

The United States Presidential Elections from the Point of View of the European Press

Las elecciones presidenciales de Estados Unidos
desde la perspectiva de la prensa europea

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Abstract: Public relations strategies based on dramatization are key tools to achieving success in electoral campaigns. Press offices play a fundamental role as theatre directors, turning their leaders into great actors. What at first glance would look like a theatrical performance is, more than ever, what happened in the US presidential elections. Newspapers are intensifying the use of visual elements to reinforce the news. This research paper analyses 2,463 articles from eight digital newspapers in four 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 visuals prepared by Trump's press office and his perfectly designed public appearances, were reproduced by the media. The study shows that the progressive newspapers analysed have contributed to giving Trump greater visibility in Europe.

Keywords: Political communication, public image, leaders, United States elections 2016. Trump against Clinton.

Resumen: Las estrategias de relaciones públicas basadas en la dramatización son herramientas clave para lograr el éxito en las campañas electorales. Los gabinetes de prensa desempeñan un papel fundamental como directores de teatro al convertir a sus líderes en grandes actores. Lo que a simple vista podría parecer un espectáculo teatral es, más que nunca, lo que ocurrió en las elecciones presidenciales de Estados Unidos. Los periódicos están incrementando el uso de elementos visuales para reafirmar las noticias. Este trabajo analiza 2,463 artículos de ocho periódicos digitales en cuatro países para indagar sobre el impacto de los elementos visuales y la dramatización en la prensa europea. Parece paradójico que los periódicos progresistas hayan dedicado más artículos a Trump que los periódicos conservadores. ¿Falta de tiempo por parte de los periodistas? Lo que es seguro es que los elementos visuales preparados por el gabinete de prensa de Trump y sus apariciones en público perfectamente diseñadas fueron reproducidos por los medios. El estudio demuestra que los periódicos progresistas analizados han contribuido a dar mayor visibilidad a Trump en Europa.

Palabras clave: comunicación política, imagen pública, líderes, elecciones presidenciales de Estados Unidos (2016), Trump contra Clinton

Introduction

The 21st 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 (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, keep informed and speak to their friends; they are not willing to read long, endless articles in the best newspapers.

On 2nd February 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. In those moments, this sentence marked the line of what it has been called the revolution of immediacy. There are profound changes that cause the media to adapt to new formats.

In the study carried out of the US 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 piece of news, increasing the number of short articles in the day. In this scenario, giving visuals a strong position in public relations campaigns is essential. The organisation of events or rallies facilitates visual communication with one’s different audiences (Hazleton & Long, 1998; Hazleton, 1993).

Public relations define general systems theory as the organisation's adaptation process where communicative elements are used to achieve its objectives. Messages, accompanied by visuals, will be the manifestations of communication strategies to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Six public relations strategies to communicate with one's audiences have been defined: informative, facilitative, persuasive, promise and reward, threat and punishment, bargaining and cooperative problem solving (Dodd & Collins, 2017; Werder, 2006). They will be analysed in each candidate strategy.

This case study found that the PR strategies used by the Republican candidate 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 a 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 in his own interest.

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

The United States presidential elections have been the subject of much debate and interest in Europe in recent months, generating a significant amount of news content. This research paper analyses the European media and their editorial ideologies, contrasting this to

personal characteristics, the dramatization of the candidates and the 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 the formation of the visuals that people receive. The image that the majority of Europeans have of the presidential candidates is that which they perceive through the media, especially television, social networks and the press in general. For the study of the elections in the US, given the evident distances and different languages involved, the local media enjoys greater relevance and more credibility than other forms of communication (Losada, 2002).

The choice of the adjectives of image is not a random process. 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 evidence that the media have a real influence on the opinions that their audiences form, irrespective of whether the contents are to do with news, fictitious spaces or entertainment (Berrocal, Campos & Redondo, 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, and citizens have a critical opinion of their leaders (Sotelo, 2008), it should be noted that the creation of the images for political leaders in

recent years has focussed on generating a show or sensationalism. There is an increasing search for conflict and stories, personalising the leader in the pursuit of information, but also of entertainment. (Berrocal et al, 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 campaign between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump had a dual focus, initially. On one hand, there was the possibility of 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 & Grabe, 2018, 450). In addition, one with 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 opposition was a successful businessman with a perfect knowledge of the media. However, the electoral process would involve 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 suffered by the female 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 show of interest in

the recent history of Europe, causing the population to display 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. Toth (2009), in a study on rhetoric, refers mainly to how individuals, groups and organisations, 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 placed on stage design and a perfectly acted script, got results. According to Naegele & Goffman (1956), individuals act in the same way as they would do 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, where symbols and language are part of the movement. Just like in the theatre, he defines actors and their scripts, the roles, their movements and gestures. Marshall (2010) emphasised the importance of carrying out a great many activities of this type for public persons, in order 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 Republican candidate, polarised 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 US flag,

or its colours, 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 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 & Collins, 2017). Burke (1989) also points out that actions must be motivated. This is how Donald Trump speaks, for example, of building the "Wall to stop drug traffickers and immigrants from entering".

It can assert that Trump's communication style managed to exceed all expectations. Since the beginning of the campaign, experts of all persuasions seemed to have underestimated the chances of success of Donald's politics. (Lee & Lim, 2016; Ross & 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 & 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 & Smith, 2016).

Taking these considerations into account, the study of the selected media has analysed not only the messages transmitted by the candidates, 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.

It has been chosen eight media outlets in their digital formats with progressive and conservative editorial ideologies, which reflect, in principle, interests that are in line with the Democrats or the Republicans. This will show an overview of the United States presidential electoral campaign that it was 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 polarised pluralism, accustomed to assuming a role of political leadership." (Campos, Valera & López, 2015, 1629). It is true that the extremely radical and populist stance of Donald Trump could 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 has been proposed:

RQ₁. 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 their candidate Hillary Clinton?

RQ_{1.3}. Do Newspapers devote more articles and space in their publications to the candidates who share their ideology?

RQ₂. Do Populist messages gain candidates greater exposure?

RQ₃. 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 reveal 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 characteristics. To do this, evaluative analysis and frequency analysis are used.

Taking into account the observation of the systemised behaviour in the media it is convenient to deal with 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 Krippendorff’s (1990,28) classical definition. To demonstrate this we use a broad sample which supports the representative nature of the indicators with a total of 2,463 journalistic articles analysed between 1st June and 8th November 2016 in eight digital newspapers in the Eurozone.

The Eurozone, represented by its 19 member countries, gives greater protection to the EU at a global level, since the euro is the second largest international currency after the US dollar. It is for this reason that, for this research paper, four countries within the euro area were included (Goodell & Vähämaa, 2013). They were chosen at random and are representative in terms of population. Germany, France, Spain and Belgium, together, make up 61% of the population. Three of the four larger countries were selected, with Belgium representing one of the countries with a smaller number of inhabitants.

For each country, two newspapers that are representative in terms of audience and editorial ideology have been selected; one progressive and the other conservative. In order to identifying them we have used data from IFABC (International Federation of Audit Bureau of Circulations) and Eurotopics (2017).

The study universe consists of the following digital newspapers:

Country	Digital newspaper	Editorial ideology	Web address
Germany	Bild-Zeitung	conservative	http://www.bild.de/
	Süddeutsche Zeitung	progressive	http://www.sueddeutsche.de/
France	Le Figaró	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/

Table 1. List of newspapers and countries in the study.

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

Units of analysis	2463 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 analysed	1 June - 8 November 2016
Selection criteria for the units of analysis	Key words: "Trump" or "Clinton" with a photo or video in the news article

Table 2. Technical information. Source: In-house production

It started on 1st June, coinciding with the final stages of the primaries of both parties, and ended on 8th November. Although the candidates were not yet the official ones of their parties, they were already identified as such. For this reason, their public speeches were not directed towards their rivals in their own party, but to the other party. With the objective of study in mind, selected articles with visuals were gathered (photographs or videos), which were processed according to quantitative and qualitative criteria.

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

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 US flag or emblems
		Medium shot of candidate
		Family of candidate
		Party members with candidate
		Party members
		Other motifs
	Photograph or video	Trump
		Clinton
		Other

Table 3. Information on the study variables. Source: de las Heras-Pedrosa, et al. (2017).

Results

The results will be presented in the following way. First there will be a quantitative analysis cross referencing the following variables: the candidates, countries, the ideology of the newspapers' editorial line and newspapers. Secondly, a qualitative study will analyse information processing in relation to each of the aspects listed above. The information collected in the first two sections will serve as a base for the study and interpretation of the visuals found in the articles that will be analysed in third place.

Presence of the candidates in the newspapers

The strategies employed by the Republican candidate got him 51.9% of the 2463 articles analysed in the sample, while only 35.6% were dedicated to Clinton. Articles about both

candidates made up 12.5%, as was the case of the three electoral debates on television. Also included in the “both” category are the articles that explain the American 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%. The Spanish newspapers are next, with 427 articles and 17.3% of the total.

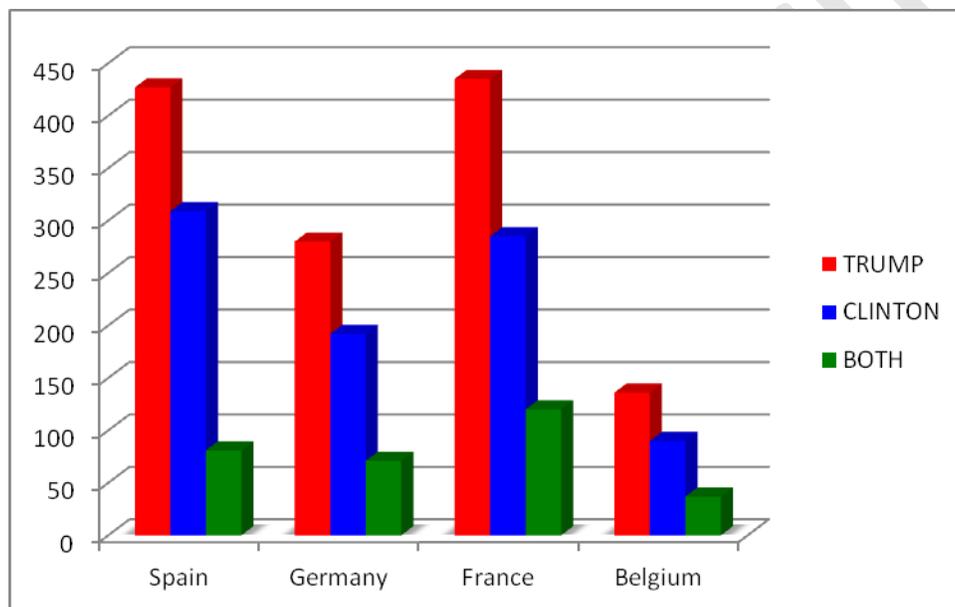


Figure 1. Presence of the candidates in the newspapers by country. In-house production

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. It is 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%, compared to 38.3% 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.

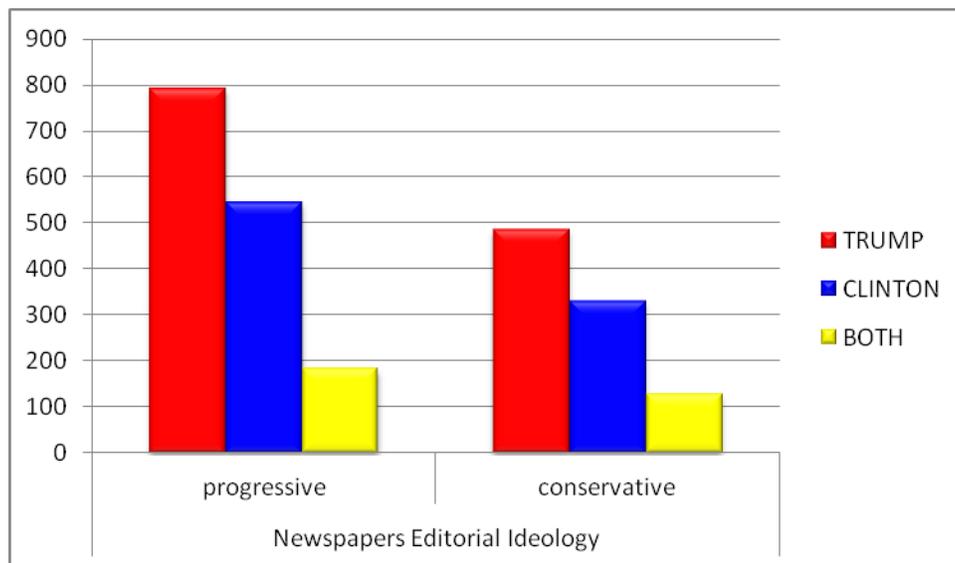


Figure 2. Presence of the candidates in the newspapers by editorial ideology. In-house production

Information processing in the newspapers

Populist speeches, regardless of their influence on the population, tend to be rejected by the European press. Brexit, and the amazed reaction to its victory on the front pages of newspapers is very recent. The current phenomena of Le Pen in France, and the memory of the populist speeches of the dictators Hitler, Mussolini or Franco are still present. It will be now analyse the information processing variable, with its values: positive, negative or neutral news article. As before, it will be study it by candidate, country, editorial ideology and newspapers.

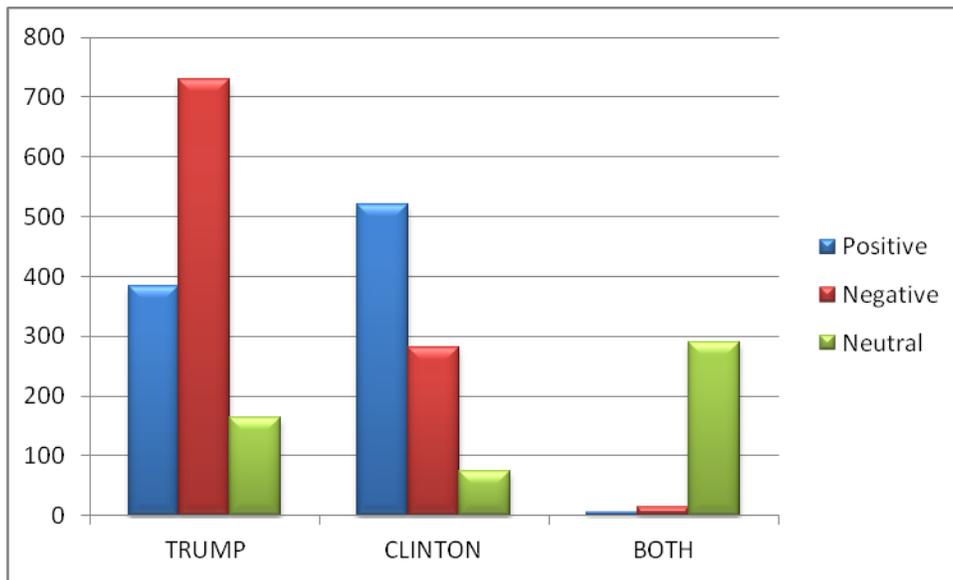


Figure 3. Information processing by candidate. In-house production

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

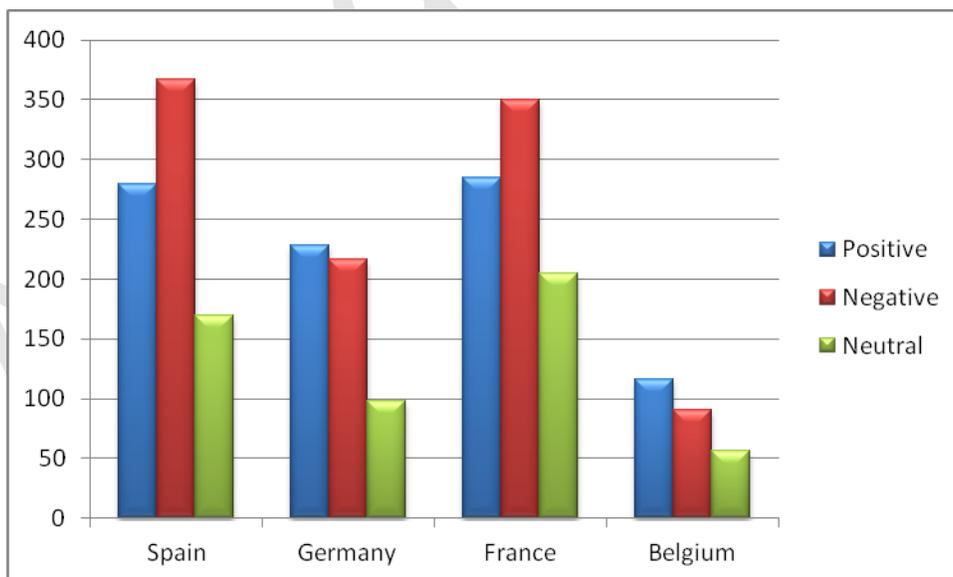


Figure 4. Information processing by country. In-house production

Unanimity ends for the first time if we analyse 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.

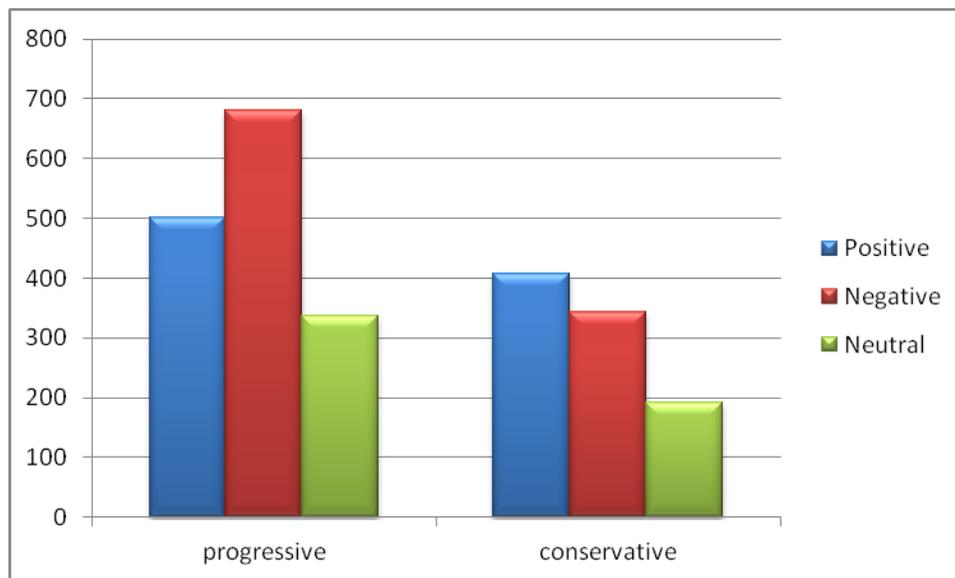


Figure 5. Information processing by editorial ideology. In-house production

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.

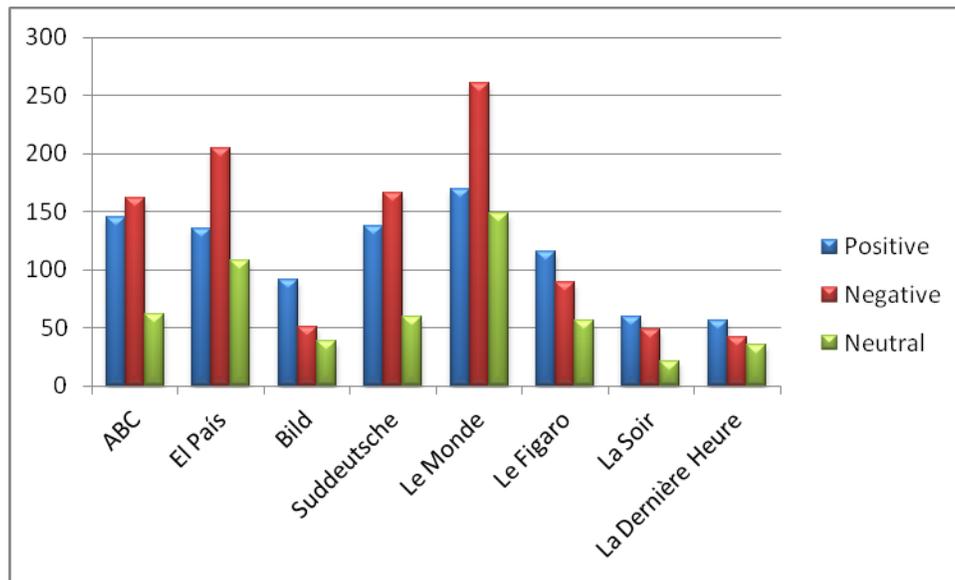


Figure 6. Information processing by newspapers. In-house production.

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 got the public used to consuming messages fast. Rather than reading long electoral programmes, people prefer to get clear, concise ideas. Images play an ever more decisive role in this scenario. Parties strive to present strong candidates that seduce voters with their charisma.

Current visuals that are inserted in newspapers, photographs and videos, provide the stage, symbology, companions, expression or hand position of the leaders. All these symbols constitute elements of differentiation that are used to reaffirm identity. Normally, they tend to be made up of the party's emblems, colours 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 the United States elections, on many occasions, national signs have replaced party signs. This is true for Hillary Clinton, who wore the three colours 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 strategies of the parties; the political actions that the newspaper covers are established. The actions of public relations play a crucial role when organising events, rallies etc., which in addition to bringing the candidate closer to his or her supporters and voters, assures media coverage. Secondly, the editorial ideology of the newspapers, which are those that determine, through their choice of images, the attitudes and concrete situations in which they appear and the prominence of each candidate 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 and they are visuals that are 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* on 5 November 2016, showing Leslie Bauman's two-storey house painted like the 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 medium shots most, which allow clarity in the image without losing detail.

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

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

At a family level, things are very different. There are no pictures of her daughter in the newspapers analysed, and Bill Clinton almost never appears. Her husband's sexual scandals are detrimental to them. It is only in the first part of the campaign that he makes an appearance.

She is always supported at rallies by an audience that identifies with her voter. She aims to create a close link to the different social groups.

Donald Trump might well be 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 3 February 2016 says "*Le trumpisme est un nationalisme renvoyant à l'Amérique des origines*" and this is why the flag plays a crucial role in Trump's stage design. 21% of his visuals contain flags or elements that represent 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%), or his vice president (2.3%).

Some candidates appear warmer than others; some draw on their personal charisma, while others look to their party for support. The prominence of one demeanour 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.

In second place is the editorial ideology of the newspapers. Figures 7 and 8 analyse the image of each candidate in relation to each newspaper.

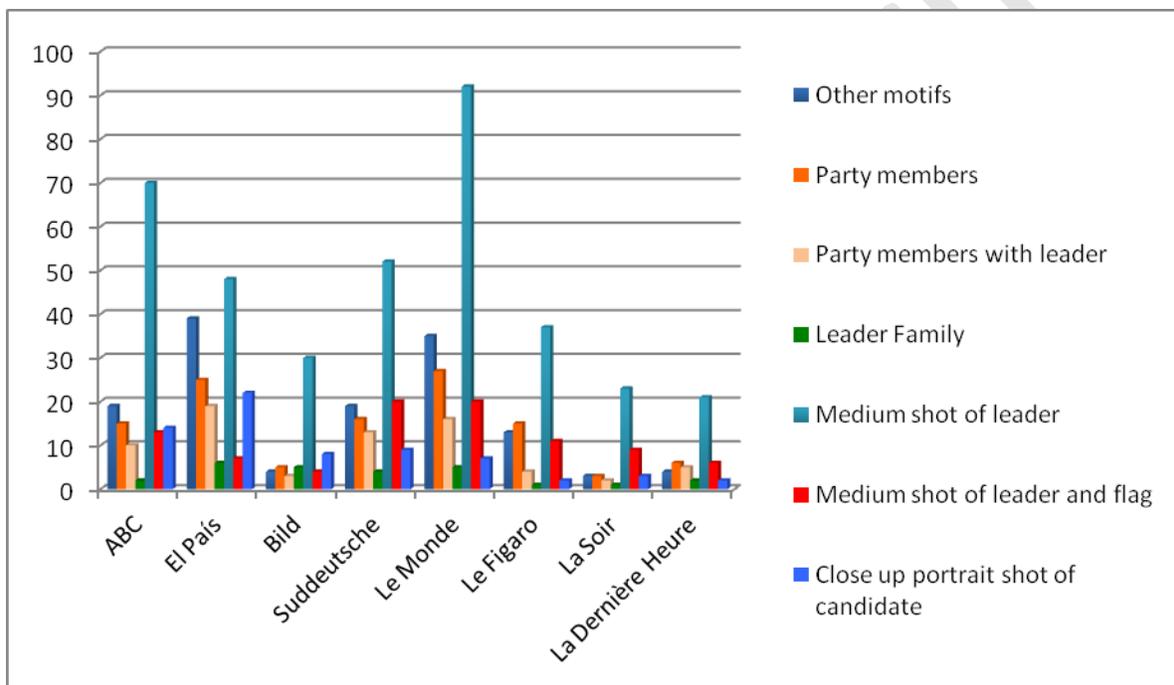


Figure 7. Importance of the visual of the Democratic candidate by newspaper. In-house production

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.

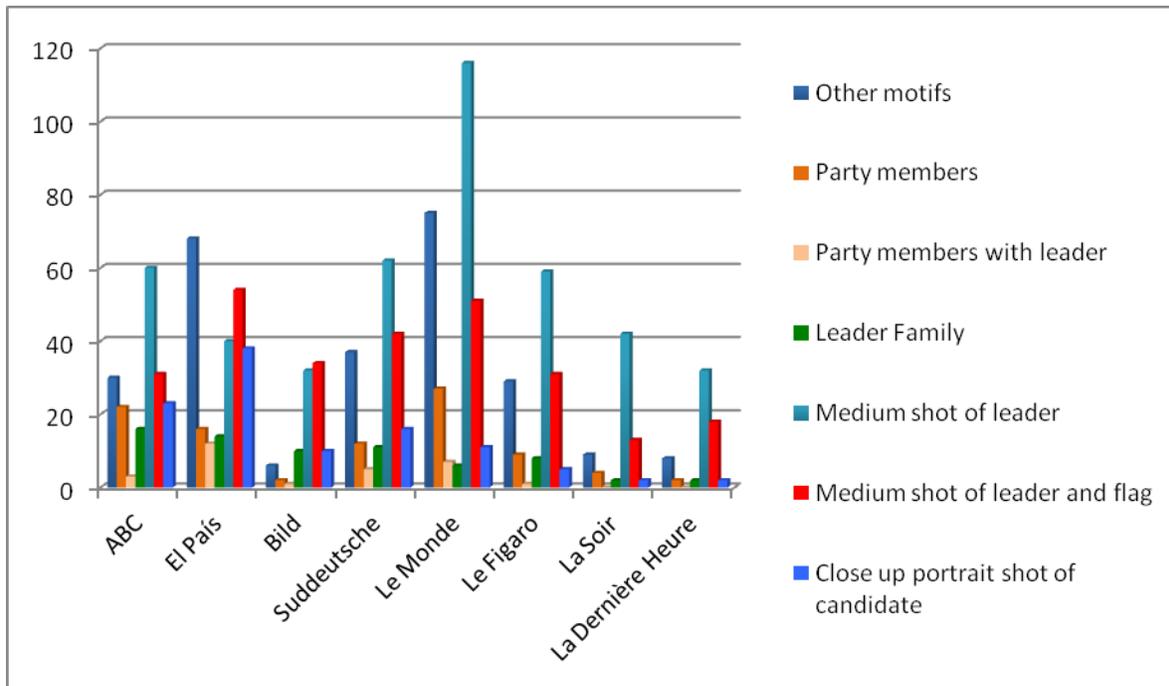


Figure 8. Importance of the visual of the Republican candidate by newspaper. In-house production

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%).

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 American flag (22.3%). The headlines in this newspaper are very critical, as it was shown earlier, but the visuals can be considered positive; in keeping with the strategic line of the Republican candidate of patriotic nationalism. The other newspapers that follow the

practice of publishing 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 editorial ideologies of the newspapers.

Conclusions

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

The images of the digital newspapers in their photograph or video formats are an unbeatable source of information with which to analyse the electoral campaigns. 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 employment 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 Americans' pride in what is now called Trumpist nationalism (Stein, 2017; Visser, Book, & 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 this summed up in a simple but powerful slogan "Make America Great Again". What better way to act out your slogan than kissing the American flag in rallies?

Hillary Clinton is completely the opposite. She has perfect knowledge of the establishment and unbeatable political preparation. Her party supports her and it was in power 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 in a rally with people in the background rather than alone with flags like her rival. Michelle Obama's rallies, (Burrell, Elder, & Frederick, 2011) a well-loved woman, provided the perfect setting. Clinton's strategies were well defined; her image and dramatisation well maintained. It is true that show business plays a greater and greater role in United States election campaigns.

In answering RQ1, it can be concluded that in three of the four digital newspapers with conservative tendencies coincide in their editorial ideology with the Republican party and candidate Trump. 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. Their headlines are synchronised with their pictures. Unlike that, Spain's ABC newspaper distanced itself from Trump from 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 criticising 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 criticising Trump. In contrast, the three conservative newspapers support the candidate who share their ideology.

In answering RQ₂, Trump's populist messages and the controversy he has generated, have caused both the progressive and the conservative newspapers to write mostly about Trump, earning him unprecedented exposure.

The public relations strategies based on symbolisation and dramatization used by the candidates in the US presidential election campaign are reflected in the photographs and videos found in the newspapers. The RQ₃ is affirmative. The strategies designed by the campaign offices and their the impact on the images of our digital newspapers is confirmed, especially with regard to Donald Trump. It has been 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 or not the title of the article is for or against, the image published is the one that the candidate designed.

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

After analysing the newspapers from the four countries, two main conclusions have been reached. 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 analysed 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.

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