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Politainment in the transmedia construction of the image of politicians

Abstract

This article explores the application of the concept of transmedia narrative to the construction of the public image of political figures, in a media context characterised by the prevalence of infotainment and the dissolution of the boundaries of political content. To attain this objective, a case-study on a specific leader is carried out; he is a regional leader recognised at a national level thanks to his discursive strategy: president of Cantabria, Miguel Ángel Revilla, chosen for his role as a regular guest on T.V shows of all kinds, as well as for having become the third most followed Spanish politician on social networks. Through content analysis, we examine the character's own performance on different media (television, social networks and an autobiographical book) along with the reactions provoked among the cybernauts. The results show a multiplatform narrative adapted to the specific formal language of each of those media and formats, constantly maintaining the application of *politainment* features (personalisation, entertainment, emotiveness and trivialisation of the issues). Regarding the effects, there is a high level of involvement and a love-hate dichotomy among the public, as proved in social networks. Consequently, in the transmedia political narrative (TPN) the users co-create the resulting image of the politician who is finally perceived by the audience. In addition, the success of Revilla's communication strategy is verified via ensuring that the self-assigned values in his speech, such as leadership and closeness to the people, match those that the audience identify with his figure.

Keywords
Political communication, spectacularisation of politics¸ infotainment, transmedia narrative, media convergence, public image.

1. *Politainment* and transmedia narratives

1.1. *Effects from spectacularisation of politics*

Knowledge is the basis for making informed decisions, among which we can consider the option of how to vote (Sampedro & Resina, 2010). This premise differs from the high level of political disaffection and disengagement shown by a significant portion of the population (Berganza, 2008; Corner & Pels, 2003). In a situation like this¸ the media find in the

infotainment formats, characterised by show-based features, the key factor to address and tackle current political issues while keeping the audience's attention (Vázquez-Sande, 2017).

The increase of the number of political parties, and consequently the rising competitiveness, the proliferation of diverse broadcast and podcast media and formats, and especially the dissolution of boundaries regarding political media content, turn out to be crucial to boost the presence of politicians in hybrid television programmes (Salgado, 2010) – either in the form of magazines, interviews, talk-shows, or late-night shows– whose common basis is "that candidates can make politics a permanent show" (Berrocal & Cebrián, 2009, p. 43) and monopolise the viewers' attention.

The concept of "political infoshow" (Berrocal, 2003) outlines the television programme which, through an emphasis on entertainment, spectacularises political issues using humour and/or irony as a basic resource, besides involving the guest politicians in activities far from their standard (that is to say: 'official') professional tasks. The fact-based comments, when displayed, are superficial and frivolous, in addition to being guided by anecdotes and feelings (Ellis, 2009).

In Spain, this manifestation of *politainment* is relatively recent[1], due to the previous belief that the participation of politicians in infotainment programmes detracted from their seriousness and credibility. However, the social gain achieved this way (Teruel-Rodríguez, 2016), in terms of closeness and accessibility, to those among the public most disconnected from political information, seems to overcome the possible disadvantages: a degradation of political information and a banal conception of the issues at stake (Moy, Xenos & Hess, 2006; Berrocal, 2017).

This particular way of approaching politics and the desire to be foremost in the citizens' minds propitiate the emergence of star-politicians who personally represent both the political party and the ideology they belong to (Echeverría, 2017). This personalisation of politics projects an image of the politician as an extraordinary individual –with style, appearance and leadership qualities (Street, 2012)– as well as a normal person, with concerns and desires close to those of any other regular citizen. To raise this sort of an image, the characters depicted show and share aspects of their private sphere related to their impressions and feelings, family life and personal behaviour.

The continuous participation of the politician in infotainment programmes leads to an overexposure and, above all, a loss of discourse control, due to the effect of social networks. This situation privileges the audience by participating in the projection process of the character's image, although, conveniently channelled, it also offers an opportunity for self-evaluation and continuous listening (Oliva, Pérez-Latorre & Besalú, 2015, p. 4; Selva & Caro, 2017).

Although the public image (Capriotti, 1999) is the sum of identity –self: appearance and personality–, communication and behaviour, it is also necessary to consider a fourth, non-controllable, variable magnified by platforms 2.0: the contribution of the prosumer. The digital reputation or the mere set of opinions visible in the network and elaborated by "the crowd" influence the decision-making of third parties, this way reinforcing the need of monitoring (Durántez-Stolle & Martínez-Sanz, 2011).

And while it is true that the politician's communication is aimed at projecting a positive image, García-Beaudoux & D'Adamo (2013, 2006) prove the proliferation of negative campaigns characterised by exposing the flaws of the adversary in preference to their virtues.

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[1] Teruel-Rodríguez (2016) places the consolidation of this format in the general elections in December of 2015, and June of 2016. During those campaigns, all the leaders involved, regardless of both their ideology and the background of their political party (be it recently founded or not), participated in some television programme (or programmes) characterised by political infotainment.

1.2. *Media convergence and transmedia narratives*

The current technological, cultural and social context encourages both the exploitation of media convergence and the hybridisation of languages. For Henry Jenkins, this convergence gives rise to an unavoidable usage of different platforms or channels for content distribution, so that each medium contributes in a valuable and different way to the whole, a process called "transmedia narrative" (Jenkins, 2008). In this construction, the stories become widespread via multiple channels, each of which provides a content with autonomous meaning, although once consumed together, the sense and approach is broadened, along with the creation by the users themselves (namely: prosumers), that the Internet promotes. (Scolari, 2013).

The transmedia narrative is defined as a great story shared in fragments being distributed on multiple platforms, which allows it to become widespread and somehow enlarged, thanks to the virality of the diffusion through social networks and mobile devices (Gosciola, 2011, in Porto & Flores, 2012). The participation of the citizens via comments or redistributions is sought, which in turn generates a proactive consumption by a social audience (Peñafiel, 2016).

The definition of "transmedia" was initially applied to the dispersion of fiction narratives all over multiple platforms, in order to create a coordinated and collaborative entertainment experience. However, for years it has been employed not only in fiction, but also in journalistic production (Porto & Flores, 2012; Larrondo, 2016), as well as in commercial, corporate (Galán, 2016; Costa Sánchez, 2014), and political communication (D'Adamo & García-Beaudoux, 2014; Ferré-Pavia & Montoya-Bermúdez, 2017; García-Orosa, Vázquez-Sande & López-García, 2017).

1.3. *Transmedia political narratives (TPN)*

One of the most used strategies of political communication is storytelling, a persuasive story that builds up a personal brand for a political leader or party, transmitting their identity, values and goals. To attract, seduce and engage the public in it, this kind of narration appeals to general values and feelings, stages a specific leadership, then builds and shapes an antagonist, and makes use of linguistic resources common to popular culture, such as metaphors, symbols and morals (D'Adamo & García-Beaudoux, 2012). These traits can also be assimilated with what Del Rey Morató (1997) calls "the games of politicians:" the prediction or prophecy (game of the oracle), humour and media sympathy, the redemption of the victim, the creation of both the character of the adversary and that of the saviour...

More and more political parties and leaders transmit this story through a transmedia narrative, which is designed and broadcast in a coordinated manner by various media and formats. For the construction of a TPN, traditional media are combined with digital platforms that encourage public participation. This way, prosumers share and expand that story through their own opinions and short narrations. To sum up, TPNs entail two main features: the multiplatform distribution of a political story, and the participation of users in the final result (D'Adamo & García-Beaudoux, 2014).

The greatest benefit of "transpolitics" is the engagement effect on voters and citizens (Cárcar-Benito, 2016; Ferré-Pavia & Montoya-Bermúdez, 2017). The purpose is consolidating a community of followers, cohesive and participatory, as is fostering loyalty among the electorate, and viralising communicative actions. In addition, it allows the integration of past, present and a certain vision of the future, and sets up both an image and a style of leadership (Cárcar-Benito, 2016, p. 107).

The launching of digital narratives in Spanish political parties stands out for its innovation, but also for committing mistakes linked to the lack of continuity, the replication of content (systematic overlap), or the absence of incentives for participation, almost always limited to promoting the content rebroadcasting, without responding to the interactions there involved (García-Orosa, Vázquez-Sande & López-García, 2017, p. 596).

2. Methodology

The objective of the research is to analyze the characteristics of the communication carried out by a regional politician who has achieved national recognition thanks to his media strategy: Miguel Ángel Revilla. Therefore, the starting questions are: What kinds of language, resources, intent and formats does he use within his stories? Do they fit in the traits of political infotainment? By which means does he spread his personal story and image? What type of response do these strategical actions generate?

The starting main hypothesis is that Miguel Ángel Revilla exploits and strengthens his image as a politician through a transmedia narrative strategy (media employed) based on the values of infotainment (content).

This hypothesis is in turn subdivided into two:

- H1.1. Revilla's media appearances connect to the essential traits of political infotainment.

To demonstrate this, the presence of the basic characteristics of infotainment (Berrocal & Cebrián, 2009) in the communication of this political leader turns out to be verified: decontextualisation and frivolity; emphasis on anecdotes of public life; expression of opinions at the expense of ideas or proposals of a political type.

Likewise, the image that Revilla projects is trialled, based on values that reinforce his leadership (Street, 2012) and/or its closeness to people (Selva & Caro, 2017).

- H1.2. The political strategy of this politician profits from the media convergence by expanding his story through different platforms, and reaching real involvement from the publics, who become prosumers and in turn enlarge that story, which in fact generates a transmedia construction of the final image that the audience perceive.

The case-study is carried out through the application of a quantitative and qualitative analysis template to different formats through which Revilla conveys his public image (communication on social networks, television appearances and books) and the responses among the recipients on the Internet.

2.1. *Miguel Ángel Revilla: biographical data and media relevance of a regional politician*

Miguel Ángel Revilla (Polaciones, Cantabria, 1943) has a degree in Economics, being a bank employee on leave, and current president of Cantabria by Regionalist Party of Cantabria (Partido Regionalista de Cantabria: PRC), of which he is General Secretary.

As a media character, the following data stand out:

- He is the third most followed Spanish politician on social networks, only after Pablo Iglesias and Mariano Rajoy (both of these two being national, not regional, leaders).
- He is a regular guest of political talk-shows and interview programmes focused on social facts, in terms of entertainment, both on the radio and television. He has been invited, among others, to *Chester, El Intermedio, La Noria, Buenafuente, La Sexta Noche, Mi casa es la tuya, Hable con Ellas, Volando voy...* He even became the host of his own programme in Mediaset, *Este país merece la pena*, in 2014 (translated: *This country is worth it*).
- He makes the audience rates skyrocket[2] in the programmes in which he takes part, such as *El Hormiguero*, where he is a regular guest.
- Author of the following books published by Espasa: *Nadie es más que nadie* (2012), *La jungla de los listos* (2014), *Este país merece la pena* (2014), *Ser feliz no es caro* (2016) and *Sin censura* (2018) (respectively translatable into: *Nobody is more than anybody else; The jungle of the scoundrels; This country is worth it; It is not expensive to be happy; Uncensored*).

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[2] News like these, here below, show it clearly: http://cadenaser.com/ser/2018/04/17/television/1523976740_955200.html or https://vozlibre.com/medios/hormiguero-entra-extasis-twitter-record-revilla-37-millones-10590/.

- His media strategy has brought him recognition and popularity at a regional level (chosen by Cantabrian as a leader with whom they would even have a beer)[3], as well as in national terms (one of the politicians that Spaniards would like to have as their boss, according to a survey)[4]. In a study by CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas: Center for Sociological Research), conducted in 2015, after the regional elections, Revilla is the only politician to receive public approval in Cantabria[5].

2.2. *Analysis sheet*

There is an elaboration of an analysis template –based on content analysis–, which, with small variations, is applied to all Revilla's appearances. This template is made up of 6 categories: the first four are resolved considering the message as a whole, integrating both the textual and visual part, while the remaining ones focus on one of these elements specifically. The six categories are:

- Intent. This category explores the primary objective of the message.
- Limelight. This second category, in the vein of "being in the limelight" (equivalent to "being the protagonist"), indicates who the attention is focused on.
- Issue (open category).
- Symbolic role. It establishes the role that the emitter tries to represent about himself.
- Textual composition. It indicates everything related to content, formulation, language and values included in the text.
- Image. It is focused on self-made images and their protagonists. If the political figure concerned appears, the type of programme and the capture mode are also observed.

Table 1: Composition of the analysis sheet.

Intent	*Limelight*	*Issue*
Political Agenda Promise Achievement Media Agenda Criticism on the adversary Dialogue with the citizen Fact-based comments Information on the state of the governed region	Revilla's / Shared *Nature:* politician public figure citizenry (private citizens) region	Political corruption Independence movement Health Education Employment Economy Personal behaviour… *Field of action* international national regional
Symbolic role	*Textual composition*	*Image*
Great Communicator Figurehead Whistleblower Public Administrator	Content: Political/personal Formulation: Rational/emotional Language Values	The politician appears: Yes/No Protagonist Type of media/show/format Capture: Contrived/spontaneous

Source: Own elaboration from López, Marcos & Casero (2017), Berrocal (2003), García-Beaudoux & D'Adamo (2006) and Selva & Caro (2017).

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[3] http://www.europapress.es/cantabria/noticia-revilla-favorito-cantabros-salir-tomar-cervezas-20170328104202.html.

[4]   http://www.europapress.es/economia/laboral-00346/noticia-arrimadas-revilla-rivera-politicos-espanoles-que rrian-tener-jefes-20180129112334.html.

[5] http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Marginales/3080_3099/3092/es3092mar.pdf.

2.3. *Sample*

For the study of the three media (social networks, T.V appearances, and books), the most recent ones were chosen on the date of research (February, 2018). Specifically:

- Analysis of the profiles of this politician on social networks. The messages emitted by Revilla on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are monitored on the days before and after his performance in *El Hormiguero*: from 22nd of January to 4th of February, 2018 (n = 125). In addition, reactions are counted and all comments (n = 3,713) generated by Twitter and Instagram posts are supervised.
- Analysis of the participation of Revilla in *El Hormiguero* on 30th of January, 2018. This T.V show is chosen since it is currently one of the most used by him as a platform, plus its audience and the huge amount of comments unleashed by them on social networks. The speech has been divided into 18 units of meaning taken from the changes of topic and /or protagonists. Likewise, the public reactions are studied from *hashtag* #RevillaEH. After ruling out the irrelevant (those referring to other topics, with inappropriate use), the sample amounts to 598 tweets.
- Analysis of book *Ser feliz no es caro* (*It is not expensive to be happy*) (2016). Each chapter (n = 20) constitutes a unit of analysis, so that in some of the categories the answer is multiple, due to being larger than the previous ones. Public reactions are evaluated through comments and votes on Amazon[6].

3. Results of the investigation

3.1. *Analysis of the communication on social networks*

Miguel Ángel Revilla has an active profile on the three social networks gathering most of cybernauts in our country: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. With an identical username on all platforms –first surname followed by the first name–, the avatar shows a headshot of him (Table 1). His profession and the position he holds in Cantabrian regional government are the first data indicated in the biography, followed by the titles of his books. These traits help assure the followers that they are indeed before the official account of this politician.

The number of followers is around one million on each social network. These figures contrast with the low number of profiles followed by Revilla himself and, therefore, of his interest. The header image is the same one on Facebook and Twitter, and shows the silhouette of Revilla with his grandson in his arms watching the sun set into the sea. Idyllic sceneries of this sort mark the general tone of his own pictures that he has made public on the aforementioned networks.

**Table 2**: Fact-sheet on the profiles of Revilla in social networks.

	Facebook	**Twitter**	**Instagram**
Creation date	No record	March, 2012	29-08-2014
Number of followers	1,200,000	703,000	959,000
Number of profiles he follows	No record	579	42
Number of posted messages	No record	317,000	1,319
Avatar			
Username	@revillamiguela	@RevillaMiguelA	@revillamiguela

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

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[6] These data are collected as a close estimate, since we do not know whether Amazon somehow selects among the posted comments, or accepts any of them coming from a verified purchaser of the item concerned.

Miguel Ángel Revilla shows continuous activity across these different social networks, having specifically posted 125 times on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, in the two weeks evaluated. The main purpose of his messages deals with fact–based comments (46.2%), which sometimes results in acidic criticism. These remarks always show disagreement with the exposed fact via unmasking its protagonist through irony, disbelief or even mockery.

Figure 1: Intent, expressed as a percentage, of the messages posted by Revilla.
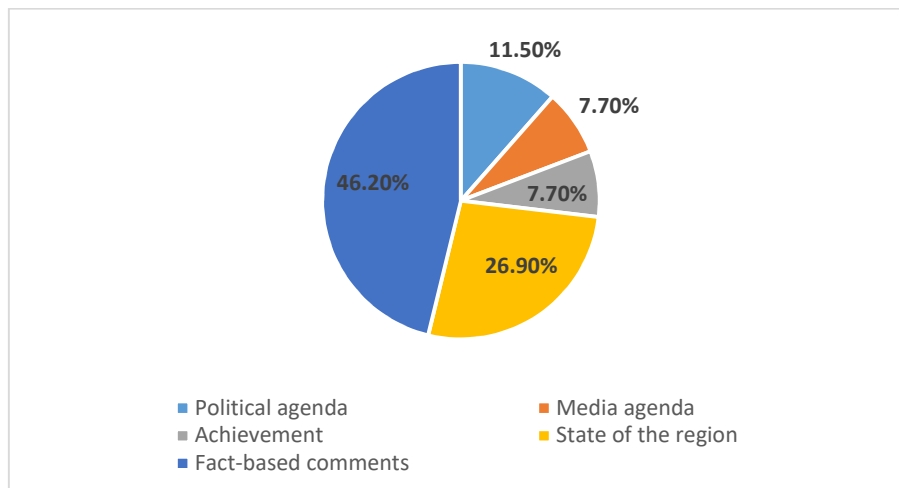
Source: Own elaboration.

The political and national issues are the ones that caused the greatest number of reactions from Revilla. Particularly noteworthy are the sovereignty challenge in Catalonia and political corruption. His views and judgments, oriented mostly to identify reprehensible conducts, consist of short and hard–hitting statements, in a predominantly emotive tone. This forthright way to express oneself prompts a prevalent symbolic role as that of Whistleblower, thanks to his capacity to discern between the right and the condemnable. In the same vein, certain values are channelled: those that Revilla tries to project onto his audience via showing himself as an unbribable and implacable leader who will show no mercy to the corrupt ones, and who heads the defense of the most unprotected and vulnerable.

In contrast to the posts consisting of a disseminated image are those associated with a new image, unedited or self–made; these latter ones usually deal with the state of the region (26.9%). On these images a character proud of his region and its traditions is shown, which fulfils his symbolic role as Figurehead, by establishing a parallelism between that idyllic scenery and its proper and exemplary manner of understanding politics in addition to his style as a leader. From a primarily rational formulation, the text of the message is concise, without any bombastic language.

The rest of intents (Graph 1) develop to a lesser extent. The political agenda of president of Cantabria is barely glimpsed (11.5%) and when he makes it visible, it is through his own personal and close tone. This is evident in cases such as: the affectionate words he dedicates to people he encounters within the institutional events, and the pictures where he is expressing human warmth and a special kindness.

Figure 2: Photographs displaying closeness and empathy from the protagonist.

Source: Images from Revilla's official profile on Instagram.

The divulged events always keep a festive air when they are homages, celebrations or anniversaries, whereas their textual formulation preferably opts for the mere information. The settings of the images prove heterogeneous: be they interiors of a political nature – Cantabrian Parliament or personal office– as non-political –a tent or an assembly hall–. The prevalent symbolic role of Miguel Ángel Revilla during his publications as public representative fluctuates between Great communicator, reflecting his gift to address the masses, and Figurehead, demonstrated by his ability to lead.

Those messages linked to the political agenda of president Revilla do not show any direct or indirect allusions to the political party to which he belongs, neither textually nor visually. It is striking that the publications on social networks are used neither to offer proposals for improvement nor to publicise any political achievements or government management results.

The language of his messages is very expressive and straightforward: passionate and attention-seeking formulas are insistently brought to the table, with a simple vocabulary, somewhat limited, sporadically including 'unofficial' terms with suffix *-uco* (suffix of a regional nature, typical of Cantabria). Also highly remarkable is the repeated use of metaphorical informal expressions of disagreement such as "¡A los leones!" or "¡Viva el vino!" (Spanish expressions translatable respectively into "To the lions!" and "Long live wine!").

Interaction in his social media profiles
The review of the comments addressed to Revilla published on Twitter and Instagram (n = 3,707) demonstrates that the leader did not reply to any of them, offering these social networks a one-way communication. Moreover, there is the verified fact that the tone of the messages of cybernauts on Instagram is mostly flattering, while on Twitter the criticism is directed towards either his management or behaviour as Cantabrian president or the controversial issue selected by him. This question spurs Internet users to express their outrage and discomfort. Hence, the most repeated term is "shame." In both options, the criticism adopts a permanent lack of respect. There are cases in which human dignity is undermined and the comment could even be considered as a hate crime. Worthwhile examples are: "Another one who deserves to spend the earned money on medication" or "I hope they come for you."

Those interactions with a positive bias praise Revilla's personal virtues, especially the communicative ones, while those negative –headed by around ten profiles that reiterate their claims– question him harshly, asking him to give explanations on the issues that affect Cantabria, providing figures and concrete facts also collected in recognised media.

Regarding the use of language, we can see an imitation and reformulation of the most habitual expressions of this political leader: "¡Viva el reparto!" or "A las hienas" (informal expressions translatable respectively into "Long live sharing!" –said in an ironic tone– and "To the hyenas," similar to the aforementioned "To the lions!") and a continued presence of popular sayings and proverbs, to reinforce the meaning of the statements displayed.

3.2. *Analysis of the participation in television: the case of El Hormiguero*

The comments displayed by Miguel Ángel Revilla in the show *El Hormiguero* on January 30th, 2018, (n = 18) are used mostly (8 out of 18) to deal with facts; specifically, to evaluate and talk about the Catalonian independence movement and political corruption. Secondly, with a number of 3 references, they match media agenda and criticism on the adversary (especially Mariano Rajoy). Finally, in two of the cases, there we find the dialogue with the citizen and information on the specific region of Cantabria.

Regarding the main character of the story narrated, we highlight the fact that in most cases (12 out of 18) he holds the prominent role, but he does it alone in only 3 cases; in the remaining 9, his prominence is shared with other politicians, citizens, or Cantabria itself. Regarding the 6 occasions in which he does not appear as a protagonist, the social actors in the spotlight are public institutions or politicians such as Rajoy, Mas and Puigdemont.

The most usual issue tackled was personal behaviour, as this was followed by other questions, here ranked in order: Catalonian independence movement; media; corruption; political management, and finally, the promotion of Cantabria. The political content, which Revilla, as a representative of the regional government, deals with, is reduced to 4 among all the units of analysis. Quite the contrary, there is a prevalence of frivolous anecdotes or personal opinions on different topics (14).

The formulation within his speech was mostly emotive (11 out of the 18 fragments), while the contribution of mere information or data support was restricted to 7 cases. As for the literary devices and linguistic resources, there is a significant use of colloquial expressions, metaphors, sarcasm and humour, exaggerations, comparisons and repetitions. The employment of the first four particularly helps Revilla connect and attract the audience's attention, with a language rarely seen in public appearances of political figures of a similar age. There is a remarkable use of expressions such as "estar en el ajo," "tener un chollete," or "esto es la hostia" (all of them referred to corruption scandals, and respectively translatable into: "to be party of a plot, or any fly-by-night business;" "to have an easy ride;" "this rocks," again, ironic); metaphors such as defining Puigdemont as "el del flequillo" ("the one with the fringe"); as jokes referred to Queen Letizia's "compi yogui" (her "yogi mate") or "Hotel *Soto del Real*" (name of a Spanish prison known for the famous inmates it harbours, such as politicians or bankers).

In addition, the use of the third person to flatter himself stands out in two occasions: referring to his honesty ("in Cantabria the president goes in his own Peugeot, pays for his gasoline, and he is the one who earns the least all over Spain") and his hard-working and claiming mood ("Revilla does not lie, Revilla does not steal, Revilla works, Revilla reports").

Figure 3: Linguistic resources present in his narrative.
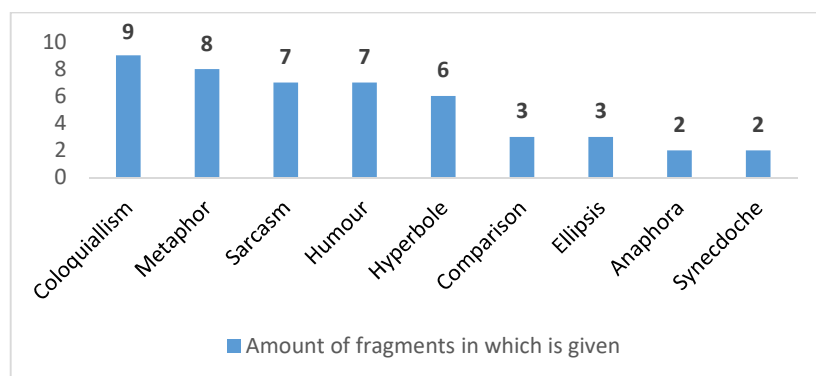
Source: Own elaboration.

The values conveyed through the content of his narrative and his language resources are, in order of frequency: closeness, simplicity, honesty, sense of humour and pride for his land.

All of the above-mentioned give shape to certain predominant roles: Whistleblower (in 8 out of the 18 units of the story), Figurehead (6) and Great Communicator (4). At no time we find the role of Public Administrator, accounting for the achievements made as president of Cantabria.

Finally, it is worth noting that in 5 of the units analyzed, there is a mention of Revilla's appearances in other media or his publications and profiles on social networks.

Audience response on social networks: #RevillaEH

Out of the 598 tweets analyzed, 232 count on a positive bias, praising Revilla (38.8% of the total), while 328 are critical or negative (54.9%). The rest, just 6.3% (38 messages), are considered neutral. We observe, therefore, a polarisation out of the feelings around his figure, namely a *love-hate* dichotomy.

Among the negative messages, the values or adjectives that the audience repeats the most to criticise the political leader are, among others: tiresome, liar, populist, pro-Franco, clown, scoundrel, demagogue and ignorant. At the other extreme, the positive comments reiterate the idea that he is a funny guy, that he would be a great regional or national president, or the adjectives "great," "sincere" and "exemplary."

Figure 4: Negative and positive adjectives received from the audience.
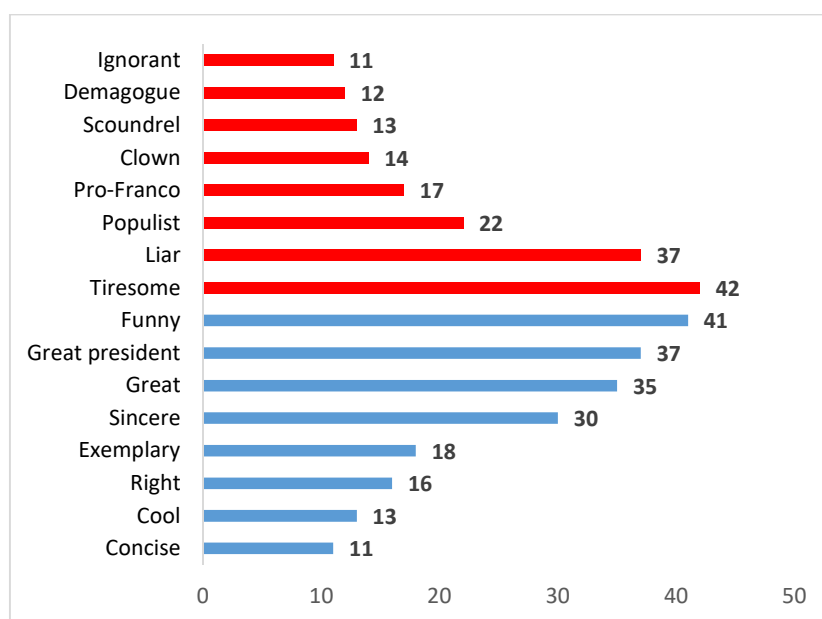
Source: Own elaboration.

Among the negative comments we observe criticisms on his performance as a regional president, either for alleged issues of corruption (8), or for economic management (28 cases of unemployment, deficit, city planning, defaults, or losses in *Racing de Santander* football club). It is perceived that a lot of his critics are Cantabrian people themselves.

In fact, although it is not possible to know it for sure, since many locations from the tweets are not available, supportive or critical tendencies can be certainly related to different specific regions. In particular, the majority of critical comments come from Cantabrian people themselves, as many as from Catalonia and Valencia (whose institutions are critically alluded to in Revilla's speech during the programme). On the other hand, the majority of

positive tweets are located in Madrid and Andalusia, while in Castilla y León or Asturias there is a wide range of diverse opinions.

Regarding the formulation of messages from users, there is a predominance of the opinion or the emotional side of issues (538=90.1%) *versus* the rational or data-supported information (22=3.7%). Within the rational it is outstanding that only 3 are positive, while 19 are negative. These tweets are accompanied by links, videos or images from news on the media, or via other tweets or personal testimonies.

The elaboration of a rational message entails greater preparation and effort to be made by the viewers, because of having to look for associated evidence while consuming the content of the programme. The next step is the self-made production, which can be observed from *memes*, minimum units of cultural information that are replicated or transmitted over the Internet, usually, combining image and text with a dose of humour or irony. Within the analyzed tweets, there are several among these memes (4 out of 10) that are a replica of the one generated by *El Hormiguero* to reach new followers straight from Revilla's networks ("Cantabria mola, y lo sabes") ("Cantabria rocks, and you know it"), but we highlight those created by Net surfers themselves, some editing right from the original show (3), as others from different images (3).

Figure 5: Memes generated by the audience during Revilla's performance in *El Hormiguero*.

Source: Screenshots of tweets from different user profiles with hashtag #RevillaEH.

Lastly, it should be noted that the greatest interaction in users' messages occurs in those critical on his management, except in the case of a firm whose message is released in appreciation of the promotion received by the programme.

Figure 6: Negative tweets with greater interaction during the performance of Revilla in *El Hormiguero*.

Source: Screenshots of tweets from different user profiles with hashtag #RevillaEH.

3.3. *Analysis of the story through books: the case of "Ser feliz no es caro" (It is not expensive to be happy)*

Out of the 20 units of analysis (chapters), 16 contain fact-based comments. Other intentions out of the discourse are placed and ranked much further away: criticism of the adversary (7), dialogue with the citizen (6), achievements (4), information on the management of the region/ territory (3) and media agenda (1). In most chapters Revilla appears as a protagonist accompanied by various figures (15 cases), among which stand out, in order: national or regional politicians, businessmen, journalists, citizens and judges. In 4 of the units of analysis he is not the protagonist, but the mere narrator of the story. In these latter cases, the actors carrying the weight of the chapter were politicians, or Partido Popular (in a critical manner), regular citizens or businessmen. He is the sole protagonist only in one chapter.

The usual mention of other formats used for his communication is striking: 7 of the chapters highlight the appearance of Revilla on television or press, 5 mention some of his previous books, and 3 contain tweets from his account.

The most frequent topics are his personal behaviour (in 11 of the chapters) and policy (10). To a minor extent, we can find topics such as economy, Cantabrian history, corruption, justice, the media or the monarchy. The predominant content is personal (19 out of the 20 units), compared to only 8 in which Revilla appears as the regional president or a political official.

The formulation of the story is rather mixed, balancing between the emotive and rational side in most chapters: there is plentiful usage of adjectives as the wording all along maintains a high burden of opinion; however, at the same time it is supported by numerous historical, economic and law-based data, as much as by additional background elements such as letters or images. The emotional tone is present in 17 occasions, compared to 13 more rational, enunciative or argumentative.

Figure 7: Language resources and devices present in his narrative.
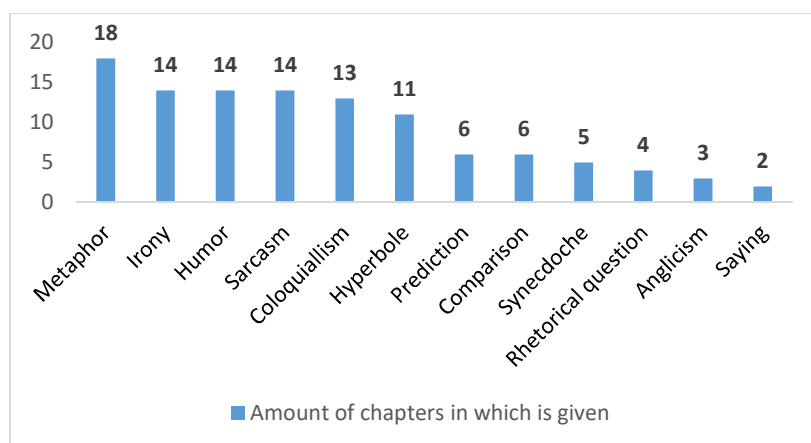
Source: Own elaboration.

The style of the messages is fully shaped –in this order– by metaphors, irony, humour or sarcasm, colloquial expressions and exaggerations and, to a lesser extent, via resort to predictions and comparisons, synecdoche, rhetorical questions, anglicisms or sayings. It is therefore possible to appreciate a slight adaptation of the story style to the written discourse, preserving the usual direct, sincere and ironic tone, but taking more care of the expressions and using more elaborate figures and devices than in either the brief texts shown on social networks, or his colloquial speeches in television programmes.

The values that Revilla himself associates with his own figure are mainly: honesty or honour (present in 11 chapters); solidarity (6); his role as a defender or fighter (6); simplicity (5), and pride for his land (5). These data also demonstrate the continuity or ongoing coherence that his representation as a character entails, through the different media and formats.

Finally, the most common roles are Figurehead (14) and Whistleblower (10). In addition, he appears as Great Communicator in 3 of the chapters. However, similarly to what was found on his television appearance, his performance and possible achievements as the main public administrator of Cantabria are practically non-existent throughout the pages; that being said, it is true that there are mentions of his personal achievements.

Audience response to the book

To assess the readers' reactions, the book profile has been consulted via online sales website *Amazon.es*.

There we find how, out of the 19 opinions of users who had read his work, there is an average score of 4.68 points out of 5. All opinions are positive, but what is more, the majority does not judge (only) the book, but also Revilla himself. Of the opinions there voiced, it is remarkable that the values perceived by these readers are: sincere, simple, close, concise, direct, courageous, hard-working, defensive, interesting, human... in addition to recurring opinions such as "no tiene pelos en la lengua," "ojalá hubiera más (políticos) como él," or "sería un gran presidente del Gobierno" (expressions translatable respectively into: "he doesn't mince words," "only if there would be more (politicians) like him...," "he would be a great president of the nation"), which had also been observed in the positive comments of Twitter's social audience.

Figure 8: Readers' opinions about the book *Ser feliz no es caro (It is not expensive to be happy)* (2016).

Source: Screenshot of the Amazon website (date: 05/03/2018).

3.4. *Contrast between the results found*

If we compare the communication by Revilla in the various media studied, we must emphasise the strategic adaptation to each one: while the books have a relaxed style, with a basis of opinion burden, but full of specific references to economic, historical, legal data, etc.; oral communication on television is more spontaneous and visceral, full of colloquial expressions

and frivolities. The latter is repeated in social networks, where the strategically selected issue, besides being strictly current, turns out to be controversial.

The politician here studied profits from all these channels to invite the audience to consult the rest of formats that have accommodated his speech, underlining in a recurrent manner that media themselves are those demanding his stance on this or that issue. This tactic attracts consumers and prompt them to change to another format, so that they can finally enjoy the full story.

The communicative strategy maintains a constant style: personal and close tone, mixing information and opinion, with a predominance of anecdotal contents about himself as negative opinions about others, avoiding any reference to his own performance in Cantabrian government. It is noteworthy that the use of resources from his political narrative, such as the creation of the adversary (criticism of other politicians, especially: from Partido Popular, namely Spanish Popular party), the role of the saviour/whistleblower (defender of the weak), or the reduction of discourse to colloquial terms, metaphors, ironies, comparisons and hyperboles that connect with the recipients' emotions.

It should be stressed that Revilla's messages published on social networks, in addition to not promoting interaction, are replicated with little variation from one profile to another. Other than that, the lack of response to comments, questions, requests, criticisms or compliments reduces public satisfaction and, therefore, potential engagement.

Regarding the participation of the public, a dichotomy of opinions has been located, especially in the television show, since it is consumed by a more varied range of audiences. Conversely, the books only reflect positive opinions because the users are followers really interested and willing to pay to know their story. In the case of social networks, the comments remain also dichotomous. Instagram brings together the majority of praises for Revilla, according to the information found related to Cantabrian region. Twitter, on the other hand, gathers a more negative criticism, characterised by questioning his political performance and leadership besides his tendency to insult. Among positive values, we highlight the correspondence between the ideals projected on his communication and those perceived and associated to him by the public (honesty, sincerity, clarity, defender of his region), which demonstrates the effectiveness of his communication strategy.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Based on the analysis carried out, the proposed hypotheses are put to the test. The communication brought by the image of Cantabrian politician Miguel Ángel Revilla can be considered transmedia, since the stories transmitted by the different media and formats make sense *per se*, but the whole sum of them adds a greater meaning, and the recipients partake in the construction of the narrative via social networks, providing information, opinions and own creations (as well as co-creations) certainly having an impact on the final image of the character perceived by the audience.

With the data collected, we can see the success of the strategy of exploiting media convergence together with the characteristics of political infotainment (personalisation *versus* professionalisation, anecdotes *versus* information, emotional tone *versus* rationality) and the language games explained by Del Rey Morató (1997), the main ones being: games of the oracle, humour, media sympathy, or the role of saviour.

The transmedia narrative of this politician exploits the main infotainment features to generate a brand image of a character whose life appears spectacularised. The personal and professional are mixed with a simple, close and emotional style based on frivolities and hard-hitting opinions on current issues. This *modus operandi* gives rise to high levels of interest in the public, as also generates a high degree of interaction with polarised reactions of a love-hate sort.

In contrast, this study detects the habitual errors of TPN: the contents are replicated in the different platforms, almost without adapting to any of their characteristics or their audiences, and it remains the case that digital media are used to perform clearly traditional strategies of transmission of unidirectional information, without encouraging any participation, nor responding to comments, requests or criticisms.

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