

**PRACTICES AND LIMITS OF ADVERTISING: A PROPOSAL OF CRITICAL
INQUIRY TOWARDS POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS**

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ABSTRACT

Interest in studying political advertising campaigns has grown in recent years, mainly in the United States (Daignault, Soroka, and Giasson, 2013). Likewise, approaching advertising from a critical angle has become very important (Hamilton, Bodle and Korin, 2017). The present makes a proposal to address what would be the tools and mechanisms of empathy and experience under which the advertising campaign of a presidential candidate in Mexico communicated with its target audience and what effects it caused in their groups of interest. The results show that it is a topic that is not widely addressed internationally and even more so in our country, and therefore proposes a methodology composed of various techniques and under a critical analysis, to be able to reflect on the invasion of privacy and lack of ethics that certain political campaigns have.

KEYWORDS: critical studies, advertising, political campaigns

BACKGROUND

Advertising, according to Bassat (1993), is "the bridge between the product, or the service, and the consumer". Does not simply offer products or services, but a style or way of life, depending on the socio-cultural context. As expressed by Baran and Sweezy (2013), manufacturing companies are increasingly market-oriented and away from production. Advertising has become an indispensable mechanism for the functioning and development of our society, coming to be considered as a variant of social communication, making people interested in products and consumes them by using a message under communication theory (Degrado, 2005). According to Gómez (2017), due to the great advances and evolutionary processes, the procedures of this have changed in their practice in the commercial world and include much more than the fact of selling a product for its usefulness. Which leads to other areas of interest in which advertising is currently unfolding, from psychological and social aspects such as perception to the close relationship with consumerism and capitalism of nations.

"Perception is the process by which the individual selects, organizes and interprets stimuli to construct a meaningful and coherent painting of the world. The consumer makes decisions based on what he perceives rather than on objective reality" (Domínguez, 2001, p 43). It is understood that for a product to be successful or to quickly stand out from the rest, it must be perceived in the best way, this quality is indispensable so that it is more likely to be purchased. Almost all elements of human interaction entail a degree of persuasion in their communication process, particularly those of sale, negotiation, promotional writing, advertising itself and the relationship with the media (Lakhani, 2005). "Advertising is the most prominent element of the marketing process. Consequently, it receives more than its fair share of scrutiny by a number of governmental, legislative and public policy organizations, [...] because it is so persuasive, advertising has a special responsibility to adhere to high and honest ethical standards and of business, by serving to create economic growth "(Russell, et al., 2005, p.705). This implies that advertising not only impacts the psychological and social environment of the consumer but also affects their other environments, culture, politics, and economics.

PUBLICITY AND PROPAGANDA

The study of a phenomenon such as that of political communication and its best-known expression, advertising, implies, as in any social science, seeing it in an interdisciplinary way. An advertising campaign is the totality of the messages that result from a creative strategy; in other words, it is the sum of all the advertising efforts that a company makes in a given situation in the life of a product (Guzmán, 2003). Advertising has become an indispensable mechanism for the functioning and development of society, coming to be considered as a variant of social communication. We can say that it advances with society, in a rhythmic, changing and adapting to the new characteristics of emerging markets, noting that it occurs not only in countries with high development but also in any part where there is a small marketing opportunity.

The evolutionary change that advertising has had is reflected directly in the ways of thinking and lifestyles of the new generations, supported mainly by the new media that have emerged and that have achieved new communication channels. According to Paz, Vázquez and Santos (s.f) "advertising is an activity with important economic and social repercussions: As an economic instrument, advertising contributes to some extent to the expansion of sales; From a social perspective, advertising has a great use for its informative content that benefits the consumer, in particular, and society in general, making known ways to meet their needs and desires "(p.3)

On the other hand, Fernández (2011) mentions that propaganda consists of the launching of a series of messages that seek to influence the value system of the citizen and its conduct, therefore, in politics, acquire decisive importance in the electoral processes. It is a licit activity that decisively influences the selection of rulers, as evidenced by the excessive amount that political parties devote to this item in campaigns (Fernández, 2011). There is a relationship between the two that gives rise to reuniting them in a single concept, as complementary and not as two totally different aspects. For Pineda and Rey (2009), institutional advertising shares with propaganda the transcendence of its content and purposes. Both, although with different objectives, point to issues of importance for life in common. Advertising for institutions follows the principles and rules that advertising for consumer products, but its degree of transcendence is much greater (Bassat, 2004 cited in Pineda and Rey, 2009).

For the common people, the concepts of advertising and propaganda tend to be confused to an almost total non-differentiation. Both advertising and propaganda are about inducing behavior, exerting power and persuading (Crespo, 2010). "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in the democratic society. Those who manipulate this hidden mechanism of society constitute the invisible government that holds the true power that governs the destiny of our country. Those who govern us, shape our minds, define our tastes or suggest our ideas are largely people we have never heard of" (Bernays, 2008, p.15).

PROBLEMS OF ADVERTISING

Critical positions towards advertising have been around for some time. It has been addressed from economics, psychology, semiotics, politics, cultural studies. All this by evaluating to what extent, or what are the parameters that dictate a healthy relationship between company-consumer. If they exist, what are the barriers that cross or the lines that are violated in terms of terms such as privacy or personal security? Advertising plays a great social importance. One could say that it is one of the most powerful actors that act in the process of the production of the culture of contemporary society. This means that advertising has high social visibility and, at the same time, that it is subject to numerous criticisms. Modern societies were historically built based on the extension of consumption and, for this, the systematization of the advertising activity was as necessary as the proliferation of the factory.

The societies of what some have called hypermodernity or "new modernity" (Lipovetsky, 2006) are also being built on the basis of a new publicity in which "the social" is not something accessory or anecdotal, but the core element of the strategies and, therefore, the discourses that implement them (Alvarado, 2009). The perspectives towards advertising and its social work are very different since it can be approached from different perspectives. According to Llaguno (2010), advertising plays an important and relevant role in the cultural configuration of the modern order, one of the central hypotheses of consumption sociology. Indeed, capitalism, in a constant process of expansion and globalization, requires to function and be efficient an advertising device that generates the cultural and ideological conditions for the reproduction of the current political and economic system.

According to Pentiado, Lisboa, Portela, and Stefano (2011) "in the current epoch of changes we see ourselves transiting through a new stage of capitalism {...}. In the times that run the current means of production, are based on techniques and procedures of communication and information minimizing the factory machines {...} What is produced just if they are material goods because they are rather representations of social relationships and forms of concrete lives that increasingly manipulate the meaning of symbols and their images "(p.47). In all countries, there are laws that prohibit deceptive marketing messages, a form of fraud. Advertising that does not follow these rules is questionable and ethically problematic (Binde, 2014).

Rules have been established to regulate the abuse of manipulation of the information shown in the advertising messages, as well as the consumer's own information, such as the case of Mexico's National Institute of Transparency, Access to Information and Protection of Personal Data (INAI). Hamilton, Bodle, and Korin (2017), from the Frankfurt School and other related currents, offer a wide exploration of the approaches of the critical study of advertising, presenting new findings. However, with the new era and the growing advance of technology, various issues have arisen in which advertising abuses the power it has over the consumer. Some of the problems that can arise on the Internet in relation to the "lack of protection" of the consumer are the insecurity of transactions and means of electronic payment, lack of protection of privacy, intellectual property rights, and personal data. Underlying them is the concept of intimacy, necessary for a diversity of relationships, an essential aspect of autonomy. It is necessary to protect some events in a person's life against publication. The common law recognizes to the individual its inviolable personality and this includes facts of his own life (Gismera, 2004).

ADVERTISING AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Screti (2012) mentions that often in the literature on politics and publicity, it has been analyzed how the former has used the latter to achieve its discursive and social ends. The cases in which the opposite has happened have been studied to a lesser extent. Even so, in reference to these latter cases, some have spoken of "crossed loans" between these two social and discursive domains, between the socio-semiotic universes of advertising and politics.

According to Crespo and Moreno (2015), political communication was, from its inception, linked to the development of the media, which would later be called Mass Media. The expansion

of technology that enabled the development of the media was manifested, in the first instance, in the advance of radio and film, whose potential was alarming for some researchers of the time, thanks to the possibilities of manipulation, at mercy to the new techniques of political propaganda that these new media offered. Advertising has been one of the main media players in the decisions, thoughts, and behavior of individuals, according to Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1994), one of the main strategic functions of political advertising lies in its ability to insert topics in the media agenda

This is how political campaigns take a position and a place, through the media, within the ideology of the voters, because of their actions the public is conscious or ignore, pay attention or neglect, emphasize or overlook. On the other hand, the theory of the media agenda mentions how the media are effective insofar as they manage to distribute and transmit to the audience the importance they attach to the topics they cover (Paniagua and Gómez, 2012, p.284), which brings with it a perceptive impact on the voters and users of the media, based on the present mainly on the image as a foreground and on the second a discourse that supports or reinforces what one wishes to present.

According to Baeza (2012) the dissemination of ideas through a propagandistic logic, which was recorded until the middle of the century, is interrupted by the need for new communication logic of the political proposals. Since the new forms of modern political advertising are standing with a whole new stock of communication and advertising tools, have as their purpose two functions: the function of communicating, that is to transmit the message in a textual manner (it is the one that denotes, so that presents and describes the information linked to the proposal), and the persuasive function, that is, suggests a second reading of the message, shows an implicit content (Baeza, 2012, p.40).

For purposes of a proposal to critically analyze the advertising dynamics of political campaigns, an analysis of different elements is proposed to determine the tools and mechanisms of empathy and the generation of experiences, key elements of any campaign, and how these are communicated towards their target audience in order to generate a critical study. When talking about determining these tools and mechanisms, refers to those key points that engage people to be consumers of a product or service, but especially those points that are not allowed ethically or pass acceptance levels from a moral or ethical perspective, and that people are not aware of it. For this case, it would be proposed to address the analysis of the presidential campaign of Mexico's last

former president from the perspective of an advertising campaign of a product and under critical studies, both that is suggested not previously addressed in the literature, and which marked an era of questions, according to various authors, where the media played an important role in winning this election.

According to Solís and Acosta (2015), a particular aspect of this presidential election was that television, in its character as a hegemonic means of communication, achieved an indisputable role that was reflected in public opinion to such an extent that from it the presidential figure was built. Starting from this perspective, the fact that an important and representative figure of a country, such as the presidential one, has backed (or taken advantage of?) in its favor the tools that the media have, and the unconscious control they impart over the masses to obtain a position, represents a historical event and created serious concerns.

So, what are the tools and mechanisms of empathy and experience under the advertising campaign of EPN that was used to communicate with its target audience and what effects did it cause on its stakeholders?

The starting point would be the advertising campaign that was carried out when EPN started as the presidential candidate in 2012, which was controversial and, fundamentally, media intrusive (Solís and Acosta, 2015), because its image of managed as a figure in which his physical characteristics, youth, and physical attractiveness were highlighted more than its politics skills or ideas, and he also strongly attacked his main opponent. According to Del Mazo (2015), its advertising campaign used the same formula that gave such good results in 2005, when EPN was elected governor of the State of Mexico.

METHOD

The case study method is proposed. The technique for this investigation is a content analysis that, according to Fernández (2002), the purpose is the identification of certain elements, in this case, it will be used to describe trends and reveal similarities or differences in the written communication between the people and the EPN advertising campaign. Three samples are presented. A study of the advertising campaign in audiovisual media was carried out. The selection of television spots was obtained after analyzing 85 spots that belonged to the political campaign

within a specific period (March 30 to June 27, 2012). See Table 1 for the final selection, were the most targeted were entrepreneurs and women to whom the campaign was most directed.

SEGMENT	SPOT NUMBER
<u>Businessmen</u>	1, 10, 17, 21, 25, 26, 27, 30, 37, 47, 52, 53, 55, 57, 58, 69, 75, 76 y 77
<u>Womens</u>	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 33, 36, 40, 43, 44, 46, 49, 71, 72, 73 y 80
Youngs	23, 29, 42, 60 y 79
Field workers	32, 39, 45, 50, 59 y 61
Elderly	18, 19, 20, 22, 28, 48, 51, 54 y 62

TABLE 1. CLASSIFICATION OF SPOTS BY MARKET SEGMENT

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

This content analysis is based mainly on the theory of framing which according to Guzmán (2015) this model, whose epistemological and methodological evolution has redefined the hypothesis of research on the effects of the media on public opinion, seeks to analyze the frameworks (frames) established by the media and the influence they exert on the cognitive process of the audiences. In other words, the framing investigates the way in which the media projects the topics of public interest and the interpretation they give to those topics. The conception of framing can be transferred to the different levels of the information process so that any of the elements that intervene in it can focus or frame the information (Giménez, 2006).

For the analysis that is implemented for this research, it consists of the elaboration of a series of categories that help the evaluation of the spots and their parts (frames). In these categories they are observed; image details, both candidate and the spot, as well as the structure of the discourse and textual elements that compose it, in order to define if the spot belongs to a category of emotional, discursive, image or proposal nature.

The results obtained after this analysis dictate how the tools of the media help in the construction, both image and the discourse of the candidate. And how these aspects, focus on specific objectives for viewers or voters, create or receive the exact message they want to convey through framing. Next, an analysis sample of three of the 10 advertising pieces that were analyzed based on the content analysis model is presented.


No. SPOT	DATA SHEET	TRANSCRIPTION OF THE TEXT
1	<p>Title: Spot "I'm not going to divide Mexico."</p> <p>Duration: 31 seconds</p> <p>Date: April 20, 2011.</p> <p>Market segment: Businessmen.</p> <p>Theme: Respect / Professional ethics.</p> <p>Campaign phase: Initial</p>	<p>In this first spot, he is seen acting in a very political and responsible for the situation that speaks. The video starts with the candidate in an office sitting on a desk saying <i>"There are those who ask me if I am going to respond to the aggressions of our adversaries. The answer is NO and for a very powerful reason"</i>, while they close their face to focus their attention on him and that people can feel the safety of him while dictating his speech. The environment where the candidate is shown, as mentioned above, is a large office where all the other employees can be observed in depth, working and carrying out different activities. Continuing with the candidate's speech, basically, he addresses the issue of political aggression between electoral parties and mentions that he is not in favor of the dirty war, because this divides society and causes problems within families. In this way, he emphasizes using the phrase <i>"We already know that a divided country weakens and does not advance, that's why I'm not going to divide Mexico."</i> That said, the spot ends with its campaign slogan <i>"That's my commitment and you know I'm going to meet."</i> All this occurs while listening to a song with a "heroic" tone in the background. With the above it can be said that this announcement belongs to candidate framing and verbal framing since the positive qualities of the candidate stand out as a reasonable logical being, able to solve any problem that surrounds the country, taking a mature and safe position, demonstrating reliable data and real facts.</p>
LINK:	<p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZLDGuv6yyw&list=PLFE43D1CC99A1FC05&index=1</p>	
PHOTOGRAM		

TABLE 2. CONTENT ANALYSIS #1


No. SPOT	DATA SHEET	TRANSCRIPTION OF THE TEXT
2	<p>Title: Spot "This 1st of July with your vote, Mexico is going to Change"</p> <p>Duration: 30 seconds</p> <p>Date: June 12, 2012</p> <p>Market segment: Entrepreneurs</p> <p>Theme: Voting ballot</p> <p>Campaign phase: Final</p>	<p>This spot belongs to the closing phase of the campaign. Basically, the video is about highlighting the advantage that the candidate has in the polls versus the other contenders. The entire short film is worked with a voice-over, while the candidate is seen with different people he met during his tours and visits to the different states of Mexico. In these scenes, the candidate is very involved with the people being attentive, friendly and very empathetic. About the voice over, it mentions that the candidate's party goes "up in the polls" and this information is projected showing results of some consulting companies and public surveys such as "Mitofsky", "El Universal Buendía and Laredo", "Milenio GEA - ISA", "Excelsior Ulises Beltrán", and "OEM Parametría". The spot ends with the phrase "This July 1, with your vote, Mexico will change", thus involving the Mexican public, making them responsible for a positive change for the country. During the video, the same background music as in Spot no. 1 is still used, which makes it easily associated and remembered with the EPN electoral campaign. This spot belongs to the verbal framing since, in addition to its speech of motivation and gratitude on the part of the party towards the people who have voted for it, it uses textual elements that are appearing throughout the video, as the graphs of the survey results, which reinforce the messages of the candidate. In addition, it also belongs to candidate framing because it shows EPN as an individual with a very warm and empathetic personality with people, which reaffirms his qualified qualities to carry the position of President.</p>
LINK:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZcQANxhIE&list=PLFE43D1CC99A1FC05&index=79	
PHOTOGRAM		

TABLE 3. CONTENT ANALYSIS # 2


No. SPOT	DATA SHEET	TRANSCRIPTION OF THE TEXT
3	<p>Title: Spot "A President who listens, respects and governs for everyone"</p> <p>Duration: 32 seconds</p> <p>Date: May 14, 2012</p> <p>Market segment: Women</p> <p>Theme: Commitment Social</p> <p>Campaign phase: Initial</p>	<p>This video begins, again, with the candidate sitting on a desk in a large office with people working in the background, while he goes to give his speech looking directly at the camera so that it seems that he is talking personally with each citizen. The narrative structure of the message, in this case, is focused on the Mexican public segmenting it by age ranges, beginning with children, then young people and ending with adults. The speech begins with the line <i>"Mexico deserves to be governed by someone who understands that children need the certainty of a good future. That young people demand, and rightly so, a better present. That they understand the desire with which women and men get up every day to support their families"</i>. It is worth mentioning that while the candidate is narrating this, with form advances and as changes the segment, they are close-ups to make a more direct message and give a touch of seriousness and relax to the commitment of this. That is why this spot belongs to the emotional framing since the message clearly tries to empathize with the voters and touch their feelings by these words. In addition, this spot also belongs to the candidate's framing since they place great emphasis on the intentions and concern of the applicant to improve the situation of the country for each specific segment mentioned in the message. They also highlight their ability to listen, understand others and respect all opinions, even if they are not in their favor, and do so with this line. <i>"I am going to govern, on a par with those who find hope in me but also understand to those who do not share my ideas. Today more than ever, Mexico deserves a president who listens, respects and governs for all"</i></p>
LINK:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1kaClgDbZ4&index=45&list=PLFE43D1CC99A1FC05	
PHOTOGRAM		

TABLE 4. CONTENT ANALYSIS #3

Table 5 shows the proportion of framing categories used in the content of campaign spots. The results of the content analysis reflect different relevant aspects of the spots of the EPN political campaign. Starting with the fact that different types of framing are used in the same spot. This is reflected in table 5, where the categories of image framing and emotional framing, both with 31.25%, are those that are most repeated or present in most of these. It is very recurrent, in the content of these advertising spots, the physical characteristics of the candidate, their way of expressing them and their way of narrating their arguments and proposals. In addition, their attitudes and qualities were also outstanding, being so empathetic with people always, in any situation, and with people of any age. In this way, he showed himself as a human being very respectful, friendly, understandable and compassionate. So, it can be interpreted that this category of the image was implemented as a communication strategy for the construction of the image of the candidate, where the charisma and its actions, helped to reinforce the messages in the spots. They framed the information, by means of framing in each message to touch specific points according to the target audience to which they were directed.

CATEGORIES	FRAMING NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Framing of proposals	3	18.75%
Framing of image or candidate	5	31.25%
Emotional framing	5	31.25%
Verbal framing	3	18.75%

TABLE 5. RESULTS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

In this way, it can be observed that the advertising strategy applied to the content of these spots helped to create a particular image of the candidate, both in his image and in the discourse he gave in each promotional video, positioning it in front of specific themes, mainly to issues that interested society, but especially those problems that directly impacted the community to which it was addressed. Problems such as "insecurity", "violence", "poverty", etc., were managed in such a way that the candidate always had the solution to that which affected Mexican society and did not allow the country to progress.

Campaign slogans such as "That is my commitment, and you know I will fulfill it", were emphasized in each of the spots, and even at the end of the political campaign it was modified with

a slight variation, to make the message more personalized with, "That is my commitment, and YOU know that I will fulfill it". Which not only invited viewers to vote for him but also created a connection of commitment and trust, which served as an incentive for the voter to make him feel that his decision was the right one.

In summary, it can be said that the image of the politician was handled as everything that pleased society. The media promotes this strategy, where the candidate should no longer be exposed to viewers as a vulnerable or ordinary person, instead, someone who is evaluated for its foundations, perfectly proposed proposals, plans developed correctly and, above all, by their natural and real personalities. These applicants are currently being evaluated for their physical image, their political speeches applied with slogans and campaign slogans, reflecting what the public wants to hear, and not what is really needed in society, in a real and objective way.

CONCLUSIONS

This was an analysis of the EPN political campaign, not in any way the man himself. Exploring political advertising campaigns from a critical perspective is not only an issue that is rarely addressed in the literature in general, but even more so in the Mexican context. Pointing out the various elements of those campaigns under which the various groups of interest have been exposed, it would allow to warn the terms in which possible excesses and/or violations of the privacy and security of the voters could occur, promoting a timely debate among the diverse social actors and thus elaborate the adequate public policies that safeguard, just as the political constitution of our country, as well as various human rights defenders, promote it, not only the privacy but the democratic development of the nation and therefore society as a whole.

Globalization and the saturation of current images in the market have permeated the minds of individuals, advertising strategies are increasingly more intrusive in our environment, in a desperate search to persuade voters with propaganda strategies, using all resources at their disposal to convince, from the use of a traditional political speech to the film narrative based on emotions, to convince.

Nowadays the line that separates the strategies of commercial and propaganda advertising is very thin, because the latter in its origins had as its objective to convince through the ideology and modify the thinking of the people to obtain followers, today the strategies have been modified

adopting bases of the commercial advertising to convince, that is to say previously a speech was sufficient to convince, today that is not certainly the case, it is required other elements as they are the image or personal branding, narrative, performance, personal lives of the candidates, contexts, etc, that is, the voter visualizes the political candidates as a product that is marketed and that seeks to position, to branding rather than ideological followers.

The content of the campaign of EPN is a sample of how commercial strategies merge with propaganda, highlighting discourses that are attached to emotions and the sale of the image of the candidate instead of promoting an ideology.

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