

## Explanation of the discursive ethos of Lenín Moreno and Rafael Correa in 2018

### *Explicación del ethos discursivo de Lenín Moreno y Rafael Correa en 2018*

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#### **Abstract**

*This article studies the speech analysis of Rafael Correa and Lenín Moreno in a new context of Ecuador with a variation of political articulations, in which discursive strategies have a renewed formation of us and others. The objective is to investigate the construction of the discursive ethos of both politicians in 2018, through what they have said about themselves. It is a qualitative analysis of a corpus of 16 television speeches (of different types) by Moreno and 9 by Correa. The results show a strong possession of personal and political values of Moreno to support his proposal for dialogue and be a refounder of the country's institutionality, while Correa emphasizes his moral integrity, he declares himself persecuted and as a redeemer of the country. The study makes visible how these discursive strategies built their image about the facts of the past and the present to form it differentially before their constructed opponents.*

#### **Keywords**

*Speech analysis, political speech, politics, Ecuador, ethos.*

#### **Resumen**

Este artículo aborda el análisis de discurso de Rafael Correa y Lenín Moreno en un nuevo contexto de Ecuador con una variación de articulaciones políticas, en el que las estrategias discursivas tienen una renovada formación del *nosotros* y los *otros*. El objetivo es indagar la construcción del ethos discursivo de ambos políticos durante 2018, a través de lo dicho por ellos sobre sí. Es un análisis cualitativo de un corpus de 16 discursos televisivos (de diferentes tipos) de Moreno y 9 de Correa. En los resultados aparece una fuerte carga de valores personales y políticos en lo manifestado por Moreno para sustentar su propuesta del diálogo y ser refundador de la institucionalidad del país, mientras que Correa enfatiza su integridad moral, se declara perseguido y se construye como un redentor de la patria para salvarla. El estudio permitió conocer cómo estas estrategias discursivas buscaron construir su imagen sobre los hechos del pasado y el presente para formarlos de manera diferencial ante sus opositores contruidos.

#### **Palabras clave**

Análisis del discurso, discurso político, política, Ecuador, ethos.

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## Introduction

Ecuador experienced a conflict between those who were previously political allies: Rafael Correa and Lenín Moreno, who even shared the binomial as president and vice president from 2007 to 2013 at the beginning of Alianza PAIS as a government. The tensions occurred when Moreno was already in office (Labarthe & Saint-Upéry, 2017), there he decided to remove his co-religionists from positions of power to — instead — locate new political agents who represented power groups. The confrontation was due to the “discovery” by the Moreno regime that there were multiple cases of corruption — as a keyword to mark the previous Correa government (Ganuza, 2019)— as well as a difficult economic situation, debt, and inherited affections for the country (Celi, 2017).

Moreno promoted new articulations of power and the political field was modified, Rafael Correa and his close group became his opponents. Moreno took advantage of this situation to shape his discursive strategy with that political adversary, whom he scathes to legitimize his mandate. Correa, on the other hand, has to assume the new panorama and the dominance of that same context (which is in favor of Moreno) to also strategically position himself before the gaze of the other. Among those strategies is the construction of their *ethos*: how Moreno and Correa configured their respective image before the people for this political battle.

We take as a basis the conception of ethos made by Dominique Maingueneau since he considers it beyond the act of elocution itself since it is a socio-discursive notion that is integrated into a communication situation and in a specific socio-historical context.

We located our study<sup>1</sup> in 2018, when there was already a clear break between the two politicians, we studied their speeches of different kinds, such as televised addresses to the nation and interviews in the media, in which greater emphasis was placed on what each one said about himself or was trying to show about himself. The objective is to analyze the discursive ethos that both politicians built to legitimize themselves in the interdiscursive struggle that they maintained, we also identify how they include their personal and political values in the story.

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1 The information included in this article is part of the author's thesis, belonging to the Doctorate in Communication at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Argentina).

This article is a contribution to the analysis of political discourse in Ecuador in this new context, which includes the formation of ideological competitors and adversaries (Van Dijk, 1999b), as a struggle between enunciators with a controversial dimension of discourse (Verón, 1987). The categories of Eliseo Verón and Teun Van Dijk, such as context control and recipients, will be central to our inquiry, as well as taking into account Ervin Goffman's conceptualizations to understand that discourse is intertwined with everyday life and popular culture.

In this text, we unravel the discursive axes of both politicians that will be related to the Ecuadorian idiosyncrasy, issues that are discussed, and related in order to investigate what their intentions would be in the political field.

## **Materials and methods: ethos as a sociodiscursive practice**

We use a qualitative methodology for the analysis of the information in this article, whose objective is the analysis of the discourse of the construction of the ethos of Rafael Correa and Lenín Moreno during 2018. The ethos has been discussed since the old rhetoric, Aristotle linked it with the moral character of the speaker, he considered the persuasiveness to convince that audience and win their trust (Maingueneau, 2002). It would be a technique to increase the adherence of the subjects and their consent, the ethos would be built based on the values and beliefs that the target audience would possess (Bermúdez, 2007). This is how ethos comes into existence in a discursive formation. Maingueneau (2002) clarifies that the ethos is made up of pre-discursive elements, the discursive part, and fragments of the enunciator's own enunciation (direct or indirect), that is, it has a socio-discursive vision. With the ethos, the "guarantor" appears, who in regard to the recipient, is a representation of the enunciator, and would have a "character" and "corporeality" with "tone" and a "voice" (Maingueneau, 2009) and is a legitimizing source of what that is said. It is part of the construction of identity and it is identified through social representations that evaluate it positively or negatively, says the author.

This article will further explore the discursive ethos: how Lenín Moreno and Rafael Correa talk about themselves in 2018 in the personal and political sphere. There will be two types of construction of the ethos: that of Lenín Moreno will be about his role as the president who has control of the context (Van Dijk, 1999a), while that of Rafael Correa will be that of a former pre-

sident and opponent of Moreno. They are roles in their daily political situation, the application of which will depend on their integration into the social environment (Goffman, 1993).

In the discursive corpus, we analyze the construction of the recipients, as Eliseo Verón indicates, the act of political enunciation implies an opposite response, with a negative other (counter-recipient), in addition to forming a positive us (pro-recipient). Both are forged through categories such as identification collectives, broader entities, and singular meta-collectives, which we use to indicate the relationships between the enunciator and the recipient.

We clarify that here we are investigating the verbal dimension, not the non-verbal dimension, so we look for the personal deixis and the inclusive *us*, in addition to the evaluative terms (Kerbrat-Orecchionni, 1997) as elements to capture how the ethos has been constructed. We work with a corpus of support that corresponds to the speeches of both politicians during 2018, a year in which there is a clear interdiscursive dispute (Maingueneau & Plantin, 2005) between them. Each speech in the corpus was chosen because it contains elements related to the categories of our methodological framework:

- Lenín Moreno: 16 television speeches obtained — mostly — from the official YouTube page of the Presidency. They are promotional and information broadcasts such as *El Gobierno de todos* (The government of all), *El presidente informa* (The president informs), addresses to the nation, messages from the President, public statements; in addition to interviews and dialogues with national and foreign media. Its contents are not specifically directed to his supporters, but to the general public through the discursive power of government communication and its access to private, seized, and public media.
- Rafael Correa: 9 interview speeches in national media, Telesur and CNN, as well as two speeches broadcasted on his *Enlace Digital* (digital link), the letter addressed to his co-religionists after leaving power and made online only. During his 10 years of government, the *Enlace Ciudadano* (Citizen Link) was a pillar in his communication strategy as it was broadcasted on television and radio. Despite the inequality in the number of speeches and Correa's limitation to access the Ecuadorian media of national scope (due to his confrontation with the private media sector), the large amount of content and elements of his statements allowed the analysis to be developed.

## **Religiosity and the values present in the ethos**

### **Lenín Moreno: piety, dialogue and consensus**

Mediante el análisis se identificó las características del *ethos* que el Presidente Moreno quiso construir sobre sí en su relación con el poder, su forma de gobierno mediante el diálogo y sus valores en el mandato.

#### *The exaltation of values and “popular canonization”*

Rosaria Minervini (2017) analyzed Lenín Moreno’s speech from linguistic and content. She expresses that Moreno tries to convey a positive image of himself, that is, the ethos, for which he portrays himself as a trustworthy and credible person, but with a lack of conceptual elements. Among the values considered positive with which Moreno tries to persuade, Minervini highlights the attachment to family and God, nuclei of a religious thought that is predominant in Ecuador due to the number Christians.

The configuration of his image is also made from the narration of events in the past, of his vice presidency in the government presided over by Rafael Correa. He uses the positive self-representation as a humanist and supportive for the social campaigns he undertook, in addition, he portrays himself as a faithful politician and revolutionary:

When the 30S occurred (...) I expressed my loyalty to the president and stated that the revolution was not only about social transformations but a loyalty revolution because here it was customary in Ecuador for vice presidents to saw off the presidents’ floor. (Interview with Fernando Rincón from CNN in Spanish, April 18, 2018)

The narrative about his self includes the verb purge, related to religious language, by a feeling of guilt: a transgression of a cultural or religious norm that is considered superior to the very being is a sin. The verb to purge would be to suffer punishment for that fault or to remove something bad from oneself, it is to assume responsibility for that past, which justifies it:

But it is the job of a human being to also recognize mistakes. And my mistake was not by action, it was by omission, I dedicated myself specifically to my social work. I never worried about the financial issue. There were suspi-

cions on the part of many colleagues that there were acts of corruption (...) Carelessness, yes, omission, yes and I am still purging that. (Interview with Fernando Rincón from CNN in Spanish, April 18, 2018)

As compensation or — following the religious discourse — as exculpation, Moreno defines himself as someone sincere (Report to the Nation, May 24, 2018), to continue the fight against corruption, he emphasizes that he does not have a double face in his actions. He describes that his mandate has more humanism, he is modest before what he believes are the achievements made by him in relation to a broad ‘us’:

It is the merit of the Ecuadorian people (...) It is true that leadership has something to do with it, but fundamentally the actions of each and every Ecuadorian. (Interview with Eduardo Khalifé, Estéfani Espín and Janeth Hinostroza, January 21, 2018)

Moreno not only figures in himself some values but also motivates them to be transmitted among all as a prescriptive component (Verón, 1987) that belongs to the “order of duty”, encourages citizens to be attached to justice, equality, tolerance, respect<sup>2</sup>, solidarity, peace, honesty, transparency and freedom<sup>3</sup>.

Faced with the political attacks against him, he exalts his personality, avoids the discursive confrontation, and evokes a non-vindictive image:

I am a happy person and I live in peace, at peace with myself because I try to act according to the principles, the principles in which I believe. (El Gobierno de Todos, July 9, 2018)

More than an image of authority, Moreno is constructed in the speech in the emotional sphere as a human being with values and faults to be amended. His language with religious overtones takes him to the habitual of politics, gives an indication of the construction of a figure of holiness that:

It is a model of a person considered of superior behavior or prestige that serves as a guide and/or benchmark (...) that helps to generate confidence in the individual in certain situations in which they may fail or suffer harm. (Aguilar-Vásquez, 2014, p. 36)

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2 El Presidente Informa, 29/january/2018.

3 National address, August 21, 2018.

In this case, it is a guide for citizens from the presidency and seeks “popular canonization” (Carozzi, 2006) that gives him legitimacy (cult, in religious language) to carry out political actions from his position of power. This will also be seen in the following subtopics.

### *Political values and the rescue of institutions*

Moreno tries to construct an image of a president who is responsible and disinterested in power as his identity role (Doury, 2016). Moreno was vice president until May 2013 and in December of that year, he was appointed to the position of special envoy to the United Nations for disability and accessibility issues, for which he moved to live in Geneva-Switzerland. He came back for the 2017 elections:

I did not want to be President, I am not very fond of power, I am not attracted to power. But I do believe that if a human being, at any time, is responsible for exercising power, it must be done with transparency, with truth, with work. (Interview with Fernando Rincón from CNN in Spanish, April 18, 2018).

The pronominal paradigm in the first person singular is repeatedly constructed to exalt his position in the first sentence, while in the second he takes up the prescriptive component of ought to be, that is, he finds himself as an example of those values of being human and political.

Moreno portrays himself as a President who restores institutionalism to the country and promotes values that he considers democratic so that State entities are considered the best in history:<sup>4</sup> “Praise to those who bequeathed us freedom. Freedom that with enough effort we have rescued, as well as tolerance, respect, alterability”.<sup>5</sup> In his speeches there is a reiteration in terms of patriotic memory (Minervini, 2017), now Moreno linking himself as a new historical figure who would have restored freedom, as a new founding reference of the country, he wishes to mark a before and after with his actions.

In December 2018, his government reduced the subsidy for gasoline, in a public speech he emphasized that his personal desires are in the last place when governing the country for el singular metacolective, the “country”: ““How do you think I’m going to stop making decisions that are in the best

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4 Inform to the nation, May 24, 2018.

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interest of the country to preserve a position! A position that is ephemeral, that has to be temporary”<sup>6</sup>. In this way, it is understood, he justifies any measure that he implements since it would be the truly good thing for Ecuador, which he considers a homogeneous whole and not a current hegemonic process (in which there are social groups benefited by the exercise of power).

This idea of being respectful of the other functions of the State was not only to attack the other one built (Correa), it was also emphasized when his then vice president María Alejandra Vicuña was accused of committing a crime years before, here, in the same way, Moreno differentiates the past from a present in which he would be the founder of the new independent justice: “I cannot and should not act as a judge (...) it has cost us a lot of work to return to the institutionality, let’s not lose our way forward (...) without interference or orders from the Palace”.<sup>7</sup>

### *Dialogue and the end of political conflicts*

Lenín Moreno seeks to construct a positive image of himself by positively valuing his allies and opponents (Minervini, 2017), by evading antagonism and confrontation to conceive of democratic life as a dialogue for consensus, as if politics were a neutral terrain and with solutions that satisfy everyone, which hides the difference in power between different groups, as well as promoting the end of ideologies (Mouffe, 2003). According to Minervini, it is a relationship ‘I-us’ in which he portrays a responsible government, he claims to be attentive to the social problems of the country and to be conciliatory, unlike the confrontational image and the construction of adversaries that Rafael Correa had (De la Torre, 2015).

As of the 2017 electoral campaign, dialogue as a noun is one of the elements that has stood out the most and has been a constant in Moreno’s discourse. Dialogue is an agglutinating entity of several selected heterogeneous subjects, which — after power level games — produce postulates with actions and verbs in relation to politics. This gives meaning to the management of power; it would be the basis and justification for decision-making.

Dialogue would go hand in hand with reconciliation. The President mentioned that the Correa regime fought with all social groups and even left

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6 Speech during Military High Command inauguration December 20, 2018

7 Message from the Constitutional President, November 29, 2018.

families broken following an “ideological fanaticism”,<sup>8</sup> but he clarifies that he does not have that temperament and motivates the opposite: reconciliation as a way out of the confrontation and as a first step prior to consensus, “shaking the hand even of the one who thinks differently, making good with the father, with the mother, with the brother, with the friend, with the co-worker with whom I distanced myself due to political issues.”<sup>9</sup>

Second, Moreno opens the possibility of listening to opinions that agree with principles that the government expresses. Third, listening becomes a verb as a mechanism to reach — as a deontological duty — a responsible consensus between various social groups and the government to see the country as a unitary whole:

People who only think about everything or nothing are not thinking about the country, they have to think about the need cede space and reach consensus, to reach minimum agreements in order to move forward together. (Interview with Eduardo Khalifé, Estéfani Espín, and Jeaneth Hinostraza, January 21, 2018).

Let’s turn to an example of the Popular Referendum. Moreno asked (points 1 and 2) that citizens propose the questions for this process: “Thank you for giving me your frank, honest, free, and patriotic opinion. I need that opinion, I need it to be able to govern well so that this continues to be, more than ever, the government of all”.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Moreno indicates that he constructs himself based on that *I-us*, without that us he cannot constitute himself in the political. Supposedly, it would promote a dialogic form of exchange of meanings on political proposals to shape government actions.

In the end, the President and the government decided (point 3) what the seven questions would be and the majority of the public voted in favor of all of them: “My style is not to impose or order by whims, you asked for the referendum, you know well the country you want and I deeply respect your will”.<sup>11</sup> The elaborated questions and above all their legal, political, and social consequences are justified by that dialogue that would have listened to and collected the proposals, as well as by the values constructed in Moreno’s

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8 National address, August 21, 2018.

9 Dialogue with the media in Manabí, January 19, 2018

10 Statements regarding the results of the Popular Referendum, February 7, 2018.

11 The President Reports, January 29, 2018.

speech about his actions as a guide in politics. Dialogue occupies a metaphorical place (Verón, 1987, p.19) on the whole of the doctrine of the Moreno government in order to legitimize its measures.

These processes of reconciliation-listening-action also appeared in the implementation of the Law for the Reactivation of the Economy and to announce other economic measures (already with the government team linked to the business sector, right-wing and related), according to Moreno, as a product of the conciliation, since that process had called for the recovery of the economy. Here, the regime announced cuts, the increase in the cost of premium gasoline, and the concession of public companies.

### **Rafael Correa: redemption and antagonism**

In the context of 2018, already out of office and geographically far from Ecuador since he resided in Belgium (his wife's native country), Rafael Correa applies discourse to re-legitimize himself since he is under discursive attack. In his ethos, he exalts his values such as an incorruptible honesty. He constructs himself as politically persecuted and, at the same time, as the redeemer of the homeland that is in danger.

*In the name of the people and without interest in power*

Correa in his career constructed a personal ethos that implies a force of character (Cerbino et al., 2016) and establishes parallels between himself and the historical character Eloy Alfaro (Ávila-Nieto, 2012), in addition to alluding to national dignity and sovereignty.

He constructs his *I* and *us* based on the difference:

We never owed ourselves to any group of power (...). Because we were middle-class people, independent professionals, we are not bankers, we are not big businessmen, we do not belong to any of these exclusive clubs, we always govern for the common good. (Digital Link # 6, October 27, 2018)

The *others* are listed and classified in different power groups with which he would never identify, in addition to becoming closer to the people by including himself in those groups of identification (middle class, independent professionals) and discursively and antagonistically distancing himself from others (bankers, businessmen).

His ethos of virtue (Cerbino et al., 2016) possessed images of sincerity, unquestionable honesty, and fidelity. To this, we add that he projects himself as “healthy people” (not contaminated by anti-values) and affirms that he has acted with truth, reason, and rectitude:<sup>12</sup> “we have always been humanists, we have been willing to give our lives for human rights, that we have provided so many rights, opportunities, social justice”.<sup>13</sup> The image of redemption appears, which is linked to the following statement in which he refers to his “historical task”, he talks about that fortuitous fact of being president, although power was not his interest:

I fulfilled my historical task, I did my part, I was going to retire from politics (...) I already achieved everything that could be achieved, I never looked for anything for myself, but life rewarded me, my people rewarded me with the maximum authority that a citizen can operate, to be President of the Republic in 3 consecutive won elections. Three and I no longer have anything to aspire to and I never aspired, only to serve my country. (Interview on TeleSUR, February 4, 2018)

It includes the nominal form “life” as a design to be chosen as president by the metacollective people, which during his mandate would have delegated its representation to speak on its behalf (Freidenberg, 2011). He reiterates his values of service and vocation towards another metacollective: the homeland.

*The moral battle: incorruptible integrity and honesty*

“The corrupt” is a nominalized form frequently used by Lenín Moreno to refer to the previous government of Rafael Correa. In this sense, Correa activated as interdiscourse and deontological necessity an ethos about his *I* and his *us* to counter the attacks: “If there is a battle that a revolutionary cannot lose, it is the moral battle, our integrity is unforgivable and they know that they are lying.”<sup>14</sup> First, Correa constructs himself as a revolutionary to confirm that he has a left-wing ideological tendency; the second is the moral battle, in which one side will be the revolutionary *us* loaded with values and integrity, while the other is one that lies:

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12 Digital Link # 6, October 27, 2018.

13 Interview on HispanTV, July / 2018.

14 Interview in Palabra Suelta, EcuadorTV, January / 2018.

We were an honest government. It is not that there are no cases of corruption, Spain had cases of corruption, Germany, the United States. He who does not tolerates that corruption and fights it. That is what we have done in the 10 years of government, in my personal case, all my life, risking even my life to fight corruption, even more, when I was President. (Interview in *Palabra Suelta*, EcuadorTV, January / 2018)

In this paragraph that redemptive discourse is reiterated, of giving his life for his mission. The following quote includes another of the elements reiterated in several speeches by the president, in terms of his honesty and show of integrity:

The only thing I have to leave my children is my reputation, integrity and believe me, that they accuse me of arbitrary, authoritarian whatever you want, but never dishonest. But if they can prove that I took 20 cents (...). I could legally become a millionaire because I received more than 2 million in gifts and there were no regulations and everything was given to the Ecuadorian people or it was auctioned to help the poorest, if they show that I took 20 cents that are not mine, I would have betrayed my country, my God, to my people, my family, my people, my conscience. (Interview in *Palabra Suelta*, EcuadorTV, January / 2018)

“20 cents” is repeated several times only in this quote, it would be a repetitive phrase that is easy to remember and understand. In this case, it is a monetary element of the daily life that substitutes the idea of corruption to deny it. At another point, Correa reiterates his values of working for the “common good” and his integrity, that his objective is not money, but service for the meta-collective Ecuadorian people as a pro-recipient. To close this section, he names metacollectives and entities that would have constructed his identity in the ethos and that tie it to an *us* of that moral battle: family, people, the country, the people, and God.

#### *An ethos as a victim of persecution*

Correa constructed this image by naming court cases, electoral and political decisions that went directly against him, and those who were participants in his government. The first case was about the Popular Referendum, in which a question prevented Correa from running for the presidency again in 2021: “I am outraged by the double standards, the attacks on hu-

man rights, that the rights of an entire people are harmed for trying to harm me”,<sup>15</sup> he forges a relationship between himself and the people as affected.

This account of victimization also ties him to a judicial case in which he is accused as the author of the kidnapping in Colombia of an Ecuadorian opposition politician, with the support of intelligence agents: “For God’s sake, a recording came out that says that he met several times with me, pure false testimony that does not withstand the slightest analysis, when the prosecutor links me, I am not a fugitive from justice, I am a fugitive from injustice”,<sup>16</sup> thus he makes a controversial denial, does not deny that he has been legally declared a fugitive in the process, and appropriates the term with which he is labeled and tries to discursively delegitimize the judicial decision.

Let’s look at another similar fragment: “Since they can’t beat us at the polls, since I’m the only opponent of this government, everyone —the rest of treacherous political leaders fell into complicity— they want to destroy us, comrades”,<sup>17</sup> in addition to the aforementioned ethos, Correa constructs himself as he direct counter-recipient of the Moreno regime and politicians responsible for his persecution.

His ethos is also loaded with energy, strength, and potential, which is why he uses irony on the statements of his opponents and places them and their phrases in the place of ridicule (Cerbino et al., 2016, p. 101). For example: “Then as everything collapsed, the only thing missing was for them to accuse me of the murder of Atahualpa, of the sinking of the Titanic”,<sup>18</sup> thus leading the criminal charges against him to irony, using facts known in Andean history and (also through the famous movie Titanic) he resorts to the collective memory and the meanings that citizens handle. In the last months of 2018, several judicial processes were developed against him, they denied the registration of his political movement, among other facts that affected the group that supports Correa, so as a goodbye to his Digital Link, the ex-president said: “They have done a lot of damage to us, the revolution is wounded, but it is not mortally wounded, they wanted to bury us, but they did not understand that we are seed and we will flourish and we will continue forward *hasta la victoria siempre, que viva la patria!*(until victory always, long live

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15 Interview on Canal 1, January / 2018.

16 Interview in Palabra Suelta, EcuadorTV, January / 2018.

17 Interview in Palabra Suelta, EcuadorTV, January / 2018.

18 Digital Link # 6, October 27, 2018

the homeland)",<sup>19</sup> closing strongly based on the emotional by the use of this ethos of persecution to which he adds metaphors of life and death for politics, as well as referring to the political rebirth of his group.

### *Defender of the homeland and redeeming ethos*

The redeeming ethos that Correa forms on himself contains powerful elements for establishing ties with his intended recipients. This is how we saw it in previous sections: he indicated that he would give his life for human rights and for the fight against corruption. It is similar to religious discourse; he assumes a messianic figure with different unshakable values as a mission for the salvation of the people.

Since Correa established his residence in Belgium, he could be configured as a new "great absentee". According to Carlos de la Torre (2015), this figure would be for the return from exile as a redeemer who returns to save the country. To achieve this, his memory must be kept alive, attribute the failures of the politician to others, to people who took advantage of his goodness and sincerity: "They try to prevent us from returning to our homeland"<sup>20</sup> and "they want to annihilate us because we wanted to change the country, we started to change it",<sup>21</sup> Correa speaks in the first person of the plural, promoting a collective *us* that governed and which others want to hurt.

The image of the redeemer is like the biblical savior and the prophet, bearer of the message and provider of happiness and well-being (Cerbino et al., 2016): "for defending the Citizen Revolution, for defending the new homeland, for those people was all worth it, for those people you have to continue believing",<sup>22</sup> he is a defender of the refounding of that country, of his metacollective and evokes faith in that prophet who can return.

"It is against us because we challenge the system, because we gave education, health to the poor, because we cared for the great majority, we made the rich pay a tax, that's why they are against us"<sup>23</sup> here he links his speech of positive self-representation to the groups of identification of "poor" and

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19 Digital Link # 6, October 27, 2018.

20 Interview on RT, July / 2018.

21 Digital Link # 6, October 27, 2018.

22 Interview on HispanTV, July / 2018.

23 Digital Link # 6, October 27, 2018.

“large majorities”, as well as constructing his counter-recipient, his political other marked in an antagonistic way: “the rich”.

These ideas will be completed with the prescriptive component that the homeland must be defended and then recovered: “This is about being Ecuadorians, defending the homeland because the homeland is going to be taken away by weight, the Bucaram, the Nebot, the bankers, the traitors and all those who are participating in the ring of power”,<sup>24</sup> then his collective of Identification becomes a broader entity, as Ecuadorians since he seeks to get more citizens to join, the para-recipients, located as the undecided voters (Verón, 1987).

This discursive sequence by Correa goes like this: they don’t let him return to the homeland, they want to destroy them because they are in favor of the poor and against the rich, that is why the homeland must be defended and recovered. In the following paragraph one can find these elements:

We are going to participate so let’s hope it does not disperse, our people wait for us, to look for candidates to win the 2019 election, go to a constituent assembly and recover the homeland (...) this is the number of our migrants, this is the number of the movement of our Citizen Revolution that returned the homeland, raised the homeland from the ashes in which the bankers had left it. (Digital Link # 6, October 27, 2018).

First, the Citizen Revolution metacollective is maintained, then he asks that the pro-recipients of that group wait for his return to defend and recover the homeland through the constituent assembly, the redemption is ratified by remembering that they are the ones who have already saved and resurrected the homeland before after the economic crisis of 1999 and can do it again, so he appeals to the collective memory. This constant use of religious language is tied to popular religiosity: the believers’ hope that order will be subverted by God as justice, as a revenge for the poor (Carozzi, 2006).

## **Discussion and conclusions**

The construction of the discursive ethos makes it possible to make visible elements of the politicians’ strategy, which are projected towards others to put

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24 Interview in Palabra Suelta, EcuadorTV, January / 2018.

themselves in relation to the meanings of citizens and thus seek legitimacy. It is recalled, according to Maingueneau, that ethos is a stake, it is the composition between what is shown, what is said about oneself, and the pre-discursive ethos, as well as the effective ethos that is made visible in the meanings of the recipient, which by the limit of this article could not be further discussed.

The present study is about a context that had a confrontation and a controversial dimension (Verón, 1987) in the political field, in which two discursive visions appear: one with the logic of consensus and the other based on a political confrontation. Taking advantage of the communication power resources of the government and its links with the private media, President Lenín Moreno — through post-political discourse (Mouffe, 2003) that is used by contemporary neoliberalism — sought to negatively represent his adversary to legitimize his change of political orientation and not respecting the program for which he was elected, arguing that there was no alternative but dialogue. At the same time, he constructed himself as opposed to Rafael Correa due to his differential characteristics.

Correa received attacks from the media and government communication, a tactic which he also practiced during his mandate. In this new context, Correa responded interdiscursively through his self-exaltation in order not to lose ground in the absence of control of the communicative context, since he was outside the governmental power and the media were against him. At the same time, Moreno's political turn served Correa to justify that there was a "betrayal" of the people, emphasizing the antagonistic logic.

Moreno's strategy forged in his discursive ethos the cleansing of his image of the past and his ratification of honesty and disinterest in power in the present moment. In search of legitimacy, he turns to a religious story, constructs a kind of figure of holiness in himself with a continuous list of values so that citizens become believers, replicate them and place their faith in him as a reliable guide. Through the knowledge that he obtains in the dialogue process (which would consist of reconciliation, listening, and action), Moreno would aspire to be the re-founder of the country's institutional framework. Here there is a coincidence in the fact that Correa and Moreno use speeches with religious overtones, given the cultural matrix present in Ecuador due to the presence of Christianity throughout its history. Correa, for his part, portrays himself as the redeemer who arrived a few years ago from citizen groups far from power, with an incorruptible morality, to save the country after the difficult situation that was experienced by gover-

nment instability and economic and social unrest. Today he shows himself as someone persecuted for having acted in favor of the most vulnerable, the people, and not the power groups. His experience in the mandate is his justification and basis to stay in political action, to seek to reclaim the homeland — which would mean to obtain power again— and to be the savior of the country again.

Knowing through this study the discursive ethos of Lenín Moreno and his main opponent in Ecuador also allows an analysis of the game of the representations of politicians that is in dispute. It is part of the process of struggle and constitution of power in a hegemonic process, in this case, the dispute for political legitimacy between us and the others constructed by Correa and Moreno.

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