Heras-Pedrosa, Carlos de las; Jambrino-Maldonado,
Carmen; Iglesias-Sánchez, Patricia; Lugo Ocando, Jairo
The U. S. Presidential Elections from the Point Of View of the European Press

The U.S. Presidential Elections from the Point Of View of the European Press

Las elecciones presidenciales de Estados Unidos desde el punto de vista de la prensa europea

Carlos de las Heras-Pedrosa[*]
Carmen Jambrino-Maldonado[**]
Patricia Iglesias-Sánchez[***]
Jairo Lugo Ocando[****]

Abstract

Public relations strategies based on dramatizations are key tools for successful electoral campaigns. Press offices play a fundamental role as theater directors, turning their leaders into great actors. What at first glance looks like a theatrical performance is, more than ever before, what happened in the U.S. presidential elections. Newspapers are intensifying the use of visual elements to reinforce the news. This research analyzes 2 463 articles from 8 digital newspapers in 4 countries to learn about the impact of visuals and dramatization on the European press. It seems paradoxical that the progressive newspapers devoted more articles to Trump than the conservative newspapers. A lack of time on the part of the journalists? What is certain is that the media reproduced the visuals prepared by Trump's press office and his perfectly designed public appearances. The study shows that the progressive newspapers analyzed have contributed to giving Trump greater visibility in Europe.

Key words: political communication, public image, leaders, United States 2016 elections, Trump against Clinton

Resumen

Las estrategias de relaciones públicas basadas en dramatizaciones son herramientas fundamentales para que las campañas electorales tengan éxito. Las oficinas de prensa juegan un papel crucial como directores teatrales, pues convierten a sus líderes en grandes actores. Lo que a primera vista parece una actuación teatral es, más que nunca antes, lo que ha ocurrido en las últimas elecciones presidenciales de Estados Unidos: los periódicos intensificaron el uso de elementos visuales para reforzar las noticias. Esta investigación analiza 2463 artículos de 8 periódicos

 * University of Málaga, Spain; cheras@uma.es
 ** University of Málaga, Spain; mcjambrino@uma.es
 *** University of Málaga, Spain; patricia.iglesias@uma.es
**** University of Leeds, England; j.lugo-ocando@leeds.ac.uk

digitales en 4 países para aprender acerca del impacto de la dramatización y los efectos visuales en la prensa europea. Parece paradójico que los periódicos progresistas dedican más artículos a Trump que los conservadores; ¿falta de tiempo por parte de los periodistas? Lo que es cierto es que los medios reprodujeron los elementos visuales que preparó la oficina de prensa de Trump y sus apariciones en público, perfectamente diseñadas. El estudio muestra que los periódicos progresistas analizados han contribuido a dar a Trump mayor visibilidad en Europa.
Palabras clave: comunicación política, imagen pública, líderes, elecciones del 2016 en Estados Unidos, Trump contra Clinton.

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has brought a new revolution, with information on paper becoming information on a computer screen and now on our mobile phones, too. Immediacy plays a crucial role, and new generations are not willing to wait for more than a few seconds for a page to load on their phones. According to a study carried out by Gausby (Harris, 2015) for Microsoft, attention spans are diminishing to as low as eight seconds. Young people aged 18 to 24 use their mobile phones to watch TV, stay informed, and speak to their friends; they are not willing to read long, endless articles in the best newspapers.

On February 2, 2002, the then-president of the European Parliament, Mr. Cox, in a debate on terrorism in Strasbourg, pointed out the agreement between the three European institutions (the Commission, the Council, and the Parliament). Later, in a press conference, he said: "One image reveals more than a thousand words," making reference to the presidential table with the representatives of each institution. This sentence marked the line of what has been called the "revolution of immediacy." Profound changes exist that make the media adapt to new formats.

In the study of the U.S. presidential elections, it is evident that the majority of the articles were short, with a headline, subheading, photo or video, and a few lines commenting on the news item, increasing the number of short articles in the day. In this scenario, giving visuals a strong position in public relations campaigns is essential. The organization of events or rallies facilitates visual communication with one's different audiences (Hazleton and Long, 1988; Hazleton, 1993).

Public relations define general systems theory as the organization's adaptation process in which communicative elements are used to achieve its objectives. Messages, accompanied by visuals, will be the manifestations of communication strategies to achieve the organization's objectives. Six public relations strategies to communicate with one's audiences have been defined: informative, facilitative, persuasive, promise and

(DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.22201/cisan.24487228e.2019.1.374)

reward, threat and punishment, and bargaining and cooperative problem solving (Dodd and Collins, 2017; Werder, 2006). They will be analyzed in each candidate's strategy.

This case study found that the Republican candidate's PR strategies match three of the above: persuasive, promise and reward, and bargaining and cooperative problem solving.

First of all, he appeals to the emotions and uses language with a very particular point of view. The messages include a call to action; as a promise and a reward, "Make America Great Again." The last strategy mentioned, and the one that seems to have the greatest impact on society, bargaining and cooperative problem solving, implies that we are all facing an adversary together. This approach is designed to bring people together around his interests.

However, for Russell and Lamme (2016), the public relations strategies applied do not themselves define the lines of action, because other forms of persuasion exist, as in the case of propaganda, that can also have a significant strategic value.

The U.S. presidential elections have been the subject of much debate and interest in Europe in recent months, generating a significant amount of news content. This article analyzes the European media and their editorial ideologies, contrasting this with personal characteristics, the dramatization of the candidates, and knowledge of the scenography. Therefore, the perception of presidential candidates can be influenced by the media that they consume, both of their editorial ideologies and the photographs and videos that these newspapers, aware of the power of visuals and stage design, provide.

The media are responsible for creating the visuals that people receive. The image that the majority of Europeans have of the presidential candidates is what they perceive through the media, especially television, social networks, and the press in general. For the study of the U.S. elections, given the evident distances and different languages involved, the local media enjoy greater relevance and more credibility than other forms of communication (Losada, 2002).

The choice of the adjectives of image is not random. No communication can generate consequences in the mind of a receiver if it is not endowed with meaning. Credibility and confidence will depend to a large extent on the meaning that subjects are able to perceive in what they receive.

It is clear that the media have a real influence on the opinions that their audiences form, regardless of whether the contents relate to the news, fictitious spaces, or entertainment (Berrocal, Campos Domínguez, and Redondo García, 2012). It is widely thought that the media are the main mediators of reality for citizens as a group, and that a large part of the collective imagination has, at its foundation, the generation of opinion, but also of image.

Although today's society is better educated than before, and citizens have a critical opinion of their leaders (Sotelo, 2008), it should be noted that the creation of images for political leaders in recent years has focused on generating a show or sensationalism. There is a growing search for conflict and stories, personalizing the leader in the pursuit of information, but also of entertainment (Berrocal, Campos Domínguez, and Redondo García 2012; Losada, 2002). It can be said that the media have a decisive role, since they are not only involved in the construction of events but also participate directly in the formation of visuals.

In general, presidential elections in the United States are of global interest. On this occasion, the electoral contest between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump initially had a dual focus. On the one hand, the possibility existed of electing the first female president. It is possible that the traditional genderization of Democrats as feminine and Republicans as masculine might have become muddled in the 2016 election. In any case, "the entry of a female candidate into the presidential race offers a unique opportunity to gain insight into political party genderization" (Hale and Grabe, 2018: 450). In addition, in this case, this candidate had a perfect knowledge of the establishment and therefore of the continuity of the policies initiated by Obama, with the positive consequences of growth in employment or the "Obamacare" health reform. Her opponent was a successful businessman with perfect knowledge of the media. However, the electoral process involved other factors that would contribute to its media importance, not only for the United States but for the rest of the world. Among these factors were emails, the leaks via WikiLeaks or Russian hackers experienced by the woman candidate, and the Republican candidate's daily tactless remarks or his populist messages. All of this led the major European newspapers to increase their presence in the United States, looking for news in every corner of the country. Therefore, this presidential election has captured the greatest interest in recent European history, causing the population to gain an unprecedented knowledge of the two candidates.

The electoral campaign was distinguished by the Republican candidate's messages, with their evidently populist character, achieving a greater media presence than his opponent. In a study on rhetoric, Toth (2009) refers mainly to how individuals, groups, and organizations, through argument and counter-argument, creating issues and resolving uncertainties, seek the attention and support of their audiences. Symbolic aspects play a very important role in the construction of the political objectives to be achieved (Taylor, 2011; Ihlen, 2011).

The dramatization game, with great care given to stage design and a perfectly acted script, got results. According to Naegele and Goffman (1956), individuals act in the same way as they would in a drama, and they present themselves as others wish to see them. Burke's (1989) model had already classified the ritual of political campaigns.

His theory considers dramatism to be a method because it invites us to consider motivations from a dramatic perspective, in which symbols and language are part of the movement. Just like in the theater, he defines actors and their scripts, the roles, and their movements and gestures. Marshall (2010) emphasizes the importance of carrying out a great many activities of this type for public figures to get greater exposure in the media. In short, a perfectly defined stage performance. These theories are very similar to the concepts of populism known today. In this case, the actor, or the Republican candidate, polarized citizens by identifying the opposing candidate as the common enemy, positioning Trump as the solution for all problems "Make America Great Again." For this purpose, he used patriotic symbols. He was always accompanied by the U.S. flag or its colors at rallies or public speeches, kissing or holding it on many occasions. Instead of the politician kissing a child (a very common act in Europe), he kissed the flag, awakening U.S. American patriotic feeling. Another commonly used resource is the bargaining and cooperative problem-solving strategy. This is the definition of the candidate as a spokesman for the people, gaining a rhetorical advantage when he becomes the voice and representative of the nation where all evils belong to the opposition (Dodd and Collins, 2017). Burke (1989) also points out that actions must be motivated. This is how Donald Trump speaks, for example, about building the "wall to stop drug traffickers and immigrants from entering."

It can be argued that Trump's communication style managed to exceed all expectations. From the beginning of the campaign, experts of all persuasions seemed to have underestimated the chances of success of Donald's politics (Lee and Lim, 2016; Ross and Rivers, 2017). Threats such as the wall, discussed earlier, or the prevention of Muslim immigration, or breaching trade agreements, made up a populist, grandiose, dynamic, and informal communication style that managed to go against all predictions (Bacchetta, 2002; Collins, 2016; Ahmadian, Azarshahi, and Paulhus, 2017).

His simple, direct style of communication, which reached all types of audiences, combined with controversial messages –Obama is African; When I'm president I'll put Clinton in jail; I'll throw all the immigrants out of the country; the Arabs are terrorists–, built a reputation for showmanship. This has led the media from all over the world, and in this case, Europe, to devote a lot of space to them (Ashcroft, 2016; Gökariksel and Smith, 2016).

Taking these considerations into account, the study of the selected media analyzed not only the candidates' messages, but also, as a crucial part of communication, all the symbolism that each of them has used in their campaigns and that has been reflected in visuals in the various digital newspapers. The presence of party colleagues, singers, or actors in the case of Clinton, and of family members or the United States flag in the case of Trump, has played a relevant role in this election campaign.

We have chosen eight media outlets in their digital formats with both progressive and conservative editorial ideologies, which reflect, in principle, interests in line with the Democrats or the Republicans. This will give us an overview of the U.S. presidential electoral campaign as witnessed in Europe. "The restraint shown by the columnists contrasts with the strong commitment of the headlines to directing the vote of their respective readers, something that is not necessarily surprising in a media system of historically polarized pluralism, accustomed to assuming a role of political leadership" (Campos Domínguez, Valera Ordaz, and López García, 2015: 1629). It is true that Donald Trump's extremely radical, populist stance may have caused some conservative newspapers to stop supporting the Republican candidate.

Methodology

The theoretical approaches and research reviewed formed the basis of the analysis of the news content of the most widely read European newspapers. The aim of the research is to take a closer look at the nature of news and learn more about the treatment of visuals that occurred with regard to the phenomenon in the European digital press.

With this objective in mind, the following research questions have been proposed:

RQ_1. Relationship of the newspapers with the candidates:
$RQ_{1.1.}$ Do digital newspapers with conservative tendencies coincide in their editorial ideology with the Republican Party and the elected candidate Donald Trump?
$RQ_{1.2.}$ Do newspapers with progressive tendencies coincide in their editorial ideologies with the Democratic Party and its candidate Hillary Clinton?
$RQ_{1.3.}$ Do newspapers devote more articles and space in their publications to the candidates who share their ideology?
RQ_2. Do populist messages gain candidates greater exposure?
RQ_3. Are the public relations strategies used by the candidates reflected in the visuals found in digital newspapers?

Content analysis was chosen because it allows us to derive reproducible inferences based on specific characteristics identified in the messages (Van der Meer, 2016; Krippendorff, 1990). This type of analysis shows trends and reveals differences in the content of the communication. It also allows us to compare messages and

means of communication and to identify intentions, appeals, and symbolic character-istics. To do this, evaluative analysis and frequency analysis are used.

Taking into account the observation of the systemized behavior in the media, it is a good idea to use this technique to obtain rigorous data. Once this has undergone statistical analysis, "it generates valid inference that can be applied to the context," according to Krippendorf's classic definition (1990: 28). To demonstrate this, we use a broad sample that supports the representative nature of the indicators with a total of 2 463 journalistic articles analyzed between June 1 and November 8, 2016 in eight digital newspapers in the eurozone.

The eurozone, represented by its 19 member countries, gives greater protection to the EU globally, since the euro is the second most important international currency af-ter the U.S. dollar. This is why four countries within the euro area were included for this research (Goodell and Vähämaa, 2013). They were chosen at random and are rep-resentative in terms of population. Germany, France, Spain, and Belgium, together, make up 61 percent of the population. Three of the four larger countries were selected, with Belgium representing one of the countries with a smaller number of inhabitants.

We selected two newspapers that are representative in terms of audience and edi-torial ideology for each country; one progressive and the other conservative. To identify them, we used data from IFABC (Eurotopics' International Federation of Audit Bureaux of Certification) (2017).

The study universe consists of the following digital newspapers:

Table 1 NEWSPAPERS AND COUNTRIES IN THE STUDY			
Country	Digital newspaper	Editorial ideology	Web address
Germany	*Bild-Zeitung*	conservative	http://www.bild.de/
	Süddeutsche Zeitung	progressive	http://www.sueddeutsche.de/
France	*Le Figaro*	conservative	http://www.lefigaro.fr/
	Le Monde	progressive	http://www.lemonde.fr/
Spain	*ABC*	conservative	http://www.abc.com/
	El País	progressive	http://www.elpais.com/
Belgium	*La Dernière Heure*	conservative	http://www.dhnet.be/
	Le Soir	progressive	http://www.lesoir.be/

The analysis of the image of candidates Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton was carried out with a broad journalistic study, as shown in the technical information summary (Table 2).

Table 2 TECHNICAL INFORMATION	
Units of analysis	2 463 articles distributed as follows: 181 bild.de; 362 sueddeutsche.de; 261 lefigaro.fr; 579 lemonde.fr; 448 elpais.es; 369 abc.es; 133 dhnet.be; 130 lesoir.be
Period analyzed	June 1 - November 8, 2016.
Selection criteria for the units of analysis	Key words: "Trump" or "Clinton" with a photo or video in the news article
Source: Developed by the authors.	

The analysis begins with June 1, coinciding with the final stages of both parties' primaries, and ends with November 8. Although the candidates had not yet been officially selected by each of their parties, they were already the clear front-runners. For this reason, their public speeches were not directed at their rivals in their own party, but at the other party. With the objective of study in mind, we gathered selected articles with visuals (photographs or videos) that we processed using quantitative and qualitative criteria.

With regard to the categories, we developed a codification datasheet with the information collected structured in the following blocks:

| Table 3 INFORMATION ON THE STUDY VARIABLES		
Identification variable	Date Newspaper Candidate Country Editorial ideology	
Information processing variables	Positive Negative Neutral	
Visual composition variables	Importance of the candidate in the image.	Close-up portrait shot of candidate Medium shot of candidate with U.S. flag or emblems Medium shot of candidate Family of candidate Party members with candidate Party members Other motifs
	Photograph or video	Trump Clinton Other
Source: De las Heras-Pedrosa et al. (2017).		

Results

The results will be presented in the following way: 1) a quantitative analysis cross-referencing the following variables: the candidates, countries, the ideology of the newspapers' editorial line, and newspapers; 2) a qualitative study will analyze information processing in relation to each of the aspects listed above; and, 3) the information collected in the first two sections will serve as a basis for the study and interpretation of the visuals found in the articles to be analyzed.

Presence of the Candidates in the Newspapers

The Republican candidate's strategies got him 51.9 percent of the 2 463 articles analyzed in the sample, while only 35.6 percent were dedicated to Clinton. Articles about both candidates made up 12.5 percent, as was the case of the three electoral debates on television. Also included in the "both" category are the articles that explain the U.S. electoral process.

Figure 1 shows that France and Spain devote the most space to the presidential elections. Donald Trump has been at the forefront in each of them. With 435 articles, the French newspapers provide 17.7 percent. The Spanish newspapers are next, with 427 articles and 17.3 percent of the total.

Figure 1
PRESENCE OF THE CANDIDATES IN THE NEWSPAPERS BY COUNTRY
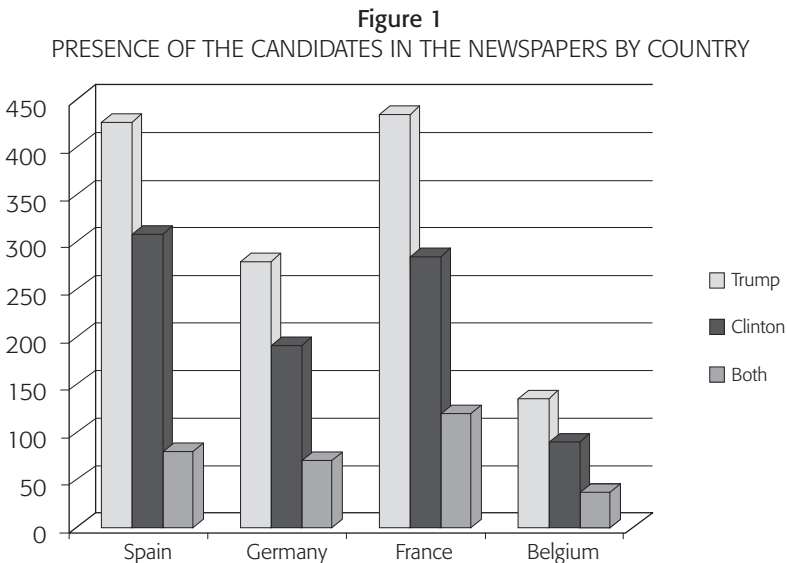
Source: Data developed by the authors.

The decision to stratify the newspapers in the sample as conservative or progressive provides an opportunity to learn about the tendencies of European editorial ideologies. We found that the progressive newspapers were more involved in the electoral campaign, dedicating more attention to it. Articles from the so-called progressive newspapers make up 61.7 percent, compared to 38.3 percent provided by the conservative ones. Despite what one might expect, Donald Trump wins again in both cases. Contrary to all journalistic logic, the progressive newspapers give the Republican candidate more exposure than the conservative newspapers do.

Figure 2
PRESENCE OF THE CANDIDATES IN THE NEWSPAPERS BY EDITORIAL IDEOLOGY
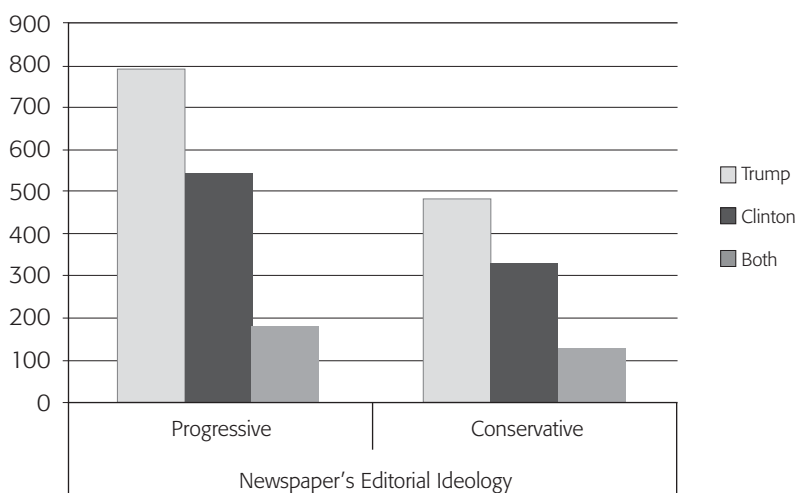
Source: Data developed by the authors.

INFORMATION PROCESSING IN THE NEWSPAPERS

Populist speeches, regardless of their influence on the population, tend to be rejected by the European press. For example, Brexit, and the amazed reaction to its victory on the front pages of newspapers, is very recent. The current phenomenon of Le Pen in France and the memory of the populist speeches of the dictators Hitler, Mussolini, or Franco are still present. We will now analyze the information processing variable, with its positive, negative, or neutral news article values. As before, we will study it by candidate, country, editorial ideology, and newspaper.
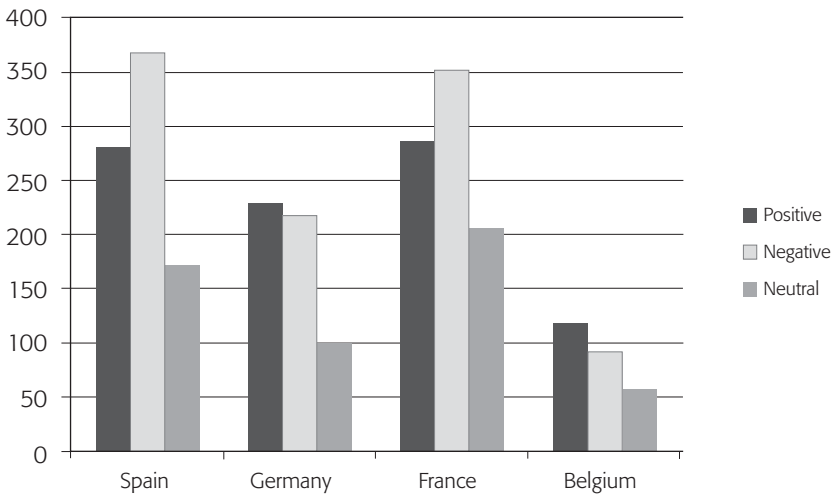
Figure 3
INFORMATION PROCESSING BY CANDIDATE
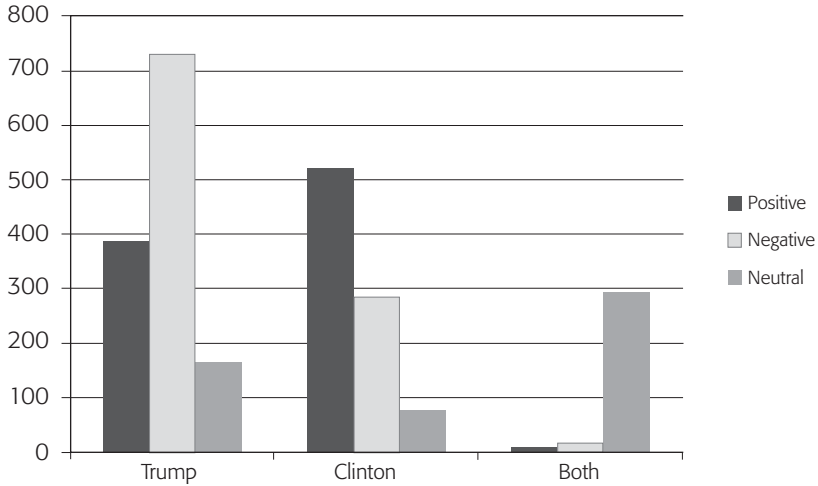
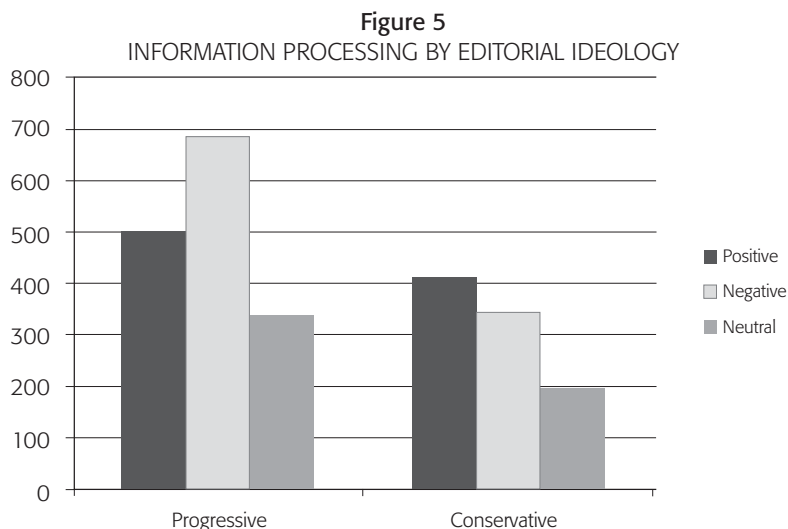**Source:** Data developed by the authors.

The European press does not like populist messages, and Donald Trump takes first place for negative news articles about him. However, positive news on Trump is noticeably higher than negative news on Clinton.

Figure 4
INFORMATION PROCESSING BY COUNTRY

Source: Data developed by the authors.

Unanimity ends for the first time if we analyze the results by country. Germany and Belgium display a higher number of positive news articles about the electoral campaign than France and Spain, who prefer a negative outlook in their editorials.

Figure 5
INFORMATION PROCESSING BY EDITORIAL IDEOLOGY

Source: Data developed by the authors.

While the conservative newspapers base their strategy on positive contributions and news, the progressive newspapers prefer to devote their time and effort to negative news.

Figure 6
INFORMATION PROCESSING BY NEWSPAPERS
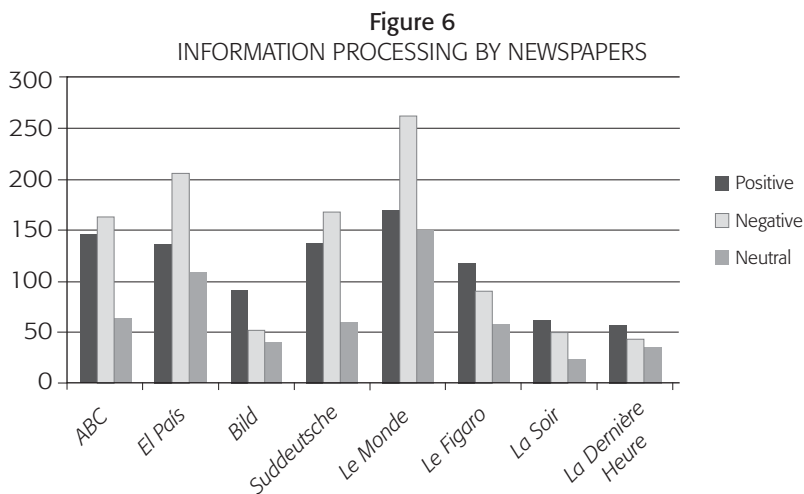
Source: Data developed by the authors.

Spain's *ABC* is the only ideologically conservative newspaper that published negative articles in line with the progressive newspapers.

The Importance of Image for Candidates

In today's society, television and, above all, social networks have accustomed the public to consuming messages fast. Rather than reading long electoral programs, people prefer to get clear, concise ideas. Images play an ever more decisive role in this scenario. Parties strive to present strong candidates who seduce voters with their charisma.

The visuals currently used in newspapers, photographs, and videos show the leaders' stage, symbology, companions, expression, or hand position. All these symbols constitute elements of differentiation used to reaffirm identity. Normally, they tend to be made up of the party's emblems, colors, or flags. While it is true that these symbols will strengthen an active supporter's identity with the party, they can be a problem when it comes to capturing new votes among the undecided.

With this in mind, in U.S. elections, national signs have often replaced party signs. This is true for Hillary Clinton, who wore the three colors of the flag at the three presidential debates; red for the first debate, blue for the second, and white for the third.

In the main, two elements have an influence on the formation of the image of the electoral candidates. Firstly, the parties' strategies; they decide on the political actions that the newspapers cover. Public relations activities play a crucial role when organizing events, rallies etc., which, in addition to bringing the candidate closer to his or her supporters and voters, assures media coverage. Secondly, the newspapers' editorial ideology, which determines, through their choice of images, the attitudes and concrete situations they appear in and how prominent each candidate is with respect to his or her opponent. Neither the information nor the visuals are neutral descriptions of reality; everything is perfectly studied and planned in the public relations strategies designed by the candidates (Figures 7 and 8).

"Other motifs" is considered the smallest value; these are visuals not included in the other items because it is impossible to create as many variables as cases. Some of them have a strong meaning, as was the case with the photo published by *Le Figaro* November 5, 2016, showing Leslie Bauman's two-story house painted like the U.S. American flag with a giant figure of the Republican candidate next to it. These photographs are left as anecdotes of the research.

The newspapers use mostly medium shots, which allow for a clear image without sacrificing detail.

Figure 7
KINDS OF VISUALS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE BY NEWSPAPER
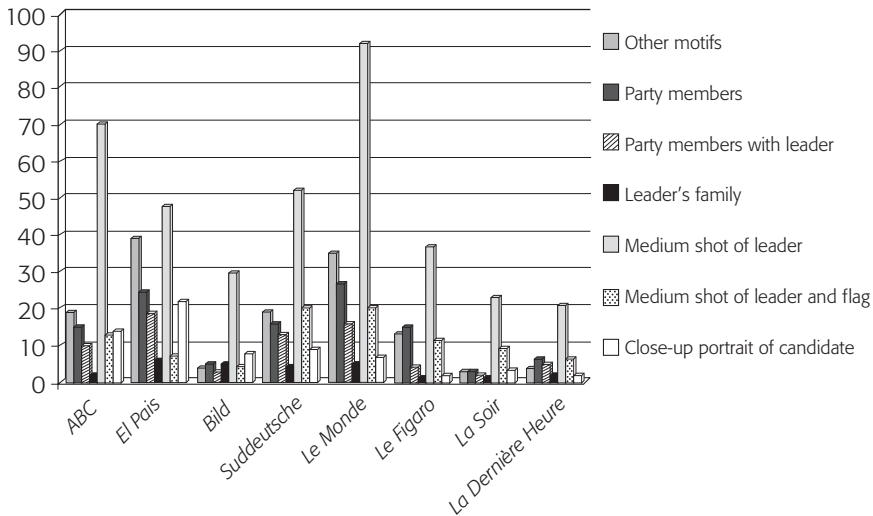
Source: Data developed by the authors.

It can be observed that part of Hillary Clinton's strategy is to show the support of her party members at rallies and events. The figures of Barack and Michelle Obama or other party colleagues campaigning individually or with her accounted for 21 percent of her visuals. The Democratic candidate wanted to show that her party was behind her.

Another sector that supports her in her appearances included singers, actors, and sports personalities: in short, leaders who set trends and influence opinions.

At a family level, things were very different. No pictures of her daughter appeared in the newspapers analyzed, and Bill Clinton almost never appeared. Her husband's sexual scandals were detrimental to them, and it was only in the first part of the campaign that he made an appearance.

She was always supported at rallies by an audience that identified with her voter. She aimed to create a close link to the different social groups.

Donald Trump may well have been the exact opposite. Remaining faithful to his slogan "Make America Great Again," he is surrounded by flags at all times. As the headline in *Le Figaro* on February 3, 2016 reads, "Le trumpisme est un nationalisme renvoyant á l'Amérique des origines" (Trumpism Is a Nationalism Sending America Back to Its Origins), and this is why the flag plays a crucial role in Trump's stage design. Twenty-one percent of his visuals contain flags or elements representing the nation. Patriotism and nationalism are the central concepts of his speeches.

He usually takes the stage alone, sharing it on occasions with his wife and children (5.4 percent) or his vice-presidential running mate (2.3 percent).

Some candidates appear warmer than others; some draw on their personal charisma, while others look to their party for support. The prominence of one demeanor or another is decisive in each candidate's style, as well as in the communication of credibility and trust and in the way of connecting with citizens.

The second element is the editorial ideology of the newspapers. Figures 7 and 8 analyze the image of each candidate in relation to each newspaper.

A significant detail to highlight from Figure 7 is the treatment that left-leaning newspapers *El País* and *Le Monde* give the visuals of "Party Members" or "Party Members with Leader." In both cases the newspapers promote the presence of Clinton. In contrast, the German tabloid *Bild* publishes almost no visuals of this type. For *Bild*, the rallies of Barack and Michelle Obama did not exist. *Bild* limits itself to medium shots of the Democratic leader.

Figure 8
KINDS OF VISUALS OF THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE BY NEWSPAPER
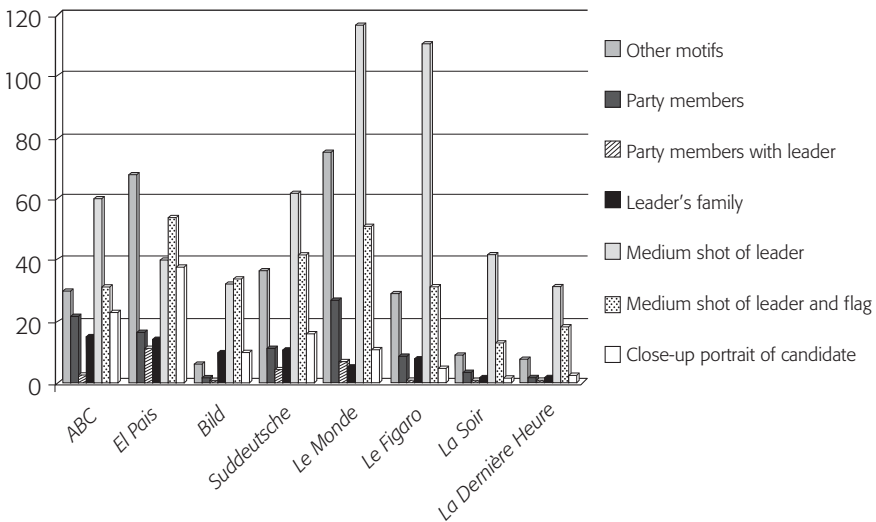
Source: Data developed by the authors.

The left-leaning Spanish newspaper *El País* likes to accompany its most critical articles with the "close-up portrait shot of candidate," always showing an angry or contorted face (15.7 percent).

But in reality, Donald Trump's strategy has been successful in the European press. Turning, again, to *El País*, it is especially surprising that the most published image is the one of Trump with the U.S. flag (22.3 percent). This newspaper's headlines are very critical, as mentioned earlier, but the visuals can be considered positive and in keeping with the Republican candidate's strategic line of patriotic nationalism. The other newspapers that publish pictures of the candidate with the flag are the left-leaning *Le Monde* and *Suddeutsche*.

This detail confirms that the Trump cabinet's campaign strategies achieved their objectives. The power of visuals rises above the newspapers' editorial ideologies.

CONCLUSIONS

The emergence of new technologies and the increased use of visuals offer extensive communicative benefits and multiply public relations opportunities. For public relations, all this has meant an improvement in speed, interaction, and actions aimed at stakeholders.

The digital newspapers' images in their photograph or video formats are an unbeatable source of information with which to analyze the electoral campaigns. U.S. American campaign offices and politicians take this into account and know that these images speak for themselves.

One example is Trump, who reflects in the newspaper visuals a charisma and a constant tone of euphoria that his rival does not possess. This is combined with simple language that reaches the entire population, regardless of their educational or cultural level. In times of crisis and loss of jobs and purchasing power, citizens want politicians to provide solutions to their problems. It is precisely in these moments when simple, populist messages have a greater impact on the population. The Republican candidate's message roused U.S. Americans' pride in what is now called Trumpist nationalism (Stein, 2017; Visser, Book, and Volk, 2017). In this way, the message was conveyed that a successful businessman would solve the country's problems. Recovering traditional values is his objective, all summed up in a simple but powerful slogan "Make America Great Again." What better way to act out your slogan than kissing the U.S. American flag at rallies?

Hillary Clinton is completely the opposite. She has perfect knowledge of the establishment and unbeatable political preparation. Her party supports her and was in office at the time, with the charismatic Barack Obama as president. The newspapers showed photographs of her at rallies, surrounded by people, supporters from her party, young, adults, women, and men. She preferred to be next to a party colleague

at a rally with people in the background than alone with flags like her rival. The rallies of Michelle Obama, a well-loved woman, (Burrell, Elder, and Frederick, 2011), provided the perfect setting. Clinton's strategies were well defined; her image and dramatization well maintained. It is true that show business plays a greater and greater role in United States election campaigns.

In answering RQ_1, it can be concluded that three of the four digital newspapers with conservative tendencies coincide in their editorial ideology with the Republican Party and its candidate. The German newspaper *Bild*, followed by *Le Figaro*, are particularly staunch supporters of the Republican candidate. They almost totally ignored the Obama family's rallies in their articles and pictures, and their headlines were in synch with their pictures. By contrast, Spain's *ABC* newspaper distanced itself from Trump starting in September 2016.

With respect to $RQ_{1.2}$, sure enough, the findings suggest that the newspapers with progressive editorial ideologies have supported the Democratic candidate. However, it is true that seeking maximum journalistic accuracy has provided a lot of information about the emails and Clinton´s problems with the FBI or WikiLeaks, giving a negative image of her.

With respect to $RQ_{1.3}$, about whether newspapers devote more articles and space in their publications to the candidates who share their ideology, the findings show that the progressive newspapers have devoted more articles to criticizing the Republican candidate than to talking about Clinton. Messages against immigration or his treatment of women, among many others, caused the progressive newspapers to devote all their time to criticizing Trump. In contrast, the three conservative newspapers support the candidate who shares their ideology.

In answering RQ_2, Trump's populist messages and the controversy he generated caused both the progressive and the conservative newspapers to write mostly about Trump, earning him unprecedented exposure.

The public relations strategies based on symbolization and dramatization used by the candidates in the U.S. presidential election campaign are reflected in the photographs and videos found in the newspapers. The RQ_3 is affirmative. The strategies designed by the campaign offices and their impact on the images of our digital newspapers are confirmed, especially with regard to Donald Trump. We have shown that the visual used on many occasions contradicts the title of the article. Trump provides us with an example: kissing the flag, or taking one everywhere, is one of the strongest symbols of patriotism, and this image of Trump is captured to perfection. The progressive digital newspapers are the ones that use this resource most. Therefore, whether the title of the article is for or against, the image published is the one that the candidate designed.

We have found that the candidates' stage design has indeed been perfectly reflected by the newspapers.

After analyzing the newspapers from the four countries, we reached two main conclusions. The first is that the role of the cabinets in developing and carrying out their public relations strategies has been a total success; the digital newspapers studied have captured them fully. The second is that the progressive newspapers analyzed have not been able to interpret the images that they included in their articles. As a result, these photographs or videos have gone against the critical ideology of the published article. In these cases, the editors of the newspapers and the journalists responsible for writing the news stories have to pay more attention to the value of visuals.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AHMADIAN, SARA, SARA AZARSHAHI, and DELROY PAULHUS

2017   "Explaining Donald Trump via Communication Style: Grandiosity, Informality, and Dynamism," *Personality and Individual Differences*, no. 107, pp. 49-53, DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2016.11.018.

ASHCROFT, ANTON

2016   "Donald Trump: Narcissist, Psychopath or Representative of the People?" *Psychotherapy and Politics International,* vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 217-222, DOI: 10.1002/ppi.1395.

BACCHETTA, PAOLA

2002   "Book Review: Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation," *Cultura Geographies,* vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 367-368, DOI: 10.1177/147447400200900312.

BERROCAL GONZALO, SALOME, EVA CAMPOS DOMÍNGUEZ, and MARTA REDONDO GARCÍA

2012   "Comunicación política en Internet: la tendencia al 'infoentretenimiento' político en 'YouTube,'" *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico,* vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 643-659, DOI: 10.5209/rev_esmp.2012.v18.n2.41037.

BURKE, KENNETH

1989   *On Symbols and Society*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

BURRELL, BARBARA, LAUREL ELDER, and BRIAN FREDERICK

2011   "Polls and Elections: From Hillary to Michelle: Public Opinion and the Spouses of Presidential Candidates," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 156-176, DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-5705.2010.03835.

Campos Domínguez, Eva, Lidia Valera Ordaz, and Guillermo López García

2015   "Emisores políticos, mediáticos y ciudadanos en Internet: hacia un nuevo marco comunicativo en la jornada de reflexión en España," *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos*, vol. 22, pp. 1621-1636, DOI: 10.1590/s0104-597020150 00 500005.

Collins, Eliza

2016   "Trump´s 'Winning Temperament' Dominated Facebook, Twitter-Big League," *USA Today*, September 27, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/onpolitics/2016/09/27/trumps-winning-tempermant-won-facebook-twitter/91157680/.

De las Heras-Pedrosa, Carlos, Francisco J. Paniagua Rojano,
Carmen Jambrino Maldonado, and Patricia Iglesias Sánchez

2017   "Image of U.S. Presidential Candidates in Spanish Digital Press," *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, vol. 72, pp. 975-997, DOI: 10.4185/RLCS-2017-1203

Dodd, Melissa D., and Steve J. Collins

2017   "Public Relations Message Strategies and Public Diplomacy 2.0: An Empirical Analysis Using Central-Eastern European and Western Embassy Twitter Accounts," *Public Relations Review,* vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 417-425, DOI: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.02.004.

Eurotopics

2017   "Media Index," *The International Federation of Audit Bureaux of Certification* (IFABC), http://www.ifabc.org/, accessed June 12, 2017.

Gökariksel, Banu, and Sara H. Smith

2016   "'Making America Great Again'?: The Fascist Body Politics of Donald Trump," *Political Geography,* vol. 54, pp. 79-81, DOI: 10.1016/j.polgeo.2016.07.004.

Goodell, John, and Samy Vähämaa

2013   "U.S. Presidential Elections and Implied Volatility: The Role of Political Uncertainty," *Journal of Banking and Finance,* vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 1108-1117, DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2014823.

Hale, Brent J., and María E. Grabe

2018   "Visual War: A Content Analysis of Clinton and Trump Subreddits during the 2016 Campaign," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly,* vol. 95, no. 2, pp. 449-470, DOI: 10.1177/1077699018766501.

HARRIS, REBECCA
2015   "How Digital Is Affecting Attention Spans," *Marketing*, May 19, http://mar
        ketingmag.ca/consumer/how-digital-is-affection-attention-spans-146742/.

HAZLETON, VINCENT
1993   "Symbolic Resources Processes in the Development and Use of Symbolic Re-
        sources," in W. Armbrecht, H. Avenarius, and U. Zabel, eds., *Image und PR,*
        pp. 87-100, DOI: 10.1007/978-3-322-85729-3_6.

HAZLETON, VINCENT, and LARRY W. LONG
1988   "Concepts for Public Relations Education, Research and Practice: A Commu-
        nication Point of View," *Central States Speech Journal,* vol. 39, no. 2, pp. 77-87,
        DOI: 10.1080/10510978809363239.

IHLEN, OYVIND
2011   "On Barnyard Scrambles: Toward a Rhetoric of Public Relations," *Manage-
        ment Communication Quarterly,* vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 455-473, DOI: 10.1177/08933
        18911409533.

KRIPPENDORFF, KLAUS
1990   *Metodología de análisis de contenido. Teoría y práctica*, Barcelona, Paidós.

LEE, JAYEON, and YOUNG-SHIN LIM
2016   "Gendered Campaign Tweets: The Cases of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump,"
        Public Relations Review, vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 849-855, DOI: 10.1016/j.pubrev
        .2016.07.004.

LOSADA DÍAZ, JOSÉ C.
2002   "Los medios de comunicación como generadores de imagen corporativa: los
        públicos internos," *Comunicación y Sociedad*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 95-113, http://
        dadun.unav.edu/bitstream/10171/8003/1/20100226131610.pdf.

MARSHALL, P. DAVID
2010   "The Promotion and Presentation of the Self: Celebrity as Market of Presen-
        tational Media," *Celebrity Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 35-48, DOI: 10.1080/193923
        9090351957.

Naegele, Kaspar, and Erving Goffman

1956   "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," *American Sociological Review,* vol. 21, no. 5, pp. 631-632, DOI: 10.2307/2089106.

Ross, Andrew S., and Damian J. Rivers

2017   "Digital Cultures of Political Participation: Internet Memes and the Discursive Delegitimization of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Candidates," *Discourse, Context and Media*, vol. 16, pp. 1-11, DOI:10.1016/j.dcm.2017.01.001.

Russell, Karen M., and Margot O. Lamme

2016   "Theorizing Public Relations History: The Roles of Strategic Intent and Human Agency," *Public Relations Review,* vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 741-747, DOI: 10.1016/j.pubrev-2016.04.002.

Sotelo Enríquez, Carlos

2008   *Introducción a la comunicación institucional*, Barcelona, Ariel.

Stein, Randy

2017   "'Trumping' Conformity: Urges towards Conformity to Ingroups and Nonconformity to Morally Opposed Outgroups," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* vol. 70, pp. 34-40, DOI: 10.1016/j.jesp.2016.12.007.

Taylor, Maureen

2011   "Building Social Capital through Rhetoric and Public Relations," *Management Communication Quarterly,* vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 436-454, DOI: 10.1177/0893318911410286.

Toth, Elizabeth

2009   "The Case for Pluralistic Studies of Public Relations: Rhetorical, Critical and Excellence Perspectives," in Robert Heath, Elizabeth Toth, and Damion Waymer, eds., *Rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations II*, New York, Routledge, pp. 48-60.

Van der Meer, Toni G. L. A.

2016   "Automated Content Analysis and Crisis Communication Research," *Public Relations Review,* vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 952-961, DOI: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2016.09.001.

Visser, B. A., A. S. Book, and A. A. Volk

2017   "Is Hillary Dishonest and Donald Narcissistic? A HEXACO Analysis of the Presidential Candidates' Public Personas," *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 106, no. 1, pp. 281-286, DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2016.10.053.

Werder, K. P.

2006   "Responding to Activism: An Experimental Analysis of Public Relations Strategy Influence on Attributes of Publics," *Journal of Public Relations Research*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 335-356, DOI: 10.1207/s1532754xjprr1804_3.