De La Torre, 2013; Philip, 1998). However, what appears to be new is the increasing use of communication apparatus and the decreasing importance of parties to generate political loyalties and social support (e.g. Fujimori in Peru, Menem in Argentina, Caldeira in Brazil). In fact, Canaghan and De la Torre (2008) suggest that the need to maintain the
popularity and the acceptance of the leader has encouraged presidents to adopt in a constant campaigning attitude in the media while they are running their respective countries. Chávez, Morales, and Correa mobilized public opinion and electoral support in order to dismantle and re-make institution based, among other strategies, on enormous communication apparatus (Canaghan and De la Torre, 2008). The presidential popularity of these leaders and their repeated electoral victories have been a key element to pursuing fast political transformations. Nevertheless the many interesting cases found about these phenomena, for analysing if political personality are manufactured trough the media in non Western-Democracies and what it can unfold about the political project of the candidate and the political culture of a particular country, this dissertation turn focus on Ecuador.

Since the second half of the XXth century, the political culture in Ecuador has been shaped by the appearance of charismatic leaders who appeals to the "people" to arouse massive social support to encourage their political projects. These leaders portrayed themselves as the incarnation of the people (Martz, 1983) and their images reflect popular desires and social expectation. However, they are pictured as better than the common people (De La Torre, 2013). The literature calls “populism” the phenomenon through which a leader intervene to reduce all social conflicts into two opposing groups: “lo popular” (those who belong to the people) and the ones who have the political or economic power (Martz, 1983; De La Torre, 2013). On the one hand, the notion of people becomes a moral concept, in which diverse cultural, ethnical, and religious backgrounds are disregarded. On the other hand, the upper class and the tradition political class — or any other social group, depending on the needs of the leader — become the enemy. Moreover, parties are extensions of the leader. Also, public institutions are fragile relative to the executive branch and the Congress's decisions are ignored. Thus, in Ecuador personalism in politics is not a new reality. On contrary individual leaders are critical in sustaining political parties and mobilizing social support towards them.

The relation between the media and the government in Ecuador started again when the country returned to a democratic state in 1979. However, the media trully began to be widely used to captivate masses by Abdala Bucaram during the presidential contest in
1996. Bucaram innovative use of radio and television – in addition to the clientelist networks of his party- to portray himself as the rejection of the elites attracted more followers than having a clear political project (De La Torre, 2008 ). The propaganda launched to support his candidature delivered emotional messages that were charged with symbols of the popular culture, religion and left wing movement. The advertisements pictured him as the "leader of the poors" with the mission to lead them out of misery by battling the traditional upper class. Similarly, his humble background was constantly evoked to portray himself as the embodiment of the people. In addition, the political spectacles performed during his campaign – which induced people to sing and dance popular music with him – were broadcasted as advertisements and his personal life was always the main issue in media interventions. Moreover, he directly directed the design and production of his communicational campaign. Finally, Bucaram propaganda was framed as a simple message of nationhood, where people are joined together under his image.

Even though Bucaram did not manage to stay in power for more than six months, his strategy to conquer audiences has had a deep influence in the electoral and political system. His ability to create intimacy with audiences —by talking about his personal life, the love for the people and using popular language, symbols, and experiences — has changed how politicians present themselves in the media. Before this actor entered the political scene, previous politician needed to prove respectability and cultivation to conquer vote from the electorate (De la Torre, 2008). After Bucaram’s election, however, the politic narrative continued to be based on the image of a hero, the villain and the victims. Moreover, in following years, other candidates used the same strategy, but they were adapted in order to include wider audiences, rather than to focus only on the lower classes. This inclusion is interesting regarding to the fact that the population of Quito (the capital city) tends to join the social protest demanding political transformations or the resignation of the president. Considering this tendency, Bucaram’s lesson in political communication is that the construction of the personality of the leader in the media requires to reach diverse groups, rather than focussing on only one large target. Whereas transformation on the relation of power are needed to lead their political projects. In the case of Bucaram, he failed to create
alliances with those who represent the economic, politic and symbolic power (the upper class, the traditional political party and the Catholic Church, respectively).

2.4 RAFAEL CORREA

When Rafael Correa declared he would run for the presidential election in 2006, he did so in a moment of instability and general social discomfort against the political class. In the previous decade, Ecuador had been one of the most fragile democracies in Latin America. Between 1997 and 2005, three elected presidents — Abdalá Bucaram, Jamil Mahuad, and Lucio Gutiérrez — had been forced to resign before completing their respective terms. In all three cases, mass protests against economic policies and scandals of corruption had been at the root of their resignation (De la Torre, 2008; Burbano De Lara, 2007). These events had produced a profound lack of confidence in the whole political system, especially among the population of Quito. In the social imagination, politicians had become the principal cause of the instability and the weak economic situation that characterized the country at that moment. Even though the process of privatization of public companies had never been completed in Ecuador, the financial crisis of 1998-1999, the adoption of dollar as a national currency, and the use of public money to save the banks had promoted the idea that politicians support the upper classes, rather than the well-being of the Ecuadorians.

Correa started his campaign for the presidential race in 2006 with no previous knowledge of electoral politics and no party affiliation. The only political experience of this former academic was as Minister of Economy during the interim government of President Alfredo Palacio in 2005. Yet, he was in office for less than six months as he resigned because of his lack of support to privatization and neoliberal policies. His resignation helped him create an image in the media as a left-wing supporter and courageous man. After this experience, Correa founded a political movement to support his presidential candidacy called the “Movimiento Patria Altiva I Soberana” (PAIS). Diverse left-wing parties, Indian rights movements, labour leaders, and environmentalist movements — that had historically been excluded from the political class — joined his initiative (Becker,
2013). This diversity of political actors saw in this candidate an option to integrate their demands into the operation of the State.

The low likelihood for this new movement to obtain a majority in the incoming Congress, motivated Correa to announce that he would not run for a position in this institution. Indeed, he planned to completely reform the managerial and regulatory aspects of the state (Becker, 2013). During his campaign, he offered to re-fecundate the nation by renovating the institutions of the state and the political class. The vehicle to lead this transformation was the Constituent Assembly. For this purpose, while in campaign, he announced to call for a nationwide vote (consultant popular) to elect this assembly whose task would be to re-write the constitution in order to put an end to the domination of the traditional parties, thereby dismantling neoliberal economic policy, increasing social investment, and integrating the demands of social movements (Acosta, 2009; De La Torre, 2015). This strategy accentuated his image against the prevailing anti-political mood of the population. Vinicio Alvarado, a veteran of previous presidential campaigns, developed the media campaign and communicational strategies that introduced this almost unknown candidate to the voters. Television and radio were the main instruments used to broadcast the political advertisements of Correa (Canaghan and De La Torre, 2008). Rapidly Correa’s spots on radio and television overcame those of his competitors. Due to the social support for his candidacy, Correa finished second (out of the 13 candidates) of the first round of the election, which was won by Alvaro Noboa, the wealthiest men in the country and leader of the political party "Renovación Institucional Acción Nacional" (PRIAN) However, in November 2006, Correa beat his opponent with 57 percent of the vote (Canghan and De La Torre, 2008).

After only two years in power, Correa won the referendum to call for the foundation of a Constitutional Assembly, conquered the majority of seats in the incoming assembly, obtained the approbation of the new Constitution, and was re-elected as President. These successive victories taught the new President that his political transformations and projects depended on electoral victories and in the consolidation of the power into the executive branch (De La Torre, Becker, 2013). For this purpose, Correa named Vinicio Alvarado
secretary of public administration. This position allowed the former campaign adviser of Correa to control the palace's secretariat of communications. In order to promote a positive image of the president, Alvarado carried on his communication strategy by spending a lot on television and radio advertisements. Such an intensive use of public resources started to preoccupy journalists and academics. In response to these preoccupations, the following new regulations for electoral processes were adopted. On the one hand, no private purchases of television and radio time were allowed. On the other hand, parties and political movements could only use resources provided by the government. At the same time, the government's communications infrastructure expanded. First, the government acquired the newspaper "El Telegráfo" after it fell into bankruptcy. Then, it inaugurated a state-owned television station and revived a national radio network. Further communication strategies include the use of weekly televised and radio program, direct advertising, and the Internet. In other words, from 2006 to 2013, the Correa administration developed a sophisticated infrastructure of communication, whose aim was to further construct the image of the president in the media in order to sustain the electoral support to his political project.

So far, this chapter has explored the theoretical framework about political personalization and the media. Also a brief analysis of the strategies used on advertisements to produce the personalities of political leaders was included. Finally, the focus looks thought the relation between political marketing, media and personalism in Ecuador. In the section that follows, the methodology used to explore the research question of this dissertation would be described.
3. METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to compare and describe how the image of Rafael Correa is manufactured through political advertisement broadcasted on television to support his running for office during the years 2006 and 2013. This data was consider important as it contains the political goals of this politicians, it presents the candidate to the audiences, it embedded cultural believes and social values and it recreates social stereotypes and relation of power. Therefore, the data was gathered from all the advertisement broadcasted in Television during the electoral campaign for President in Ecuador in 2006 and 2013. This visual materials are available in the official channels of the political movement that support this candidate “Movimiento Patria Altiva y Soberena” (PAIS) in the webpage youtube” in the webpage: www.youtube.com.

The underlying hypothesis of this research was that the images of politicians are manufactured through political advertisements according the desires of the audiences and the political interest of the candidate in contemporary democracies in Ecuador. Therefore, the research process was performed within a framework of content analysis, because this method allows proving deductively this hypothesis. Additionally, many authors have considered this methodology useful for discerning symbols and representation on visual products, particularly in advertisements and political propaganda (Rose, 2001; Krippendorff, 2004; Laswell, 1949). Besides, this method is suggested for unveiling the underlying social structures, regarding that it assumes that the content of a cultural production cannot exist independently from their contexts (eg b.i. Griswold, 1987). Furthermore, these cultural productions are interpretation of social circumstances, which are embedded in a wider social context and relations of power. Thus, context analysis appears to be one of most suitable methodological options to interpret the meaning and strategies of persuasion embedded in political advertisements in order to visualize what they can express about the political project of Rafael Correa and the political culture of Ecuador.
Based on these assumptions, on this research this technique was used in a systematic way, deductively coding the narratives and images appearing on the videos and counting the repetition of these codes. Then, patterns were discerned and constructed based on the images and discourses observed, reaching the explicit and covert meaning (Berelson, 1952: 18).

3.1. CORPUS CONSTRUCTION AND ANALYSIS

Following the recommendation of Russell and Ryan (2010: 289), the Steps developed for the analysis: first formulate the hypothesis: images of politicians are manufactured through political advertisements according the desires of the audiences and the political interest of the candidate in contemporary democracies in Ecuador. Second, the data were collected from all the political advertisement broadcasted on Television to support the running for President of Rafael Correa in 2006 and 2013 available in the official channels of the political movement –Movimiento Patria Altiva y Soberana- (PAIS) on the following webpage: www.youtube.com. A total of 17 videos were analyzed. 10 of this material correspond to the year 2006 and 7 of them to the year 2013. In general, in 2006, the duration of this material lasted from 2 to 3 minutes, while in 2013, the duration of the videos lasted from 4 to 5 minutes.

The next step was the creation of a set of codes according the hypothesis of this research. As stated before, content analysis was performed based on the data gathered. Although it does not exist unique set of codes to explore how the images of candidates are manufactured into images in political advertisements, the coding categories for this research were borrowed and adapted from other content analysis studies discussed earlier in the literature review (Castells, 2009, Kim, 2005). In general political advertisement to persuade the audiences manufacture the image of the politicians: highlighting personal qualities and attributes, attacking the political opponents, generating symbolic references about the audience, and by reducing political project into emotional and simple messages. Before starting the process of codification, the variables were pre-tested on a few of the selected text. This simulation was helpful to fix and adjust the categories and codes in order
to make them consistent in their coding. Also, it was created a code book and a case-by-variable matrix to analyses the visual material from the years 2006 and 2013. Finally the matrix was analysing, using words, phrases and images of the visual material to summarize and present the relevant findings.

3.2. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Finally, the weakness of the qualitative method applied is that it is not completely neutral, since in the process of meaning interpretation the personal subjectivity of the researcher is always involved (Foucault, 2004; White, 1980). This could have been prevented with the inclusion of blind coding and cross coding, but as this was not available other measures were developed. In order to assure the reliability and validity of the process of coding, it was performed more than one time to confirm the results and to prove that they were connected with the literature review. Also, considering that in most cases the categories used in this dissertation were adapted from other studies, they can be applied to other cases. However, they will need to be readjusted considering the particular elements reveal in the data. Finally to facilitate the process of replication of the methodology applied to explore the hypothesis a codebook, with the respective categories and subcategories used, were included in the appendix.
4. FINDINGS

4.1. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PERSONALITY OF RAFAEL CORREA

In the political advertisements of his 2006 campaign, Correa’s image was constructed so as to highlight his personal qualities in two remarkable ways. Firstly, the emphasis was on the fact that he represents a new face in the political arena. Indeed, the most repeated quality was his lack of political experience. This was followed by the notion that he was a common citizen. In the video advertisement "Los Jovenes con Correa" (Young people with Correa), his youthfulness and political inexperience are presented as positive characteristics, in a context where established politicians have a low credibility among the electorate. This is in stark contrast to the representation of Correa’s opponents, who are depicted as out-dated and ineffective. Furthermore, the advertisement "Presidente de Paz" (The President of peace) shows Correa surrounded by his family presenting themselves as “good people” and "people like you" (Image 1). This is a prime example of how his image was constructed with the aim of providing an alternative to the corrupted traditional political establishment. This construction relies on the personalization of the values of ‘the good politician’ and appeals to people’s empathy.

Chart 1: Personal Qualities of Correa in the Advertisement of the 2006 Presidential Campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Qualities</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A common citizen</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No political trajectory</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well educated</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family values</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correa’s educational background and his expertise as an academic from the second category of personal qualities that are brought forwards in the advertisement of the 2006 Campaign. In particular, his status as an expert economist was central in the construction of his personality. In the advertisement "Mensaje Final" (Final Message), he emphasises the fact that he would be the first president in the history of the country to have a degree in Economy (Image 2). When talking about his political project, Correa’s body language resembles the gestures of a lecturer, detailing to his audience the actions he intends to take achieve the "re-foundation" of the nation (Image 3). Once again, his age is shown as a source of honesty, in contrast with the old politicians who have occupied the political area of Ecuador for decades.

In summary, both his achievements outside the political ground and his personal characteristics were used to portray him as a superior leader with a clear political project to run the country. This is a good example that illustrates Castells (year) theory, where a president is associated with the image of a hero, whose destiny is to save the nation by using his experience and knowledge.

Image 2 and 3: Correa as an expert and a teacher
For the 2013 presidential campaign, the construction of the image of the “president candidate” was based on different qualities of Correa. After 6 years in office, advertisements primarily highlighted his political achievements in representing and serving “the people”. For instance, people from diverse ethnicity, age, occupation, and gender jointly support him or mention positive aspects of his presidency. His honesty and sacrifice were also well represented in his media campaign. For this purpose, emotional elements are used. For example, in the advertisement "El Regreso del Optimismo” (Rebirth of the Optimism) citizens “accuse” the “President” for bringing hope to the forgotten and for his personal sacrifices performed to serve the people. It seems that the word “accuse” was chosen voluntarily in reference to some accusation of authoritarianism of Correa’s administration.

**Chart 2: Personal Qualities of Correa in the Advertisement of the 2013 Presidential Campaign**

Compared with the 2006 campaign, he stopped being represented as an academic lecture his audience. On the contrary, he was pictured moving around the country, contemplating the transformation effectuated by his government, and spending shares time with his people. The advertisement called "La Bicicleta" (The bicycle) is a clear example of this shift. In this video, Correa leaves the presidential palace to cycle around the country (Image 4). During the journey, he passes through the new road infrastructures, public hospitals and schools that were built under his administration (Images 5). Further, he joins fishermen in their tasks and contemplates farmers, indigenous people, children, and
underprivileged population during their daily activities (Image 6 and 7). Those images portray Correa’s personality as the one of a secular saint, who sacrifices his personal interest, is the servant of his people, and gives hope to the forgotten (Image 8 and 9). Moreover, the fact that he kept his campaign promises makes him to deserve the faith of the people.

**Images 4, Image 5, Image 6, and Image 7: Correa the President of the People.**

In both electoral campaigns of 2006 and 2013, Correa’s image was manufactured so as to portray him as “hero”, bringing evidences to Castells (year) theory. However, the narrative behind such a “superman” differed. While his non-political professional experience and expertise were brought forward in the first campaign, the “president

**Images 8 and Image 9: The President as a Secular Saint**

In both electoral campaigns of 2006 and 2013, Correa’s image was manufactured so as to portray him as “hero”, bringing evidences to Castells (year) theory. However, the narrative behind such a “superman” differed. While his non-political professional experience and expertise were brought forward in the first campaign, the “president
candidate” was depicted as a secular saint in the second one. This shift appears to sustain De La Torre (2008) argument about the Ecuadorian political culture, where populist leaders receive strong support. Furthermore, it also illustrates the claim by Castells (2005) where political personalities are constructed according to the desires of the audiences and the political mood of the citizens. In 2006, after a decade of political instability, the electorate wanted a new leader, with a different project. While in 2013, the rise of social conflicts against Correa’s administration and the criticism against his authoritarian personality forced him to attempt to convince the voters that he was a President is devoted to his people (Montufar, 2013).

4.2. THE POLITICAL OPPONENTS OF RAFAEL CORREA

Constant attacks to political opponents in Correa’s advertisements illustrate Castells (2009) argument, where a hero requires the existence of a villain. The principal difference between the advertisements of 2006 and 2013 is that the enemies are no longer to be found exclusively among rival political parties. In the first campaign, the majority of advertisements concentrated on attacking the traditional political class. Attacks primarily targeted Alvaro Noboa (the candidate ranking first the polls) and Leon Febres Cordero who was the leader of the most influential right-wing political party, the one of the former President of Ecuador. In advertisements, the traditional political class was related with wild and dangerous animals or with clowns (Image 10 and 11). These representations are a clear attempt to magnify the electorates’ lack of confidence into the political system of the time. Even though Banks, which are non-political actors, were also heavily criticised in advertisements because of the 1999 financial crisis, the blame for this crisis was actually put on previous governments who had failed to regulate the banking sector. Attributing the instability of the country to the traditional political class illustrates the fact that Correa’s advertisement campaign had singled out one clear enemy.

Images 10 and 11: Correa’s Opponents as Dangerous Animals and Clowns
The second campaign was different in so far as Correa’s advertisements attacked a variety of opponents. In 2013, attack to many actors (political and non political) use indirect attack of the traditional class. In “Mi Pluma” (my pen), the opponent is shown as defeated. An old man is filmed saying that his pencil killed the "old nation" and affirming that the "partidocracy" (traditional parties) was buried. The film continues with a woman thanking the President for "taking back the resources from the corrupted to the people". In "El Renacer del Optimismo" (Rebirth of the Optimism), Correa claims that Ecuador has stopped being the nation of "hope robbers". In contrast, the traditional political class continues to be depicted as a threat in other advertisements. In "La Bicicleta" Correa argues that "returning to the past does not make sense." He also forbids the people to forgot the "past" or to allow "the past" to get back into the power.

The second enemies of the President were non-political groups, In 2013 journalists and media owners joined the banks as opponents to the regime. In "Vamos Rafael, no te van a detener” (Let’s go, Rafael, no one will stop you), young people claim that "history" should judge Correa, and not "those who use the paper to defame him" (Image 12 and 13), thereby suggesting that the media are not trustworthy. In order to understand why Correa chose to target those groups, it is important to mention that private media and journalists had heavily criticised the authoritarianism of his first mandate and his technocratic revolution. Moreover Guillermo Lasso – the owner of the second largest bank in the country – was second in the polls during the campaign. Further, banks and media are powerful adversaries, given their economic and symbolic power in influencing public opinion (Castells, 2009).
Other opponents mentioned in advertisements were the "traitors" and "deserters". In "La Bicicleta," Correa said that "there have been betrayals that have hurt our souls, but they have failed to surrender us". Indeed, many social and political movements had announced their separation from his movement. Moreover, in some cases, these "deserters" joined other parties or founded their own political movement. The newly founded indigenous political parties (CONAIE) represent a significant loss, considering that this party have a strong grass root organization.

This diversity of opponents shows that the image of the villain is less clear in the second campaign. After Correa’s reform of the political system, the traditional political class had lost its influence in the Congress (Montufar, 2013). Moreover, the current political opposition was fragmented and had been unable to create alliances (Montufar, 2013). This ambiguity allows Correa for using the political instability to gain social support, but also to integrate new actors from the civil society.

4.3. SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE VOTERS

When referring to the voters, the 2006 advertisements primarily called them “citizens” (Chart 3). This is best illustrated by the slogan of the political movement: "La Revolución Ciudadana" (The Citizens' Revolution). This political message gives the idea that Correa’s political project focuses on the citizen and recognises the political and civic rights of diverse ethnical minorities, gender diversities, and excluded population. It is worth noting that there is only one advertisement, "Los Jovenes con Correa" (The Youngs with Correa), where the candidate is pictured with other individuals. In most cases, he appears
alone explaining the lines of his political project. Although he sometimes refers to the “unprivileged class” and the “people”, the frequency of these terms is very low compared to the use of the word “citizen”. It is clear that his purpose is to convey the idea that his political project is to form a “government of citizens”.

Chart 3: Symbolic Representations Voters in the Advertisements of 2006 and 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Citizens</th>
<th>The people</th>
<th>The previous forgotten class</th>
<th>The poor</th>
<th>Youngs</th>
<th>Ethnical minorities</th>
<th>Children</th>
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<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>120</td>
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</table>

Nevertheless, this did not prevent him to depict the citizens as victims of the traditional political class. This is evident in the advertisement "No boa No" (No snake no), where a snake, which represents a rival (Alvaro Noboa), is eating the country’s natural and economic resources (Image 14). In using the negative political opinion of the population towards the traditional political system, Correa aims to legitimise his candidacy.

Image 14: Alvaro Noboa as a Snake Eating Ecuador.
In 2013, the terminology had changed and emphasis was on “el pueblo” (the people) (Chart No. 3). The majority of advertisements supporting Correa represent happy and optimistic people from diverse ethnical origins, class, location, age, and occupation. "Vamos Rafael, No Te Van a Detener" (Let's go, Correa, no one will stop you) is an obvious example that portrays small business owners and diverse manual, street, and informal workers thanking the President Correa for his work and for bringing back “hope” to them (Image 15, 16 and 17). Another example of this shift is clear in the advertisement named "Ya Tenemos Presidente, Tenemos a Rafael (We already have President, we have Rafael) where sentences such as "We are the people of this big dream." and "We are those who vote and those who govern." are recurring. This narrative suggests that differences among Ecuadorians had been overcome thanks to President Correa as the majority of the population was united supporting him. These images and phrases are an excellent illustration of Correa’s intention to be represented as the embodiment of the people.

**Image 15: People urging Correa to Stay in Office**

![Image 15](image15.jpg)

**Image 16 and 17: Street and Informal Workers Supporting Correa’s Re-election**

![Image 16 and 17](image16_17.jpg)
Finally, the principal change in the representation of voters between 2006 and 2013 is that they are no longer victims but have become active participants of the re-foundation of the nation. However, the key condition to be a real member is to be part of the “people of this big dream”. In other words, supporting Correa is necessary. Indeed, in “Mi Pluma” (My Pen), the participation of the population in this political transformation is concentrated on the act of voting for the President (Image 18 and 19), in order to allow him to continue with his mission of “unifying the nation” and “reviving people’s hope”. It is clear that the purpose of this message was to show an audience completely committed to their President. This suggests that the principal role of the citizens in this process is to vote for the president and to believe on him.

Image 18 and 19: The “People” expressing their participation in the political project of Correa

The rise of the word “people” in advertisements can be explained by the fact that Correa’s administration had largely used referendums in order to transform the relation of power and political system. As mentioned in the literature review, the electorate had approved all the initiatives launched by Correa. Yet, one of the principal weaknesses of his government was its lack of social organization in the bases (Becker, 2013; Mountufar, 2013). Contrary to the cases of Morales and Chavez, Correa’s election is not the outcome of the work of social movements (Becker, 2013). Further, academics and journalists have described Correa’s governance as technocratic, excluding citizens from the decision process (Montufar, 2013). In response to these criticisms, advertisements showed a President working for the people and constantly suggested that they were included in the political process. Finally, the concept of citizenship was not appropriate to evoke the
population’s emotions and loyalties vis-à-vis the candidate. On the contrary, the word “people” in the Ecuadorian political culture had always been related to the image of a redeemer. Moreover, this leader became the representation of the alliance between the nation and the people. This shift demonstrates that the government had become aware that political stability depended on the popularity of the leader.

4.4. POLITICAL GOALS

In 2013, Correa’s manifesto was less clear than the one of 2006 and it employed more emotional elements and moral values. Although the political project continued to be central to his political project in the second campaign, the candidate did not explain how he would achieve this transformation, but used simple symbols. In the advertisements broadcasted during 2013, the flag of the political movement (PAIS) continuously appeared alongside the Ecuadorian flag, insinuating that his political project and the nation are indivisible. Further, the economic interests in Correa’s discourse had changed. The worries about the lack of employment, the process of privatization of public companies, and the maintenance of dollarization and subsidies were replaced by the necessity to overcome poverty and promote development. This suggests that the precise economic goals advocated in his first campaign were transformed into unclear aims such as poverty alleviation and economic development.

Chart 4: Political Aims Mentioned in the 2006 and 2013 Advertisements
Another interesting finding in the advertisement broadcasted in 2013 is the appearance of moral principles and emotions to qualify transformations that were conducted during his first mandate, (Chart 4). That is, the process of “re-foundation the nation” brought not only material transformations but also introduced new values and feelings. Love and hope are the most evoked to qualify the new country and its population (Chart 5). In "El Renacer del Optimismo” (Rebirth of the Optimism), Correa compared himself with Alfaro and Bolivar when he claimed that “six years ago, (they) awoke to give back the hope to the people". In the same advertisement, he said that he was particularly proud to "have recovered the faith and hope” of the Ecuadorian. Another example of this tendency appeared in the advertisement "La Bicicleta" when Correa told that "the love for the justice, the truth and the migrants" were the principal changes brought up by their political project. These findings show his political project was presented as the realization of the historical aspirations of the civic heroes (i.e. Alfaro and Bolivar) and a moral crusade.

**Chart No 5: Values and Emotions 2013 mentioned in Advertisements of the year 2013**

![Chart](image)

According to the message broadcasted in the advertisements, the political project is not only destined to transform the state, but also the values of the society. In 2006 the goals of the government were clear. With respect to the political area, the objectives were to transform the functions of the public institutions, the political system and the body of fundamental principles under which the state was governed. In the economic field, the goals were to increase market regulations and to distribute resources more equally within the society. On top of these, Correa claimed in 2013 that the state should have a new duty vis-à-vis the society: it must promote new social values. This shift had different origins.
First, the political system and constitution had been changed, concentrating the power in the executive branch (Montúfar, 2013). Moreover, the state had played a strong role in the regulation of the economy, the process of privatization had been reverted and subsidies had been increased (Beck, 2013; De La Torre, 2015). Thirdly, the social investment had also increased compared with spending of previous government (Montufar, 2013; Beck, 2013).

Although Correa’s government had successfully carried out political and economic reform in his first mandate social conflicts and political opposition had appeared (Beck, 2013). As mentioned above, the principal complaints were directed towards his authoritarian behavior, his technocratic management of the state, and the concentration of power on the executive office. In response to those criticisms, the advertisement related Rafael Correa with moral values and deep emotions to portray the human side of his administration.
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the relationship between the findings analysed in the last section with the research question and the literature review. Then, it turns focus to the examination of the unexpected results and concludes with brief suggestions for further researches.

This shift in the image of Rafael Correa coincides with Castells’ argumentative line about the notion that personalities of politicians are constructed through the media according to the political atmosphere and “mood” of the audiences. Moreover, these personalities tend to represent images of a “hero” justified by the existence of a villain. In 2006, after a decade of political instability and economic crises, the image of Correa represented the social desire for a “hero” capable to revert the neoliberal policies implemented by the traditional political class (Burbano de Lara, 2007). On the contrary, after the six year in the office, the image of Correa has been transformed into a “secular saint”, devoted to serving unprivileged social classes framed as “the people” and to protecting them from numerous enemies. The category of the “enemies” has been however broadened – as in 2006 it was defined mostly as a “traditional political class”, seven years lates it started to encompass also other groups, such as journalists, bank owners and his previous political supporters. This shift from a political hero to a “secular saint”, and redefinition of the concept of “clear” enemy to a diffused one, expresses that the Government of Correa and his party promoted a cult of the personality of the leader in an authoritarian form, as every actor who is not part of their political project can be put within the framework of “enemy”. It also expresses the government's confidence of its strong status and stable position.

Furthermore, the findings show also that the construction of image of the candidate shapes political attitudes and meaning embedded in the culture, as was suggested by Schwartz. Both the campaign from 2006 and the one from 2013 have strongly relied on traditional populist strategies, but in 2013 this emphasize was particularly strong. In 2013 Rafael Correa is presented as the embodiment of “the people”, the symbol of the alliance between the state and the people. These are classical attitudes of populist leaders in
Ecuador that reduce the political arena into an emotional and moral battle between two antagonist sides (De La Torre, 2008). The findings suggest that, indeed, this “representation” disregards social conflict and reproduces stereotypes in order to benefit the interest of the candidate, as Castells (2009) have claimed. On the advertisements broadcasted in 2013, people of diverse ethnical origins, social class and age have jointed together to support the re-election of the President. However, the opposition to the government has arise, specially from the indigenous political party (CONAIE) and social movements (Becker, 2013). Although Rafael Correa transforms the political system and the institution of the state, it continues to use populist elements embedded in the political culture of the country to justify his political project as a moral crusade.

Finally, from the election in 2006 to 2013, the political message shifted into using more emotional elements and its actual content – political goals – became somehow unclear. According to the message communicated by these advertisements, the political project is not only destined to transform the state, but also to address the multiple values of the society. In 2006 the goals of the government were clear. With respect of the political field, the objectives were to transform the function of the public institution, the political system and the fundamental principles under which it is governed. In the economic field, the goals were focused on increasing participation of the state in the regulation of the market and on distributing the resources more equally within the society. Nevertheless, these purpose continue to be recalled, as for 2013 the announced the new mission vis-à-vis the society – this mission is to establish and promote new social values.

Even though the findings suggest that the personality of politician is constructed in the media, the candidate's individual attributes, appreciated by each particular culture that can be shaped by marketing techniques and the media, are also important. Rafael Correa has some personal and professional achievements (i.e. stable family, high level of education, a career) that allowed him to create this personal capital. Correa is also a charismatic leader, influential speaker and abilities to turn his political action into “performance” for the audience - the fact that he can led a weekly TV program in which he explains the audience the actions and achievement of the government is a prove of it.
Additionally, his message about serving the most unprivileged groups of society is strengthened by the images of public services and road infrastructure, that appear often in the commercials, empowering Correa's message by showing his investment in social policies and direct subsides to the lower class (Montufar, 2013).

Along this dissertation the ways in which the image of Rafael Correa was constructed in political advertisement for the presidential election of 2006 and 2013 were explored. The differences between both campaigns show that indeed the personalities of Rafael Correa was created in the media according to the desires of the audience. Also, it was shown that the advertisement shape political attitudes already embedded in the society toward the interest of the leader, and that they disregard social conflicts and reduce political projects into simple and emotional messages. In addition, the findings shows that the political party of Rafael Correa are based on a cult of the personality of the leader and that this candidate is accentuating the populist tradition in the political culture of Ecuador. Finally, the practical implication of this dissertation suggest that attention should paid on the symbolic and material circumstances that generate the unprecedented levels of popularity of Correa since the return to the democracy.
REFERENCES:


De La Torre, C. (2013a). In the Name of the People: Democratization, Popular Organizations, and Populism in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador. European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, 0(95), 27.


### Appendix I:

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