The Political Branding of an Independent Politician in the Digital Era

MSc in International Business Management

Graduate Business School

Griffith College Dublin

Geraldin G. Gómez G.

January 2020

Candidate declaration

Candidate Name: Geraldin Gomez

I certify that the dissertation entitled:
The Political Branding of an Independent Politician in the Digital Era.

Submitted for the degree of: MSc in International Business Management is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgement is given.

Candidate Signature:

Date: 6th of January 2020

Dedications

I want to dedicate this work to my parents, Edwin and Edith, whom have taken upon themselves to provide me with quality education with a lot of effort.

I want to dedicate this to my brothers, Gary and Gael, my two favourite people on earth.

I would like to dedicate this specially to my aunt Dayra, without her I wouldn't been here. Thanks for checking up on me and encouraging me along this whole process.

I want to dedicate this also to my grandparents, whom have always believed in me.

My baby Rengar, this is for you too.

Acknowledgements

First I would like to acknowledge my friends and family, that have encouraged me from afar throughout the whole process of Graduate Business School.

I would like to thank Justin Keogan, which is the best supervisor I could ever asked for. Thanks for reviewing my work and for giving me his insight on the topic in both academic and practical ways. I will be forever thankful for his invaluable time. One of the finest lecturers I've encounter on my journey.

I would also like to thank the participants of the interviews for taking their time to answer the questions regarding the topics of this research. I cannot mention your names for ethical purposes but you know who you are.

I want to thank my best friend Vanessa, who sat with me in a cold winter night in Italy and listened to every single word of my research without complaining and voicing her opinions, what a champ.

I like to thank my friend JP for reviewing the different chapters of this research, encouraging me and pointing out when I didn't make sense.

I would like to thank the faculty, specially Aine McManus, for her assistance during the whole process of the Masters.

Abstract

The Political Branding of an Independent Politician in the Digital Era

Geraldin Gómez

During this research the aim of the research was to evaluate the political branding of an independent politician in the context of the Panamanian Presidential Elections of May 2019. The research examined the perception of the political image of Ricardo Lombana, a Panamanian politician, among millennials in order to identify which elements of his branding strategy resonated with them and which did not. The research also explored the brand awareness of the politician. The target audience for this study were millennials living in Panama City, Panama. The literature base for the research relates to Political Marketing, Branding, Millennials and Leadership theories with the purpose of finding strategies that could potentially improve the current branding strategy of the politician, in order to increase their brand awareness and improve the perception of the politician's overall image. A conceptual framework was created with the intention of having an effective process to evaluate a political brand. The elements that are evaluated can be interchanged in order for the process to apply to commercial brands. The primary data for this research was collected through six semi-structured interviews conducted with millennial voters in Panama. The results showed that the overall perception of the politician is positive, but that he did not reached all the population, especially those of lower income or living in rural areas. In a small group, such as the six participants that were interviewed, the qualities they expect to see publicized about a brand can vary, but it is the job of the branding strategist to identify the common traits the audience care about in order to work with those. Branding strategists in the Ricardo Lombana team are recommended to do more qualitative research among millennials, and the rest of the Panamanian population with the purpose of making the necessary adjustments in order to improve both the perception of the brand and its awareness among the electorate. It is recommended that scholars conduct further research into creating effective processes regarding the evaluation of branding strategies.

List of figures

Table of Contents

Introduction and Objectives

"Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you."
— Pericles

"Your brand is what other people say about you, when you are not in the room."
— Jeff Bezos

"Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another."
— John Maxwell

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Menon (2008, p. 12) defines political marketing as "the usage of marketing tools, techniques and methods in the political process. In other words, political marketing is the outcome of the marriage between marketing and politics. As an activity and method, it reflects the penetration of the political space by marketing". Marketing has always been an essential part of politics, throughout history we have been able to witness how a good political campaign can impact elections. To this mix we add social media and the easiness to access and generate information in this digital era, which has made keeping a good communication system between political campaigns and citizens more challenging than ever and crucial for politicians everywhere.

This research is focused on one of the elements of political marketing, which is political branding. Political branding, has been defined by Grimmer & Grube (2019, p. 269) as "the conceptual tool that can best capture both the tangible and intangible components that work together to construct the reputation and image of political leaders and of parties". The purpose of branding, both commercial and political, is to construct and emotional, authentic rapport with consumers (for the purpose of this research voters) based on the building up memories, emotions, personal narratives, and expectations (Serazio, 2017).

This research tool a look into the political branding of Ricardo Lombana, during the presidential elections in Panama, May 2019. The researcher chose to focus on this particular campaign due to the engagement it had in social media with young citizens. Ricardo Lombana is the first

independent presidential candidate to end up as the second runner up in a presidential election in the history of Panama post dictatorship era. The researcher will be sharing socioeconomic information about Panama at the end of the literature review chapter in order to better understand the arena this candidate was participating on.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to find a way to evaluate the branding of a politician in order to properly make suggestion on how the improve his overall image. This research took a look into the branding of Ricardo Lombana among millennials. The research hopes that this evaluation process could also show how commercial and political branding strategies can be interchangeable. The main goal is to understand the voters (consumers) perception about the politician (product), in order to make the necessary improvements that could help the politician win.

According to Kaul (2015) it should not even be a question if companies should be in social media or not, this question is irrelevant as it has become essential to have an online presence in order to be able to communicate with the consumers. This can easily be applied to public figures such as politicians, which have to communicate with citizens in order to gain more people to vote for them during elections, or just to keep the general public updated on their activities and opinions in order to keep the public interest even when they're not in an electoral period. This is why this research wants to demonstrate why is it relevant to invest in having the control of your narrative from the beginning, and the benefits that this may bring to politicians in terms of branding recognition and the impact this may have on the young public.

1.3 Background

One of the surprises during this elections, has been the reach independent candidates have accomplished. Panama has always been a traditional political party ruled country which makes the success these independent candidates are experiencing, worth studying, as those strategies could also be applied to new products trying to make their way when there are well stablished brands dominating the market.

Since a very young age the, author of this research has been interested in politics, and to see now how the campaigns are being handled in huge public arenas such as social media has

affected this particular election is very interesting. The democratization of public opinion, gave room to civil movements that pointed out politicians unfulfilled promises and their bad behaviour during this electoral period.

The interest of the author of this research on this specific topic comes from witnessing first-hand during the past ten plus years of her professional career the changes that marketing has been going through, the importance of having a strategy for their digital presence for a business, public figures, non-profit organizations, civil movements or government institutions. After working in marketing and sales in a multinational tech company for most of her career, during 2018 the author had the opportunity to work in the Branding department of a medium business, specifically into their Digital area, and was able to see a wider scope of how neglecting their online presence resulted in a series of negative consequences for that business, that could have been easily avoided or treated in proper time if the department would have known their clients perceptions and how to improve the experiences for both new and existing customers.

1.4 Significance

This research took a look into the importance of having a good branding strategy in the realm of political branding and the elements that should be taken into consideration while targeting Millennials. Although this particular research was carried out in the context of Panama, some of its results can be applied to branding strategies in political campaigns in other countries. This research intention is to show best practices about handling political branding. It also intends to show some of the character qualities Millennials look for in terms of leadership.

The results of this research can also be taken into consideration by companies looking to market products targeted to millennials in Panama. According to Henneberg & Ormrod (2013) political marketing theories can also be applied to commercial products as long as the characteristics of the target market is the same. Therefore, it can be said that the utility of this research has the potential to go beyond political branding itself.

This topic is an appropriate topic for a research proposal in a Business Masters as it shows examples on how branding is such a valuable asset not only in terms of marketing, but in terms of keeping a good communication system and gaining popularity. During this research, the researcher looked into the concepts learned during Leadership and Development, International Strategy, Global Marketing, Research Methods and Digital Business lectures.

1.5 Research Objectives

As stated before, the goal of this research is to find out the elements that make a political branding campaign appealing to Millennials in Panama. This study also took a look into some of the characteristics young citizens participating in this research are looking for in terms of leadership they admire. The questions that guide this research are:

1. What is the perception about Ricardo Lombana's political image?
2. What did Ricardo Lombana's branding got wrong?
3. Was the Lombana brand communicated effectively on social media?

Exploring the answers to these questions would give us a better understanding of how a branding campaign can be used as an effective tool of communications for politicians in their quest to win an election.

1.6 Structure

During the critical literature review the researcher will look at some of the concepts that are necessary to inform this research. This chapter will be divided into topics which are (1) A brief socioeconomic background of Panama, (2) Political Branding, (3) Young people and their engagement in Politics, (4) The importance of brand awareness. This chapter will end with a conceptual framework as a result of the literature reviewed.

The research design and methodology section will look into qualitative interviews the researcher conducted in order to obtain primary data. These semi structured interviews were conducted on people that meet the following criteria: between the age of 22-38 years old (Millennials), Panamanian citizens and willing to participate on this research. This research conducted semi structured interviews with 6 people that meet the previously mentioned criteria. Hence this research intention is to find out what makes this particular campaign appealing to Millennials.

The research will have a findings section in order to show the analysis of the results of the qualitative interviews. These findings will be divided into themes in order to match the main topics studied during this research.

The following section will consist of the conclusions for the research questions, followed by the limitations of the present research and recommendations for future research. This research will end with the list of references used throughout the study.

1.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to serve as an introduction to this research, letting the readers know more about its background, significance and purpose. To present the research objectives that guided this research, while it also shows the structure in which the research will be presented.

2. Literature Review

Overview

With the rise of technology and social media, the landscape of political branding has changed not only the way we receive information about politicians, but what information we receive, which could impact the intention to vote. With the purpose of informing this research, plenty of political branding literature was reviewed. There are many theories about political branding that were explored in order to look for definitions, and the elements that should be taken into consideration while evaluating a political brand. This review will look into the various topics of this research such as political branding, political marketing, the importance of social media for politicians and leadership.

2.1 What is Political marketing?

Political marketing is often regarded as advertisement, speeches or public appearances, it is more complex than that. According to Kumar & Dhamija (2017) political marketing can be defined as the application of marketing theories, including branding, into the context of politics. In the case of marketing terms of consumers and products, the consumers in this case would be the citizens and the product or service will be represented by politicians or political parties. The ultimate mission of political marketing is to create a recognizable image for a politician or a political party, one that is considered to be trustworthy among voters (Kumar et al., 2016b). It has also been defined as the means it takes for political parties and politicians to win the vote (Scammell, 1999).

The term political marketing has also been criticized, with an author defining it as the application of marketing concepts into the political arena, leaving what should be the ideal quest of the common good of a nation into treating politicians as celebrities and their actions as mere consumerism (Henneberg et al., 2009). Another author has mentioned that political marketing should not be considered a term, as there is not an exchange of goods between the electorate and the politician (Carman, 1973). According to Henneberg (2009) some of the criticism about political marketing is due to the fact that it can "corrupt" the idea of seeking a just leader with values and ideals that is looking into the betterment of society, and transforming this into a mere transaction, a plain consumerist act.

Politicians and political parties take from the marketing tools commonly used for commercial purposes in order to gain votes and win elections, one of the tools used for this purpose is marketing intelligence in order to micro target the needs of different sectors of the population through an exhaustive and complicated process where its effectiveness can only be measured after the election is completed (Lees-Marshment, 2001). Another tool borrowed from business marketing is the creation of websites for politicians in order to share the policies they care about to the public and share all sorts of information from the campaign and the politician itself, other aims of websites can be to raise money, engaging public to do volunteering for the campaign, gaining more voters (Frankel & Hillygus, 2017). Some other tools from marketing that are constantly applied into the political arena are advertising, celebrity endorsement, online publicity, tailoring resources to defined target markets, canvassing, among others (Menon, 2008).

During this chapter, we were able to define what political branding serves a purpose to the overall political marketing campaign during the time that the political campaign is carried out. We also learned how some concepts of marketing are embedded into political marketing as well.

2.2 Political Branding

According to Danesi (2006) brands have existed since the very beginning of civilization. He also claims that in ancient times, products of different places where marked distinctively in order for people to know from which region the product was coming from. According to Clifton (2009) brand can be defined as "any combination of names, slogans, logos, symbols, shapes, colours, letters, signatures, product design, packaging, advertising and marketing, that together give particular products or services a physical, recognizable form that is visually distinctive". This definition gives us a better understanding on how the politics arena can be viewed through the lens of branding. The idea that anything could be a brand as long as someone connects with it (Kumar et al., 2016a). Brand can be considered as simple as the good reputation of something; in marketing brand is regarded as the perception of a product of service that consumers have in their minds, is more about preference than of value (Anholt, 2004). . Even though brand is perceived to be an abstract concept, it could be physically communicated through logos, colours, signs, graphic design, typography among others in order to differentiate a product or service from others with similar qualities (Grimmer & Grube, 2019b).

Brand has been defined as the impression about a company or product that a consumer has on their head; this image the consumer has created inside their head can be problematic for the

brand's owner to handle, due to the lack of ability to control people's minds (C. Pich & Armannsdottir, 2018). It is also very important to understand how consumers identify the brand, since what they perceive might differ from the actual vision that is being communicated (Chernatony, 2006). In political terms, brand has been defined as the means used to better grasp the abstract and physical elements that are part of the reputation of politicians and those of political parties (Grimmer & Grube, 2019b).

One of the ways branding works, is by creating a visual image in our heads that has a strong connection with us (Danesi, 2006). According to Scammell (2007) the function of branding it's to make a product easily recognizable among products of similar qualities, serving at the time the consumer is making the purchasing decision. For marketers, it means that the brand image has to create an emotional attachment that works even over the usability or value of the product itself. As an example of brand attachment, the author used that example that on blind tests for Coke and Pepsi, two thirds of the participants chose Pepsi, but when asked what their preference is they said Coke (Scammell, 2007).

Most of the studies available about brands are made as part of market research for commercial products, that being said political branding is creating its own pathway as a discipline not only of political science, but as part of marketing as well (Grimmer & Grube, 2019b; Kumar & Dhamija, 2017; Scammell, 2007). There are three key components of political branding, such as party leader, political party and party policy (C. Pich & Armannsdottir, 2018)**.** According to Pich (2014) branding has the aspiration to create a certain value to politicians and political parties that may boost loyalty and connection with voters. Political branding is a tool used to make a politician or political party to be recognized from its competitors, therefore creating a competitive advantage for them in order to gain more votes; this can be achieved if the politician or political party are perceived positively by the electorate, therefore creating brand equity, a concept that is used to refer to the total value of a brand (French & Smith, 2010). If the brand equity is solid, according to this previous definition, the more a political brand would be set itself apart from its rivals in the public eye.

According to Chernatony (2006) to construct a brand we need three elements: brand vision, brand purpose and brand values. Brand vision refers to what the brand is set to be in the long haul. Brand purpose is the objectives of the brand meaning what is this brand function in the world, as which issues is this brand going to solve. Brand values refers not only to how much people are

willing to pay for the brand, but meeting the expectations of consumers so they would rather choose this brand among their competitors (Chernatony, 2006). Operationalization of a brand refers to align the business strategy to give the consumers what they expect from the brand, while meeting the business targets (Br, 2013). It also means to utilize the brand to embody the business culture, to inspire your employees, enforce your operations and to meet customer satisfaction by creating an impeccable experience with the brand (Lee Yohn, 2013).

When talking about branding, we have to certainly talk about image. According to Kumar (2016b) a compelling image, good debating skills, hardworking and pristine background are necessary for a political brand to be admired, and for it to be credible that this politician would be saviour to the people's issues; these are some of the elements we will be reviewing during the application of the conceptual framework in order to evaluate Ricardo Lombana's brand. Schneiker (2019) says that politicians are often regarded as celebrities, even though they try to project an image of being "just like us" in order to be perceived as relatable, just as London mayor Boris Johnson managed to accomplish in order to obtain more votes, looking as if he was one of the people and not part of the political elite that is on the power. Politicians should appear as relatable, but at the same time they also need to appear more special and capable than the ordinary citizen (Schneiker, 2019a). According to C. Pich & Armannsdottir (2018) the brand image of politicians can de deconstructed into five components, which are strength, uniqueness, expectations, perceptions and associations, experiences. Strength is the awareness and understanding that the political brand has in the public eye. Uniqueness is about the reasons why citizens should show their support for the political brand. Expectations refer to what the people have in mind about the political brand behaviour. Perceptions and associations, which refer to the public's perception about the political brand. Experiences, which relates to the direct and indirect experiences people had with the brand (C. Pich & Armannsdottir, 2018).

In order to influence consumers, the branding message should be emotional rather than analytical; in terms of political advertising it is advisable to use an emotional soft-sell approach in order to be able to gain momentum, while taking advantage of images and music (Serazio, 2017). According to one of the campaign managers interviewed by Serazio (2017), at the moment of choosing an opponent for a debate he will always choose a smart person whom will talk about numbers and policies, while his client delivers an emotional message. He continues by claiming that when people hear about numbers, any emotion gets detached from them, therefore the candidate delivering an emotional speech will win every time (Serazio, 2017). According to Hoegg

& Lewis (2011) elections results are affected by the candidate image, specifically their physical appearance. It is important for candidates that they are seen as "one of us", that they are not perceived as being part of an elite that is disfranchised with the common citizen, also all their visual branding must be able to be understood by the average citizen so the campaign is accessible to everyone while creating emotional engagement at the same time (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019).

There are two terms that might help to better understand or define the branding of a person, in the case of this paper a politician which are, human brand that relates to the 'actual personality of the person' and brand persona that relates to 'the image the human brand is seeking to project' (French & Smith, 2010). A person's identity might not be equal to the image they're trying to project, it is necessary for both of these elements to be authentic, so the electorate can deem them as trustworthy (Speed et al., 2015). What we can get from human branding, is that it is very important for politicians to be perceived as authentic, and not as their putting on a show for the voters in order to accomplish their goals which is gaining votes (Schneiker, 2019a). To point out continuously the politician's main values and backstory brings authenticity to his brand (Warren et al., 2019). A campaign manager on a research conducted by Serazio (2017) said that one of the easiest ways to rate authenticity is the "beer test", which consists of asking people from the candidates whom would you rather have a beer with, claiming that policies don't really matter, it is all about the person.

According to Lalancette & Raynauld (2019) another important definition for the purpose of this study is that of political image making, which refers to the strategic advancement and operationalization of symbols, that can be conveyed through visual and verbal messages, that give a differentiator for a product or service in order to be recognized by the public. This political image making concept borrows from elements that are part of political communication such as marketing, branding, public relations, polling and advertisement (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019). When creating a brand for a politician we have to take into consideration the meaning of the visuals that are going to represent him, such a signs, slogans, among others in order to make them engaging so the public will have a positive association with those elements (Kumar et al., 2016a). According to the research performed by Serazio (2017, p. 231), one of his interviewees, a director of communication of a politician in the United States mentioned that ''People don't read – if we put up a 20-page white paper, nobody would read that. So we're trying to use the visuals . . . to try and illustrate a narrative,'' when referring to what the electorate pays attention to in

terms of public relations and advertisement. A campaign manager in a consulting firm, said that we see the same images of politicians such as them in a dinner, walking through a factory, walking through their hometown even though they may seem repetitive, consultants always use them because they work by making the candidate to appear as authentic (Serazio, 2017).

Authenticity is subjective as it relies on the eye of the beholder. According to Athwal & Harris (2018) in terms of branding there is two ways to describe authenticity: indexical and iconic. Indexical authenticity is knowing how to identify "the real thing" from its replicas, this is done by authenticating the facts of a brand (its characteristics and behaviour) in comparison to an objective point of reference. Iconic authenticity is how the consumers evaluate a brand depending on their personal values, this a subjective approach as consumers may go for brands whom they think better represent their beliefs (Athwal & Harris, 2018). According to Parry-Giles (2014), political authenticity is influenced by the media, as they decide to show some candidates on certain ways, therefore influencing the public's judgement on the candidate authenticity. There should be a congruence of matching their words to their actions, as people are looking if political candidates act according to what they preach (Jamieson & Waldman, 2004). In a study conducted by Pillow, Crabtree, Galvan, & Hale (2018) about the 2016 presidential election in the United States of America, they researched the public's perception of authenticity between Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton. Donald Trump presented himself as the anti-politician, being provocative and confrontational in the way he communicated with the public. Bernie Sanders was the anti-establishment candidate, managing to be perceived as "down to earth". Sanders and Trump were deemed as unorthodox in their speeches and perceived authentic as they were not following a script. In the case of Hillary Clinton, she was perceived as being too scripted and emotionless on the way she communicates, therefore deemed as unauthentic (Pillow et al., 2018). Authenticity is one of the elements, this research hast taken into consideration in order to evaluate the political brand of Ricardo Lombana.

One example of political branding is the photo of Barack Obama and his team supervising the capture of Bin Laden on May, 2011 from the White House, in that photo we can see Obama as an African American man whom is charge of the nation, there were also women being part of this very important military quest and according to Lalancette & Raynauld (2019, p. 892) "Obama got swagger". Some other examples the same authors mentioned were those of Nicolas Sarkozy in France, Angela Merkel in Germany and Justin Trudeau in Canada whom have also resourced to imagery to appeal to their citizens. In the case of Nicolas Sarkozy, his visual aesthetic is aiming

to make him look as an everyday worker business person, instead of that of an aristocratic person in order to present himself as an image of power and relatability in front of the French citizens. On the other hand, there is the German leader Angela Merkel, whom avoids to carry around any elements that could make her look "too feminine" in order to create a more neutral image as part of a male dominated arena, where she is currently one of the most powerful politicians. For Justin Trudeau, the aim appears to be aiming for popularity not only in Canada but around the globe, as we can see images on his very own Instagram page as being part of the gay pride parade, or taking part of different religious or cultural activities, this images can appeal to a wide spectrum of people making them shareable therefore increasing his popularity; at the same time we get a glimpse of Trudeu's personal life where he is seeing as a happy married man and loving father with his family accompanying him to different official events (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019).

Political branding definitions were reviewed during this chapter, as well as the elements that are part of the overall political branding of the candidates. Some of these elements that we will be evaluating in relation to Ricardo Lombana's branding are political image, authenticity, weaknesses, debating skills and visual elements. This chapter informed us about why these elements in particular are important for the overall branding of a politician.

2.3 The importance of Social Media for politicians

The traditional channels of communication such as television, print and radio are still the preferred media of a huge amount of voters in Panama. There is also a rapidly increase of access to digital media, it is no surprise that it has become a must for politicians to have an online presence in order to be able to compete and have access to an important reach of the electorate. For this reason it should no longer be a choice if a politician should have an online presence, but rather of how can they control the narrative of their own personal brand and how to do it effectively (Kaul et al., 2015).

During the past twenty years, the internet has been proofed to be an essential part of the political communications agenda, this includes social media; the rise of this new media, has paved the way for changes in the way politicians are being looked at and making it more difficult to try to manage reputation efficiently (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019). One of the goals in terms of political marketing in relation to social media is to incentive the engagement of the citizens with the activities the politician is participating on, by creating visuals that make the politician look powerful,

honest, and important, while also giving the public some access to their private life which would make the politician be relatable and 'one of us' (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019).

Another important reason to have an online presence is because users do not have a passive voice, but instead they are being very active on the different digital media platforms, such as social media or online forums. The importance of an online presence, in this case for politicians, is to be able to interact with their audiences and take control of what is being said about them in the news (Horster & Gottschalk, 2012). Having access to more relevant knowledge about voters needs alone, is a valid reason for having an online presence. Creating an online conversation with voters have a direct influence on their loyalty to politicians. Having an open conversation with citizens can also increase their overall satisfaction, as they feel heard, studies have shown that voters tend to stick with a candidate as long as they receive the concrete action plans to their needs (Patterson, 2009).

Digital marketing strategy is the means of creating a marketing strategy using digital channels as a medium. These strategies are easy to target and measure, it also creates long lasting relationships with their respective audiences at the same time (Wymbs, 2011). In order to create a successful digital marketing strategy, you need to create first a human strategy if you want to capture human's attention towards what you are trying to sell to them (Haque, 2015). Digital Marketing Strategy is nothing more than the effective use of digital channels to convey a message, using a strategy specifically tailored for each digital medium.

According to (Bor, 2014) the new media has opened a communication line within the everyday citizen and politicians due to the design of its architecture made for it to be a more democratic way of self-expression where anybody has a direct line to voice their concerns to the people representing them and occupying public office, this is not the case with traditional media such as radio, TV and print where the information is usually one sided. During elections politicians have used social media to put out their message on a daily basis from any place they might be campaigning. There has not been a precise conclusion on weather followers in social media can be converted into actual voters, as not all the accounts that might be following a political candidate are able to vote, making it really difficult to measure its actual effects within the constituents (Bor, 2014).

One of the most important parts of a digital strategy is reputation management. Brown (2010, p. 57) defines reputation as "what influences people to think, feel and talk about you the way they do". Harvey, Morris, & Muller (2017) add that trough a business's reputation in the past we can see a behaviour pattern on what it is considered to be normal in their business culture, therefore it can be predicted how the company will take decisions in the future according to this previous standard. After reading these theories I can say that reputation management is the way businesses or public figures oversee and handle the perceptions of its stakeholders in order to maintain a good reputation. Also that there is a direct link between having a good reputation and a competitive advantage.

According to Mishra & Maheswarappa (2018, p. 2) online reputation management has been divided into two parts, impression motivation and impressions construction. Impression motivation is when politicians yearn to manage the public perception, and design a specific impression they want to have in front of their stakeholders. Impression construction is when politicians find out how they want to be perceived and work on a plan for it to happen. The same research also shows that people may be more motivated to share positive interactions with politicians rather than a negative one, due to a cognitive behaviour of wanting to be associated with a positive image instead of an embarrassing one (Mishra & Maheswarappa, 2018). Scandal was defined by Piazza & Jourdan (2018, p. 165) "as a publicized instance of transgression that runs counter to social norms, typically resulting in condemnation and discredit". The oxford dictionary defines scandal as an action or event regarded as morally or legally wrong and causing general public outrage.

This chapter showed us how social media is such a relevant tool for political branding nowadays. As the participants of this research are millennials, it was important to present the reader with some reasoning behind why was this channel chosen to be studied over traditional media (TV, Radio and Newspapers). This research will take a look into the effectiveness of Lombana's branding strategy on social media.

2.4 Millennials: their relationship with Democracy and Leadership

Democracy is having a hard time in the Western hemisphere, as people are disenfranchised with politics and political parties by not showing up to vote, as people consider the political elite to be far from the reality of the average citizen (Serazio, 2017). Political parties are losing credibility in democratic countries (Grimmer & Grube, 2019b). When comparing commercial brands to politicians the issues they confront are similar in the sense that they both have to be aware of

what the expectations of their public (voters and consumers) is in terms of their actions, this can make room for the concept of consumer-citizen where voters are viewed as consumers, even though some people may not be so pleased with this comparison as they say it could make politics look as a mere commercial transaction taking away the leadership focus that politics should have (Kumar et al., 2016a). People have a tendency to relate to the politician that talks about the issues they care about and have the same share values, we can say that political marketing is driven by the people's expectation (Kumar et al., 2016a).

According to Schneiker (2019) there is the rise of what is called the anti-hero politician, the archetype of this can be represented most knowingly by Donald Trump, whom just like Batman, Iron Man or James Bond is publicized as a common citizen, that in case of crisis can use his superpowers to solve problems and therefore save the day, he knows what the issue is and has the ability to solve it, rather with actions instead of words. According to branding strategy, Donald Trump is the hero the people need in order for the issues to be solved, as politicians have shown that they are not equipped to solve them, this is done by blaming the "other" about the issues, the other would be the traditional politician from whom he is very different and even goes on to point fingers at them for the current situation the country is on, labelling them as non-effective where this "others" belong to a broken system that he is not part of (Schneiker, 2019a).

According to Lalancette & Raynauld (2019) millennials are using social media not only to receive information about politics, but they are participating by sharing it with their social groups across different social platforms. Millennials, also known as Generation y is a group of people from 22 to 38 years' old that spent half of their live without the internet and half of it with it (Cone Communications, 2009). As technology has been a main integrant since teenage years, their use of current new media such as social media is part of their daily lives, making it a critical media to reach this segment of the population (Mishra & Maheswarappa, 2018). According to a survey conducted by Milkman (2017) millennials consider political parties to be untrustworthy, as part of this survey from 2007, 54% of the millennials interviewed agreed that they would rather be part of a new emergent political party than subscribe to the traditional ones. As part of the same survey 49% of millennials agreed that they would rather join an independent movement than a political party (Milkman, 2017). As part of a study conducted by Omilion-Hodges & Sugg (2019) in a list of attributes that millennials look for in their leaders is to "lead by example", other associations where dedicated, open minded, culturally sensitive, approachable and ethical leader.

By definition, an independent candidate is a candidate that does not hold an affiliation to a political party, which could be disadvantageous as political parties receive a significant financial support and have a solid structure that supports them, they have to depend on donations and sometimes even their own personal funds in order to cover campaign expenses (Brancati, 2008). Some of the common negative perceptions about independent candidate are that they are unsuccessful to present strong policy options, alienating lower class and non-educated citizens; while some positive perceptions are they plan cutting-edge policies, they invigorate democracy, reduce corruption, bring back credibility to government (Wright & Schaffner, 2002). According to Brancati (2008) there are two types of independent candidates, first are the ones with no government experience whom are passionate about solving the current issues, sometimes they focus on a particular issue. We also have those with government experience, whom usually have parted from a political party due to conflict with the management of the party or with another party member (Brancati, 2008).

It was important for this study to have some information about millennials, which are the participants of this research. This research also attempted to show what is the kind of leadership millennials admire, which is relevant to this study as we are evaluating the branding of a political leader.

2.5 Context: Panama

In order to provide some context for this research this research will share some important facts about Panama so the reader can be familiar with the arena this political branding study is taking place. Panama is a country located in the southern part of Central America, sharing borders with Colombia and Costa Rica, with access to both the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean with a population of 4.1 million (more than half of the population live in urban areas) where Spanish is the official language and Roman Catholic is the religion of the majority; its main economic resources are the Panama Canal, services and a prestigious banking sector (*Panama*, 2018). In political terms, Panama has enjoyed a solid democratic environment since the abolition of the dictatorship of Manuel Antonio Noriega in 1989, it currently has a business friendly legal environment in order to attract international investors; another attractive feature is that the local currency is the US dollar; although there has been an accelerated growth within recent years the breach within the rich and the poor continues to be unfair (*Executive summary - Panama*, 2019).

There was an electoral reform set in motion in 2017 which limited the private donations for political campaigns and decreased the time for campaign to sixty days, these rules where enforced for the first time during the 2019 presidential elections; Panama currently holds three branches of government: executive, legislative and judicial, two of this branches the executive (a president, two vice presidents and a cabinet) and legislative branch (72 deputies) are chosen every 5 years on general elections which are managed by an autonomous entity called the Electoral Tribunal and everyone over the age of 18 can vote (*Country Reports - Panama*, 2019). There was a civil movement 'No a la Re-elección' (No to re-election) that helped independent candidates to stand out, the aim of this movement was to avoid for the same politicians to get re-elected, by constantly putting online information about their absenteeism, lack of proposal, nepotism among other bad practices; this movement had a heavy effect on the National Assembly where many politicians did not managed to get re-elected (Coriat, 2019). There was 73% of participation from the registered voters, where Lombana ended up as a second runner up by receiving 18.78% of the votes for president (Aconcha, 2019).

2.6 The Candidate

The politician this research is looking at is Ricardo Lombana, a 45 years old lawyer and journalist who ran as an independent candidate for President during the General Elections on May 2019 getting 368,000 votes. In Panama there are 3 main political parties that always take the lead, Lombana ended up third on the 2019 elections accomplishing to beat one of the biggest political parties in Panama. He studied a Law Degree in Panama, a Master in International Law at George Washington University (United States). He worked as a News Editor at La Prensa, he occupied the role of consul in the Panama Embassy at the United States and has his own law firm Lombana, Law and Media (Telemetro, 2019).

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Throughout the research, it was clear that there is a gap in the literature reviewed for the purpose of this research, in regards of a branding evaluation processes, especially when it comes to the branding of a person. While managing a branding campaign it is crucial from brands to be able to evaluate their strategy, so they can make the proper changes in order to be able to accomplish the results they're looking for. The purpose of a branding strategy can go from increasing sales, to create brand awareness, to maintain customer loyalty, to repair a damaged reputation; an even though the purposes for the campaign itself might be different, they all come down to two

elements: perception and awareness. To measure consumer perception can be a complicated thing, because is not just about somebody liking the branding or not, but to the 'why' the branding its or is not of their target audience liking. To measure brand awareness can give brand an idea of the effectiveness of the communication of their branding strategy, in order to know not only if the information is getting to the target audience, but if the information is being understood the way the brand intends to.

Table 2. The deconstruction of political brand image.

Brand image variables	Perspective	Political brand image variables - definition	Desired outcome
Strength	External	The 'strength' variable refers to the external understanding and awareness of the brand identity signals (for example physical communication tools) projected by the political brand. In the context of political branding; the political brand is conceptualised as the 'party', 'party leader' and 'party policy'	External stakeholders should have a good understanding and awareness of brand identity signals. Brand identity signals should be clear and informative. Successful brands have consistency between how brands are communicated and how they are understood
Uniqueness	External	'Uniqueness' refers to unique meaningful attributes and reasons why people should support/adopt the brand. However, the other four brand image variables should offer unique meaningful attributes to distinguish a political brand from competitors, which should enhance success	Political brands should communicate internally developed and envisaged meaningful attributes to external stakeholders, with the aim of linking the positive and focused attributes to the political brand
Expectations	External	'Expectations' refers to how the external stakeholders expect the political brand to perform. This can be difficult for opposition political brands and can be influenced by the narrative set by political competitors	Political brands should offer clear visions or examples of what external stakeholders can expect if the brand is elected into government. This direction will offer understanding and reduce anxiety. Further, it will allow political brands a degree of control of their vision and reduce the likelihood of external stakeholders listening to narratives set by political competitors
Perceptions and associations	External	This variable refers to the perceptions and associations external stakeholders ascribe to political brands. As political brands can also be distinguished via corporate and individual/sub-brands. Thus an individual political brand can be contextualised as the 'local party', candidate/politician 'local leader' and 'local party policy'	Political brands should consider how they are currently perceived and understood before attempting to reposition imagery attached to the brand. This will highlight whether perceptions and associations need to be refined or changed if external understanding is inconsistent with internal positioning. Successful associations and perceptions are positive, engaging and simple
Experiences	External	This variable refers to the external stakeholders experience with the political brand. This can be divided into direct (external stakeholders own personal experience/contact) and indirect (sources of information such as word-of-mouth or narratives by competitors)	Political brands should utilise direct and indirect experiences to connect or reconnect with the electorate. This will develop external brand image. Direct experience has the ability to attract a broader support base which can go beyond party politics. The utilisation of 'experiences' can be used by corporate and individual political brands. Political brands should be aware of the complexity of attempting to control indirect experiences

Figure 1: The Deconstruction of political brand image

Source: (C. Pich & Armannsdottir, 2018)

The figure 1 is the deconstruction of political brand image suggested by Pich & Armannsdottir, (2018). The purpose of using this framework is to be able to get feedback from Panamanian citizens in regards of the politician brand image, so this research can identify how is the politician perceived among potential voters. This framework would help to identify what are the strong points of the politician overall image.
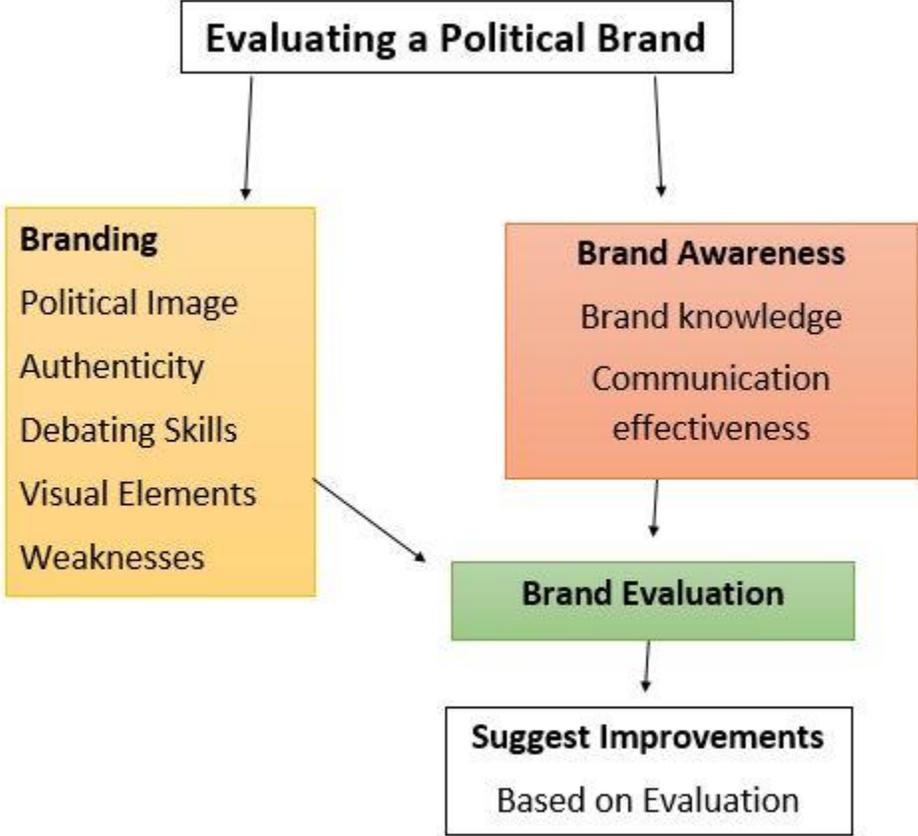

Figure 2: Evaluating a Political Brand

The figure 2 is a conceptual framework in order to provide a graphical form to the objectives that will be guiding this research and its potential results. This framework intention is to serve as an evaluation process for political branding, and for commercial branding as well. The research received feedback from the target audience of the politician, in terms of their perception and the awareness they currently have about the brand. This feedback would be analysed and presented

in a form where an evaluation can be made. As a result of this evaluation the research will be suggesting improvements for the brand.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Overview

In order for a brand to be successful they must maintain a good reputation, and to have a positive image in the eye of the consumers. In the case of a politician, is to stay away from scandals that could affect them negatively, and maintain a positive image in front of the electorate. Nowadays in the digital era, where information is one click away from consumers, it is imperative for brands more than ever to be aware of what is being said about them in order to control their own narrative from the very beginning. It is also important for politicians to be perceived as authentic (Athwal & Harris, 2018), in order for the people to find them relatable therefore inclining to support them during the elections. One of the big advantaged of social media, is that any times you post something you will gain immediate feedback both negative and positive which could help to see what the brand is doing well and what needs to be fixed.

In the research methods section, it will be described in depth the research design and its methods with the purpose of providing an answer to the research objectives that will be guiding this research. The aim of this research is to find an effective process to evaluate a political brand. It will also be taking into consideration the main elements of this research which are branding and communication strategies. It will also describe the philosophical approach used for this research. Semi structured interviews will be performed to Panamanian citizens, in order to collect feedback about the perception and brand awareness of Ricardo Lombana, a Panamanian politician that ran a campaign during the Presidential elections of May 2019, with the intention of make an evaluation of the brand and suggest potential improvements.

3.2 Philosophy Approach

The philosophy approach that guided this research is that of social constructivism. The reason for choosing this approach is because the research evaluated the collective perception about a brand, which is in itself a constructivism of each of the interviewees mind, perceptions are subjective as they come from our very own personal views, and not from a single reality (Floridi, 2011). According to Burr & Dick (2017) knowledge is a construction of our mind, which is influenced by our social and cultural environment, therefore making it the ideal approach for this review as the interviewees background and their own personal values could affect the image they construct in their mind about the politician. Their opinions on what the politician stands for will be subjective and it varied by individual. The method that was used for this research is analytical, as

the aim of this research is to analyse the feedback millennials provided with respect to Ricardo Lombana.

3.3 Research strategy

Political branding can differ drastically not only in different countries but also in different cities within the same country. Rural audiences and urban audiences are approached using different techniques. Rural areas are approached with old school marketing as some of them don't even have access to internet (Garrido, 2017), this is why we have chosen to conduct this research with voters within urban areas of Panama, that can easily be reached through the digital channels. Panama is a democratic country conformed by three branches of government: executive and legislative branches elected by direct, secret vote for five-year terms, and an independent, appointed judiciary (Country Watch Incorporated, 2001). The main chair of the executive branch will be the main focus of this research, which is the presidential one.

During the overall approach of this research proposal, it was described that the method used for this research will be qualitative. The reason why qualitative methods were chosen for this research, is due to the subjective matter of perception, therefore is very helpful for the purpose of this research that interviewees provide as much detail as they can about their views about the politicians in order for this research to proceed with the branding evaluation. The research purpose is analytical, due to the mains goals of this research. The method that will be used to obtain information is through semi structured interviews, that will allow the participants to open up and provide us feedback on the different aspects regarding the branding of Ricardo Lombana. The main data source eligible to perform this survey will be amongst voters, this means only actual citizens of the Republic of Panama will be able to participate on the interviews in order to gain an accurate result in terms of actual voters. The interviews will be carried out in Spanish, so participants can express themselves freely and go into details that might be difficult when using a second language. I will use my background as a Journalist, in order to create the questions that will get us the answers we need in order to be able to present effective results as a conclusion for this research. "Marketing strategy properties therefore provides the basis by which to assess objectively the quality of a marketing strategy independent of its organizational or market context" (Smith, 2003, p. 154).

4.4 Collection of Primary Data

3.4.1 Methods for collecting data

Hochbein and Smeaton (2018) claimed that with access to new technologies there is a greater amount of public available data, also due to its accessibility from any digital device and the use of software that can help to process big amounts of data with just a click, it's one of the biggest advantages for researchers nowadays. For this research we will be using the software Skype, one of the leaders in the market of online calls, in order to collect the data from voters in Panama. Having a reliable and appropriate source of data collection tool is imperative to conduct a high quality research, this is why I will conduct my survey using the platform Skype, I've used it before and it is very reliable. The skype app will allow to record the interviews, that would be later transcribed and translated into English in order to be used on this research. Another key element is designing the correct questions that will serve the purpose of this research. Planning the whole data collection process focusing on using a well thought set of semi structured questions is imperative to find any sort of success during the staging of this interview. In order to do this, the author of this research will study the different elements that were part of the branding strategy for this political campaign, in order to identify which tactics has better results. The author will also look into a set of questions that will try to capture if the intention to vote of the voters was altered by any sort of perception about the political image of the politician. Those two points are the backbone of this research, as it will help us identify why the campaign was more successful than others.

3.4.2 Source of the data

The literature review will serve as a framework throughout the research. As this is not a new topic we are diving into is important to use relevant sources that will help us with the academic approach of this research. We have found plenty of sources additional to the ones we have used during the proposal in order to get an accurate framework for the data that we will be obtaining from the results we will have from the surveys (Kramer, 2012).

The primary source of data I will use for this research are Panamanian citizens with access to digital channels, whom can issue their opinion about the branding of Ricardo Lombana and therefore make a judgement about him. The only conditions in order to participate in the interview is being a Panamanian citizen, that could be either natural born in the country or naturalized, between the age of 22 - 38 years living in urban areas.

3.4.3 Access and research ethics issues

Access to the data will be easy as the only requirement to fill the survey is to be a Panamanian citizen above the age of 18 years old. I will have access through family, friends and all sorts of different contacts I have. Also referrals from these people will help me to have a bigger sample for this research. Participants were sent multimedia material about Ricardo Lombana, in order for them to be able to create an opinion on the questions that were going to be asked. The elections were on May 2019, the data collection was done on December, reason why it was necessary to refresh the image of the politician on the participant's head.

In terms of ethics, at the beginning of the interview it will be asked if the person participating is Panamanian over 18 years' old, and will also have a disclaimer that mention the purposes of this research to be academic. The people filling this interview will remain anonymous.

3.4.4 Nature of data

In order to accomplish the objectives of this study, this questionnaire looked into the interviewees perception of the politician banding image and the effectiveness of the communication of his branding on social media. This questionnaire was created with some questions in order to better look into the participant's opinions:

First we took a look into the background, the participants very own views, in order for the research to have a better understanding about the interviewees about the country and about leadership they admire:

1. Generally speaking, how interest are you in politics?
2. Why do you think are the reasons some people lose interest in politics?
3. How would you define leadership?
4. What words would you associate with leadership?
5. What do you think are the 3 main problems that need solution in Panama?
6. Do you think young people in Panama are currently involved in politics?
7. Do you think social media is a useful tool for a politician?
8. Do you share political content in social media?

 Second we asked the participants about their perceptions about Ricardo Lombana in order to evaluate the elements of political branding of the conceptual framework such as political image,

authenticity, debating skills, weaknesses and visual elements. For this purpose we also make use of the conceptual framework of the deconstruction of political image. The questions asked during this section were:

9. What do you think of the colour Lombana uses? What words do you associate with the colour orange?
10. What do you think about his logo?
11. What do you think about his campaign slogan?
12. How would you describe Lombana to a friend?
13. Would you consider Lombana to be authentic?
14. How would you say his approach was during the debates?
15. What do you think of his physical appearance?
16. What do you think about the way he dresses?
17. Do you think that the fact that he was third is due to a merely economic factor?
18. He formed his own political party called another way Panama, since he says he cannot compete in equal conditions with the other parties. What do you think about him forming his own political party?
19. Do you think Ricardo Lombana really reached all Panamanians?
20. What do you think are Lombana's weaknesses?
21. What do you think are Lombana's strengths?
22. What do you think is Lombana different to other politicians?
23. What do you think expect from Lombana?
24. Have you had any experiences with him?
25. What words do you associate with Ricardo Lombana?

Third we have a set questions in order to identify if the communication of the branding has been effective. In order to accomplish the getting information about brand awareness, we asked the participants about their brand knowledge, in order to understand if the communication campaign on social media was effective, with questions such as:

26. When was the first time you heard about Ricardo Lombana?
27. Do you know some of the policies Lombana supports?
28. Do you follow him on social media?
29. What do you think of his campaign during the 2019 elections?
30. What do you know about the Ricardo Lombana?
31. If you could ask Lombana something, what would you ask him?

3.4.5   Approach to Data Analysis

This research used a list of questions that allowed to evaluate the public perception and awareness about the brand. Once the interviews were recorded using the Skype application, the transcription took place. In order to transcribe the audio, an online audio to text converter was used, and text was edited afterwards to make sure it matched the answers accurately. After the interviews were transcribed and translated, 3 different documents were created and coded in order to evaluate the criteria suggested during the conceptual framework with the purpose of the questions such as Perception (Branding), Communication (Brand Awareness); and also a document with the interviewees perceptions about leadership in order to evaluate what they would like to see about a political leader. This research will use pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the participants. Below each question the answers of the six participants are placed using their pseudonyms in order to have easier access to the information and to be able to make the analysis per question not per participant. Afterwards the answers will be presented in a form on narrative during the presentation of findings section of this research.

3.5 Conclusion

The research methods chapter shows how this research was conducted, and how the questions asked to the participants were the result of the information required in order to be linked to the conceptual framework that guides this research.

4. Presentation and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Overview

During this chapter, presentation and discussion of findings, this research will proceed to review the primary data obtained from six semi structured interviews conducted in December 2019 in the interest of finding answers for the research objectives of this study. The questions of the interview were carefully crafted in pursuance of gathering information about the perception and effectiveness of the communication of the political branding campaign of Ricardo Lombana during the presidential elections in Panama on May 2019. The interviews were recorded using the Skype application in concordance to the ground rules set during the research and methodology chapter. The results will be of qualitative nature. The aim at the very beginning of this research was to evaluate the branding of the political campaign of the independent candidate Ricardo Lombana, it is noteworthy to mention that two weeks prior to the interviews Ricardo Lombana announced that he will create a political party in order to compete in equal condition against the traditional political parties in the next elections.

The findings of this study will be given through the analysis of six interviews. The interviewees were Panamanian citizens, millennials. Primary data will serve to develop this qualitative research, which falls under the social constructivism paradigm, as we are analysing the social constructed nature of reality. This will be done by taking into consideration people's beliefs, thoughts and emotions, therefore analysing human behaviour within a small sample of 6 people. The participants were given pseudonyms in order to protect their identity. The outline this chapter will be in purpose of showing results in relation to the conceptual framework:

- Political Branding
- Brand Awareness

While also adding a chapter about the leadership millennials admire and their general views.

4.2 Presentation of Findings

4.2.1 Political Branding

During the interviews, the purpose of fifteen of the questions was to create a picture of what is the perceptions millennials have about Ricardo Lombana. Afterwards during the conclusions chapter, conclusions will be presented.

Describe the brand

Millennials were asked how would they describe Ricardo Lombana to a friend, in order to see what their perception is when talking about him to a close person. One common answer identified during this question, was that the interviewees described Lombana as a "person starting or into politics", here we can see that they all avoided labelling him as a politician, mainly due to the negative connotation on the word to them. Three of the interviewees described him as a decent person. Others used some phrases that describe him as an antihero:

Lena: "He is a person who had the guts to go against a system."

Edith: "If given the opportunity he can do things differently."

Agustin: "Someone willing to fight for the welfare of the entire country."

This confirms until some extent Schneiker (2019) theory that claims we are currently experiencing the raise of the antihero politician, with the likes of Donald Trump representing an everyday citizen whom has the secret tools to save us all.

Gabriel, one of the interviewees, described him as "an independent candidate who seeks to imitate more progressive countries," therefore labelling Lombana as a person with progressive inclinations.

Let's talk about weaknesses

The interviewees were asked about what they think are Lombana's weaknesses. There were three main weaknesses mentioned:

a) Cultural and Economic Factors

One of the main weaknesses according to the interviewees is the fact that he did not had enough money to fund his campaign. Followed this up by asking if they think the fact that he lost was due solely to an economic factor, and these were the answers:

Lena: "The country was not yet prepared for an independent leader, we cannot change the perception and change a culture in only a year and a half. Panama is used to political parties. It was almost impossible."

Flor: "I think that for some reason we gave the last chance to the political parties. What I am pretty sure of is that it is the last chance we are going to give them."

Gabriel: "Economic factors affected the scope of his political campaign, he got an extremely low number of votes compared to the rest of the candidates in less accessible areas such as the rural regions, where people do not have much access to social media, his popularity dropped a lot."

Here we can see some of the causes that people belief cost Lombana the elections, such as an economic element that affected the reach of his campaign, making it very limited. Also there is a cultural situation, where people are used to vote for traditional political parties.

    b) Being linked to a previous government

Lombana served for three years as a consul at the Embassy of Panama in the United States, role that was designated by the President back in 2004. Some of the participants knew about his role, while others knew he has occupied a public role but not which one, some of the comments in this regard were:

Flor: "He was friend of an influential person in the PRD (the ruling political party when he was consul) and that is why they he got appointed as a consul in another country."

Agustin: "People judge him for not having done anything when he was in government."

One of the problems of this might be that people were not even aware of what the actual role of a consul is, thinking he was able to make political changes inside the country. This was another of the main reasons mentioned as a weakness, the fact that he was linked to a previous government.

    c) He is not relatable

Another claim was that Lombana was not "relatable" to every Panamanian, some of the comments were:

Paul: "With a rather educated audience he did very well, but most of the country are poor old people. So that was his weakness, that he did not knew how to reach those popular audiences. You ask a Panamanian today, what do you expect from your children? is that the son takes advantage of all the other friends or everyone else in his circle and be the best at the expense of others. There is the problem."

Lena: "Lombana is not a popular politician, he wanted to eliminate the subsidies, and people were scared because they don't understand that subsidies are not the solution to the country's long term problems."

Edith: "He did not reach the lower income population, because what he proposed did not suit them. He was going to take away almost all the subsidies. In Panama, populism wins."

He was not popular among Panamanians with low income whom depend of subsidies from the government, whom are accustomed to the politicians that promise them short term solutions. He was not able to create a rapport to those audiences.

➕ Authenticity

The participants were asked if they would agree that Ricardo Lombana is an authentic person. The answers were mixed:

Lena: "Lombana does not accept donations from big economic groups and campaigned with very few tools. For him to have guts, believe in himself, to dare and to have accomplished what he did, that proves authenticity to me."

Flor: "With technology, it is very easy to find out people's lives and I am surprised that he does not have any kind of dark past and I think I would describe him as seemingly authentic."

Edith: "Even though he has used the strategy other politicians have used, I think he is."

Gabriel: "I don't know him personally, but for me, he is someone who sticks to what he says."

Agustin: "I don't know if at a 100 percent. When you are going to sell yourself in politics, you have to sell your family and you have to keep your family together, even if they are not doing so well. When you see the family together, it shows that if he fights for his family he will fight for the rest of the country."

Paul: "When he is talking about topics that are part of his comfort zone such as political, legal, he comes as quite authentic, however when there are the topics are non-political he does not look natural. In these conversations you cannot hear him as authentic, it shows on his face, while the rest of the politicians are actors."

According to these answers, we can agree that Lombana's authenticity is iconic, meaning that it depends on the personal values of the person whom is evaluating him (Athwal & Harris, 2018).

✦ Debating Skills

Participants were shown two debate participations of Ricardo Lombana before they started the interview. When asked about his participation on the debates, the interviewees said:

Lena: "I like him, he controls the situation, I like how he talks, I like that he doesn't focus on criticizing others and he talks about his proposals. He seems natural and spontaneous and he is sure of what he wants to do and what Panama needs."

Flor: "A very intelligent man who knows the weaknesses of his adversaries."

Edith: "Very well prepared. He showed education contrary to others who insulted and shouted at each other, he did not lose his temper."

Gabriel: "Pretty good really, when you are independent the main channel of exposure is the debates. I think he did an excellent job in that regard."

Agustin: "I think he is a person who handles the debates very well. He knows what the other candidates did not do in their previous government roles, he had that subject at his convenience and spoke very eloquently as well."

Paul: "I saw him on some occasions and I found him to be very appropriate with his answers, however I cannot deny that he also fell into that tendency of attacking the other candidate instead of focusing on how to solve the country problems."

His debate skills are mostly perceived as positive, he is deemed as intelligent, eloquent and well prepared. Regarding attacking is opponents, we can see the opinions are very split, while some people find it positive, others don't. While some say he talked about solving the country's issues, other mentioned he did not focus on that. We can see even thought it was the same video all participants watched, the results are a matter of perspective.

✦ Visual Elements

We asked the participants to weigh in the politician's 5 visual elements. Below under each category we will have the comments. Also the finds it illustrative to place images, to help the reader understand the opinions, all the images were taken from the politician Instagram account and Official website.

a) Appearance

Figure 3: Ricardo Lombana with his family

Figure 4: Ricardo Lombana with his family wearing traditional Panamanian clothes

Figure 5: Ricardo Lombana using public transportation as part of his branding campaign

Source: (*Ricardo Lombana (@ricardolombanag) Instagram*)

Lena: "He always has a smile and that gives me a perception of kindness, of sincerity."

Flor: "An elegant man; he has the advantage that he is an attractive man too."

Edith: "He looks pretty good."

Gabriel: "In the majority of the photos, he has a smile."

Agustin: "Very youthful."

Paul: "He is quite professional and formal, that for me that is not bad."

He got positive comments about his physical appearance, they were no suggestions or negative comments in this area.

  b) Dress code

Lena: "He is always well dressed, depending on the occasions. He usually has a short sleeve shirt, but also if he is in an interview he wears his suit well."

Flor: "Very formal, a way of giving a message that he is a serious person."

Edith: "He goes out with Columbia shirts, basic shirts. He does not use these expensive suits, only on the debates."

Gabriel: "He wears fairly casual clothes."

Agustin: "He dress appropriately for the situation, very current."

Paul: "When he is dressed in a professional manner, it seems that he is a business person and then the Panamanian normally associates a business person with a millionaire. So I think he should try to dress a little more informal because he already looks professional enough, quite serious."

The participants mostly agree that he dresses for the occasion. Some think he is very serious in the way he dresses, while others deem him as casual.

c) Colour Orange

One of the questions asked the interviewees what their perception is regarding the colour that represents Ricardo Lombana:

Lena: "I feel that it is cheerful, like a certain light, a certain empathy."

Flor: "It feels like hope to me or somehow he wants to differentiate himself because there was no one using orange colour so far, everything was red or blue or green."

Edith: "It feels like joy, warmth, summer."

Gabriel: "The orange is a distinctive colour to most traditional party colours red and blue. So it catches your attention."

Agustin: "If he wanted to project something other than traditional colours, he projected it, but in truth it reminds me of Halloween."

Paul: "Energy, as something new, I think that's why he chose it. Orange transmits more youth, more energy and I imagine it was the message he wanted to give of something new and fresh."

The perception about the colour orange is fairly positive. According to (*A Guide to Choosing Colors for Your Brand*, n.d.) orange represents optimism, joy, friendship, confidence, warmth, extrovert, determination and impulsivity.

d) Logo

Figure 6: Ricardo Lombana Logo

Lena: "I'm sorry, basic. The arrow up means that everything is going to be better. Panama will continue to grow."

Flor: "Simple, without much patriotism, which ultimately leads to nothing, political parties use the colours of our flag as a mockery really. The arrow going up tells me we are going up or forward."

Edith: "An upward arrow, it looks like it is looking into the future."

Gabriel: "It is an arrow that points up, and up means progress, good things."

Agustin: "It seemed to me something very simple, the arrow tells me that we are going up, that the people are going up."

Paul: "The upward arrow means progress. I think that the blank background is seen as having a certain degree of transparency."

In regards of the logo, most pointed out the arrow, perceiving as moving forward. And the background meant transparency to one of our interviewees.

    e) Slogan: Another Path

Lena: "He wants to show that it will not be more of the same. So we are on another path, because right now we know how damaged the politics are."

Astrid: "Repetitive, because we have also had other proposals with other candidates who always want to be different, and in the end everything remains the same."

Gary: "The political slogan is quite common; I really see nothing interesting on that subject."

Mireybis: "That he intended to do things differently, without populism and more realistic. Something different from what we usually see."

Jose: "I think it is quite accurate because it is what the country needed at that time, a change. It could have been better but I imagine that he wanted to put it in a very basic way so that everyone understood it."

Jean: "Normally, whether it is a government of the extreme right or of the extreme left where there are bases that resent the Government, when you say that we are going to use another path, you are simply saying that there will be a change."

The slogan is quite common according to the participants, very basic, but easy to understand. They think improvements could be done in this regard.

↓ The deconstruction of Political Brand Image

This section will present the findings, in regards of the deconstruction of political brand image presented by Pich & Armannsdottir (2018), in order to understand more about the current brand image Ricardo Lombana has among millennials.

a) Strengths

Lena: "His independence. His pristine resume. His youth."

Flor: "In the little political experience he has had, he has no scandals."

Gabriel: "Saying what he knew that the young public wants to hear."

Edith: "He knows how to communicate with the youth and was very transparent. "

Agustin: "To be independent, he does not report to any political party. As he has worked in the government, in theory he should know and have a better vision of how state entities are managed."

Paul: "There is a part of the political show that other audiences enjoy, they want the candidate to be a clown. But it seems to me that he is a very serious person and that makes him stand out

from the rest of the candidates who are more populous."

His biggest strengths, according to the interviewees, are his independence and his youth. While other mentioned the lack of scandals, his communication skills, his seriousness and even his experience at government, that before was seen as a weakness, one person said it could be a strength as he already has the experience in how the government operates.

b) Uniqueness

Lena: "His youth. He is not an aristocrat, not part of big economic groups like the other candidates. He is a regular person who has achieved a lot."

Flor: "He hasn't had the opportunity to do anything wrong. I would put it that way."

Gabriel: "He was not affiliated with a political party. He is relatively young, a new face and one is always prone to give him the vote of confidence when the familiar faces have already failed us so many times."

Edith: "His transparency and not being linked to any political party, he was very clear about his proposals and did not propose unattainable things, it was very realistic."

Agustin "That he had constitutional reform proposals, to solve problems of the Assembly that no other government have done before. Also the way he handled the campaign, he benefited greatly from the No re-election campaign."

Paul: "That he is independent, that unlike another politician that founded his own party, Lombana is not wealthy. That makes him look like a martyr to some extent, therefore his image was humbler despite the fact that he is very educated."

Among his unique qualities, the interviewees mentioned again his youth, he is a regular person, no scandals, his independence, his transparency, he is realistic, constitutional reform proposal, not wealthy.

c) Expectations

Lena: "He should be ethical, responsible, leader. In charge of the country, worried about the country. Tolerant. Must have impeccable behaviour."

Flor: "He should be fair and sincere."

Gabriel: "He has to be a person who is as impartial as possible, who has knowledge of the functions that he is supposed to perform, that attends to perform those functions and that maintains a high level of transparency during his role."

Edith: "I think he must be a person who has enough values to not fall into corruption, a person of integrity, transparent."

Agustin: "He has to be well focused on the decisions he is going to make and the circle of people who are going to be supporting him on that path. I cannot not fit a person to a behaviour stereotype, because if he does the functions in the role that he has and in the proper way that benefits us all, I cannot standardize it to a stereotype."

Paul: "I prefer that he behaves in a serious manner, it is good that they make a joke here and there but that they give seriousness to the subject and that they speak of relevant issues and that they are respectful, which is something that is not seen here. To understand that his role is to serve. To address us as public official and not like he is a king and we, the people, have to submit to what he says."

In regards to the expectations people have about Lombana, they mentioned he should be a leader, with ethics and tolerance, he has to be impartial, transparent, careful about whom he surrounds himself with, to have integrity, to be serious. One of the interviewees mentioned that as long as he does is job, he doesn't really mind about his behaviour.

   d) Perceptions and Associations
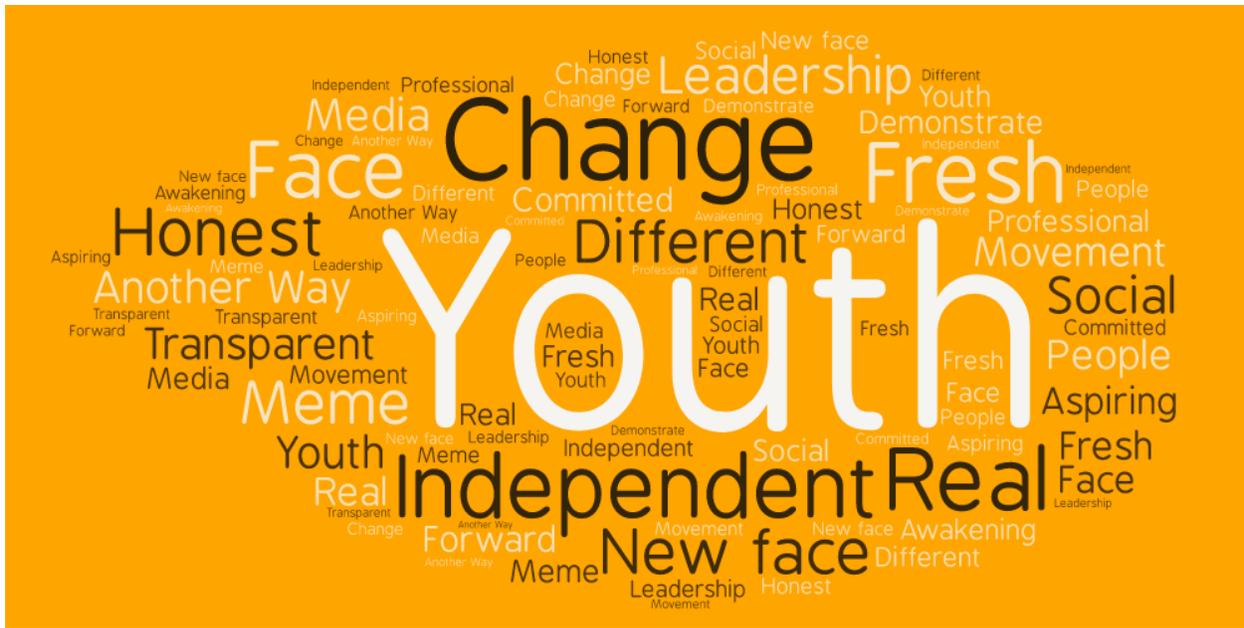
Figure 7: Word map of associations about Ricardo Lombana

Participants were asked the words the associate with Ricardo Lombana, and these were the results:

Lena: "Different, another path, change, independent, youth, fresh, leadership."

Flor: "Transparent, honest, real."

Gabriel: "Independent, new face, young."

Edith: "Young, movement, meme, social media, change, awakening."

Agustin: "Committed, leadership, move people, move forward."

Paul: "Aspiring, professional, new and demonstrate."

Then again youth is the most common association followed by leadership, new, change and independent.

e) Experience

Neither of the participants has had a personal experience with the candidate.

✚ **A new political party: Otro Camino (Another Path)**

A few weeks before starting the interviews, Ricardo Lombana announced that he would create a

political party called Otro Camino (Another path). He claimed this decision was made in order to compete in equal conditions to the traditional parties, mainly referring to economic reasons. The opinions of the participants were quite similar, they all agreed it was a positive idea, even though one of them said she would have preferred for him to stay as independent, she did agree it was a good idea. They all claimed to understand this decision was made for financial reasons. The biggest worry the interviewees pointed out about the new political party is that he should be really careful and suspicious about the people that he is going to surround himself with, and to be wary about the operations of the party.

4.2.2 Brand awareness

    a) The importance of social media for politicians

During this day and age, social media has revolutionized communication as we know it. The participants were asked if they agree that social media is a useful tool for a politician, all of them agreed with this statement. Lena mentioned "they have to take advantage of the time that youth is devoting to social media. So it is a powerful means of communication to reach them and there are several ways to connect with them, people want direct connection with their politicians."

While there is also a negative side of everything being so public, as Agustin said "I think in these elections, technology helped significantly. It gives us easier access to information. For politicians it is a double-edged sword, if they do something wrong people will find out," so it is imperative for branding managers or camping managers to work on keeping a positive online reputation for politicians, while taking care of scandals in a timely manner.

There are also positive results that have come out relying heavily in social media, such as the Obama and Trump campaigns in the United States, as Gabriel said "Of course it is very important for political campaigns today. That was the main campaign tool of Donald Trump, as we know he won. The business of digital information and social media, managed by companies such as Facebook or Google is a business that moves billions of dollars, and if there is someone willing to pay such amounts of money, is because it has a utility," this is contrary to the common perception most participants had where they said that campaigning in social media is not expensive or even free. When asked if they share political information in social media, half of the participants said yes, and half said no.

    b) The effectiveness of branding communication

In order to have a glance at the effectiveness of the communication of Ricardo Lombana's brand, we asked the participants, what do they know about the politician, here are some of their answers:

Lena: "Ricardo Lombana is a journalist, a small-scale entrepreneur because he had his law firm. I understand that he does not have a black past to recriminate him."

Flor: "That he had a totally different campaign as to what Panamanians are used to. He seems tired of the same corruption we have had during the last years of democracy."

Gabriel: "I know he has political history, if I remember correctly. He was designated during one of the governments of the PRD (political party) in some role at the chancellery. He is a politician with a more progressive mentality than others, but he is still relatively conservative, in one of his videos where he commented on the issue of gay marriage, he said he did not agree, which is something that most progressive candidates of the world agree with."

Edith:" I know he was a consul. He is a very prepared and good person, he showed it. He is not inclined to any political party."

Agustin: "I know that for a moment he belonged to the PRD, I don't know which government entity he worked for a couple of years. I know that he has a beautiful family and that he is a well-studied person, and that the party he founded has very good bases and has a good path to where he wants to take the country."

Paul: "I know that he was the consul of Panama, I do not remember in which country with the government of the PRD, hence there is not much known about him. He is of Italian descent, has a family, is a lawyer."

The things people are aware is that he was a consul with the PRD party, he wants to eliminate corruption, he has a family, is a lawyer, and even though he has progressive views he is still fairly conservative.

When asked when was the first time they have heard about Lombana, four of the participants said to hear about him a year and a half before the elections, while the other two were aware of him for the first time during the first presidential debate.

 The participants were asked if they were familiar with any of Lombana's proposals or policies he supports, two of the interviewees say they have no idea but might have been familiar with those during elections. Gabriel said to remember that "he tried to establish a government without owing political favours, but that he was going to put the person who was the most qualified for each

position;" Edith was aware that he wanted to "adjust the universal scholarship, which I think is excellent and he supported animal protection as well;" while Agustin knew that "he was going to propose constitutional reforms, to lower the number of deputies in the National Assembly". While Paul, criticized him about not revealing his proposals properly, saying that "he was very cautious because he said that he had no idea of state finances until he came to power. That made his message more ambiguous. I understand him being careful with promises, but that affected him because it implies that he will come to power to improvise," this was one of the biggest critics Lombana received during his campaign, by trying to be 'honest' he was deemed as unprepared.

If the participants could ask a question to Ricardo Lombana, what would they ask? Two of the participants would ask him what are his proposals, and how is he planning to achieve them, making emphasis on the 'how'. Two participants said they would ask him if he is planning to participate on the next elections. While Gabriel would ask him "what motivated him to get into a political career?" and Lena said "if he always said that political parties did not work, how would he make is political party to be different?". We can see that the main topic were his proposals, which allow us to see that those might not have been properly communicated during the campaign.

4.2.3 Millennials and the leadership they admire

⁜ Context: Panama

The research started asking the participants, what do they think are the problems that need more urgent solution in Panama. The most common answers were education and health system, followed by wealth distribution and national security.

⁜ Millennial and Politics

The participants were asked if they are personally interested in politics, only two of the six participants agree to be very interested, three of them mentioned they are not interested but still watch the news just to be aware of what is going on in the country; while one participant claimed not to be interested at all.

Interviewees were asked if they know the reasons why young Panamanians might lose interest in politics, the most common answer was due to corruption and unfulfilled promises, as Edith said "Because of all the lies they tell us, for all the unresolved corruption cases, it's like we are a mockery." People give up on politics, due to a feeling that nothing is going to change so why even bother?

Afterwards the participants were asked if they believe that young Panamanians are involved in politics, many claim that due to the easiness to access information on the internet, the youth might be more involved in politics, but is still not enough. Flor mentioned that "politicians have no credibility and young people associate the word politics with corruption and turn their backs on them," so due to the negative perception of politicians, young people would rather not 'waste' their time listening to the same speech.

⊹ Millennials expectations on Leadership

The participants were asked, what do they think is a leader. The answers were:

Lena: "For me it is a person that takes you and leads you to a north or direction, but by example, not imposing."

Flor: "A person who has the knowledge to guide people to do good things, do things that really benefit everyone, not just one person."

Gabriel: "A leader is one who can identify the best function that a group of people can do, each individually, in order to perform the work in the most efficient way."

Edith: "Leader is a person who guides you, who helps you achieve your goals and be better, who tells you how to do things or gives you tips on the path you must follow."

Jose: "Leader is a person who inspires me to follow him, that the values he has as a person are the same as mine, that he gets noticed thanks to the leadership he has, that also inspires me to achieve what that person has achieved, a person who dominates different topics and also fights for the well-being not only of his own, but for that of all the people who follow him and make those people grow too."

Jean: "Leader is a person who gets people to follow him. So anyone that attract the masses is a leader for better or worse."

When asked what are the best qualities a leader should have, the most common answer was knowledge, followed by communication, respect, trust and good attitude.

Figure 8: Word map with Leadership associations

4.3 Discussion of the Findings

This section will share the information obtained in order to answer the questions that guided this study.

➕ **What is the perception about Ricardo Lombana's political image?**

Ricardo Lombana is perceived as a decent person with progressive views, whom is trying to change the political landscape in Panama. The most common strength mentioned was his youth. He is perceived as authentic, as a regular person that has achieved a lot. His debating skills are strong. His overall appearance was deemed positive. The colour that represented him, orange, is perceived with positive attributes such as energy and hope. The logo was perceived positively, most participants linking it to progress or moving forward. Other main strengths are his leadership, independence, communication skills, lack of scandals and seriousness. The fact that he is creating a political party is viewed positively.

➕ **What did Ricardo Lombana's branding got wrong?**

The participants mentioned that his main weakness was not having enough funds for campaigning. Being linked to a previous government where he served as a consul. He is not relatable to all Panamanians, he failed to connect with a big portion of the country,

those of low income in the capital city, and those outside the capital city. When talking about topics other than politics or legal, he can be perceived as non-authentic. The slogan "another path" is considered to be weak and overused. The fact that he is creating a political party make people weary about whom will he surround himself with. He was too ambiguous when talking about his proposals, this was perceived as being unprepared.

✚ Was Ricardo Lombana's brand communicated effectively on social media?

All participants agreed that social media is a great tool for politicians, and they also pointed out that Lombana's campaign relied heavily on social media. Participants are aware that Lombana is a lawyer, that he is a family man, that he was a consul and that even though he has progressive views, he is still fairly conservative. Most people heard about him when he was announced as an independent candidate. People are aware of this vision of eliminating corruption, but are not so familiar with specific policies he supports other than taking away subsidies, in fact when asked what would they ask Lombana if given the opportunity, most of the participants would ask him what are his proposals and how he is going to achieve them. Half of the participants follow him on social media, while the other half does not.

5. Conclusions
5.1 Strategic Conclusions

After reading the evaluation of his brand, here are some suggested actions that could improve the branding of Ricardo Lombana for the millennial audience:

- Link to political party

  He must educate the public about his role as consul, and that even though he was designated by the president on that time, he was not registered in that political party. As this is continuously mentioned as one of his weaknesses.

- Exploit his Youth

  His youth was a quality mentioned several times by all participants. During the next elections Lombana will be 50 years' old which still make him young. The fact that he is young should be brought up significantly more when creating ads or when giving speeches. To keep in touch with young people, using his social media as an interactive medium where young people can connect with him.

- Exploit his "one of us" perception

  The fact that he is not wealthy was viewed positively, among millennials. Ads about how he has accomplished so much with hard work and effort, would serve for him to increase his inspirational leader quality. On social media, in sections such as Instagram Stories, he could have videos doing everyday things or practicing his hobbies (such as taking the bus to work or playing drums which were two of his most popular videos), so people can relate to him.

- Exploit family man persona

  It is important for him to keep showing to be a family guy. A very positive quality.

- To avoid scandals

  His honesty and not having skeletons on his closets where one of the most recurring mentions during the interviews. He should keep this up.

- Be serious but loosen up a bit

  Even though his seriousness was praised, it was also pointed out that when talking about popular topics that are non-politics, he came across as unauthentic. He should practice his public speaking abilities when talking about non-political topics.

- Proposals, proposals, proposals

  His biggest weakness and probably one of the main reasons that cost him the elections was the lack of awareness about his proposals. While attempting to be honest, he didn't

want to promise things that he could not achieve. He should find a middle ground with being realistic and also have firm proposals, because this makes him looks unprepared or that he will go to the presidential seat to improvise.

- Increase reach on the countryside and low income urban population
One of the biggest fails of his campaign, was only connecting with people on the city. In the countryside, and rural areas he was unknown. He needs to walk those places and find a way to reach those people that are not in social media. He also needs to find a strategy to make rapport with low income people in the capital city.

- Reimagine his slogan
Another path was deemed as generic and repetitive, therefore reinventing the slogan for the next elections would be a great idea.

- Micro targeting
This research would like to point out that even thought, there were common answers, each participant mentioned several times during the interview a specific quality over and over without even realizing it, which lead to think that this word might represent the quality they would consider to be more relevant about the candidate. These were the words more mentioned by each participant:

Lena: Talked a lot about his youth, making it one of his greatest traits.

Edith: mentioned the word Transparency in almost all her answers.

Flor: talked about his honesty.

Gabriel: about the fact that he is a new face.

Agustin: for him the fact that the candidate is a family man was very important.

Paul: talked a lot about how his seriousness, that makes him stand from the other candidates.

Here we can see the importance of the micro targeting (Lees-Marshment, 2001), where branding campaigns should perform extensive market research in order to come up with a branding campaign that will help to better position the brand within its target audience.

5.2 Research Limitations

Some of the limitations encountered was the scope of the research, limited to evaluating the branding strategy of one politician, for the purpose of this study Ricardo Lombana. The amount of participants interviewed was very low, therefore this research should not be taken as conclusive data, in particular when evaluating a complicated topic such as branding and people

perception. This research only had a grasp on a very small sample of the Panamanian voting population, all the participants where residents in the capital city, so it limits even more the sample of the population. The data collected through this research must not be considered as unquestionable information, as every person interviewed could have understood the questions very differently. One of the main limitations was the time given to prepare this research, limited by three months, qualitative interviews take a lot of time to be transcribed, and in the case of this research translated.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

Future research, should look into other politician's brands, or adapting this to evaluate commercial brands. It could also be tested on other countries. Future research should also evaluate other communication channels beside social media. It is also recommended to do a more exhaustive research, with more participants and also using other methods such as observation studies. Research should also be done by interviewing branding professionals, to see their point of view on what makes branding successful.

References

A Guide to Choosing Colors for Your Brand. (n.d.). Retrieved January 3, 2020, from

       https://usabilitypost.com/2008/09/29/a-guide-to-choosing-colors-for-your-brand/

Aconcha, N. (2019). *Tribunal Electoral*. Tribunal Electoral. https://www.tribunal-electoral.gob.pa/

Anholt, S. (2004). *Brand America: The Mother of All Brands*. Cyan Communications.

Athwal, N., & Harris, L. C. (2018). Examining how brand authenticity is established and maintained: the

       case of the Reverso. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *34*(3/4), 347–369.

       https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2018.1447008

Bor, S. E. (2014). Using Social Network Sites to Improve Communication Between Political Campaigns

       and Citizens in the 2012 Election. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *58*(9), 1195–1213.

       https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213490698

Br, F. O. (2013, March 5). What Does "Operationalizing the Brand" Really Mean? *French On Brand*.

       https://frenchonbrand.com/2013/03/05/what-does-operationalizing-the-brand-really-mean/

Brancati, D. (2008). Winning Alone: The Electoral Fate of Independent Candidates Worldwide. *Journal of*

       Politics, *70*(3), 648–662. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608080675

Brown, R. (2010). Reputation management. *Business Information Review*, *27*(1), 56–64.

Burr, V., & Dick, P. (2017). Social Constructionism. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Social Psychology*

       (pp. 59–80). https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51018-1_4

Carman, J. M. (1973). On the Universality of Marketing. *Journal of Contemporary Business*, *2*(142).

Chernatony, de. (2006). *From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation*.

       https://doi.org/10.4324/9780080459660

Clifton, R. (2009). *Brands and Branding*. John Wiley & Sons.

Cone Communications. (2009). *2009 Consumer New Media Study*. Cone Communications | Cone | Cone

    PR | Cone Inc | PR Agency | Boston | NYC. http://www.conecomm.com/research-blog/2009-

    consumer-new-media-study

Coriat, A. (2019, May). *Campaña de 'No a la Reelección'' tiene efectos en la Asamblea.'*

    https://www.laestrella.com.pa/nacional/politica/190506/campana-efectos-asamblea-reeleccion

Country Reports - Panama (pp. 1–44). (2019). IHS Markit Ltd.

    http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=134441162&site=ehost-live

Danesi, M. (2006). *Brands*. Routledge.

Executive summary - Panama (pp. 1–5). (2019). IHS Markit Ltd.

    http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=135723770&site=ehost-live

Frankel, L. L., & Hillygus, D. S. (2017). Niche Communication in Political Campaigns. *The Oxford*

    Handbook of Political Communication.

    https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.013.020

French, A., & Smith, G. (2010). Measuring political brand equity: A consumer oriented approach.

    European Journal of Marketing, *44*, 460–477. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561011020534

Garrido, E. (2017, December 11). El 70% de la población en Panamá usa internet, pero ¿qué hace?

    ElCapitalFinanciero.com - Noticias Financieras de Panamá. https://elcapitalfinanciero.com/el-

    70-de-la-poblacion-en-panama-usa-internet-pero-que-hace/

Grimmer, M., & Grube, D. C. (2019a). Political branding: A consumer perspective on Australian political

    parties. *Party Politics*, *25*(2), 268–281. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068817710585

Grimmer, M., & Grube, D. C. (2019b). Political branding: A consumer perspective on Australian political

    parties. *Party Politics*, *25*(2), 268–281. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068817710585

Haque, U. (2015). Your Digital Strategy Shouldn't Be About Attention. *Harvard Business Review Digital*

    Articles, 2–5.

Harvey, W., Morris, T., & Muller, M. (2017). Reputation and identity conflict in management consulting.

    The Tavistoke Institute, *70*, 92–118. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726716641747

Henneberg, S. C., & Ormrod, R. P. (2013). The triadic interaction model of political marketing exchange.

    Marketing Theory, *13*(1), 87–103. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593112467269

Henneberg, S. C., Scammell, M., & O'Shaughnessy, N. J. (2009). Political marketing management and

    theories of democracy. *Marketing Theory*, *9*(2), 165–188.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593109103060

Hochbein, C., & Smeaton, K. S. (2018). An Exploratory Analysis of the Prevalence of Quantitative

    Research Methodologies in Journal Articles. *International Journal of Education Policy &*

    Leadership, *13*(11), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.22230/ijepl.2018v13n11a765

Hoegg, J., & Lewis, M. V. (2011). The impact of Candidate Appearance and Advertising Strategies on

    Election Results. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, *48*(5), 895–909.

    https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.48.5.895

Horster, E., & Gottschalk, C. (2012). Computer-assisted Webnography: A new approach to online

    reputation management in tourism. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *18*(3), 229–238.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766712449369

Jamieson, K. H., & Waldman, P. (2004). *The Press Effect: Politicians, Journalists, and the Stories That*

    Shape the Political World. Oxford University Press.

Kaul, A., Chaudhri, V., Cherian, D., Freberg, K., Mishra, S., Kumar, R., Pridmore, J., Lee, S. Y., Rana, N.,

    Majmudar, U., & Carroll, C. E. (2015). Social Media: The New Mantra for Managing Reputation.

    Vikalpa, *40*(4), 455–491. https://doi.org/10.1177/0256090915618029

Kramer, M. (2012, April 25). Better ways of doing business: Creating Shared Value. *The Guardian*.

    https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/blog/creating-shared-value-social-

    progress-profit

Kumar, A., & Dhamija, S. (2017). Political Marketing: Grasping the Realms of Contemporary Politics. *Pranjana: The Journal of Management Awareness*, *20*(2), 43–50. https://doi.org/10.5958/0974-0945.2017.00014.0

Kumar, A., Dhamija, S., & Dhamija, A. (2016a). Political Branding: An Alluring Proposition. *Globsyn Management Journal*, *10*(1/2), 50–55.

Kumar, A., Dhamija, S., & Dhamija, A. (2016b). Political Branding: The New-Age Mantra for Political Leaders and Parties. *IUP Journal of Brand Management*, *13*(4), 46–53.

Kumar, A., Dhamija, S., & Dhamija, A. (2016c). Political Branding: The New-Age Mantra for Political Leaders and Parties. *IUP Journal of Brand Management*, *13*(4), 46–53.

Lalancette, M., & Raynauld, V. (2019). The Power of Political Image: Justin Trudeau, Instagram, and Celebrity Politics. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *63*(7), 888–924. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217744838

Lee Yohn, D. (2013, August 21). *Operationalizing Your Brand*. Denise Lee Yohn. https://deniseleeyohn.com/operationalizing-your-brand/

Lees-Marshment, J. (2001). The Marriage of Politics and Marketing. *Political Studies*, *49*, 692–713. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00337

Menon, S. (2008). Political Marketing: A Conceptual framework. *University Library of Munich, Germany, MPRA Paper*.

Milkman, R. (2017). A New Political Generation: Millennials and the Post-2008 Wave of Protest. *American Sociological Review*, *82*(1), 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416681031

Mishra, A., & Maheswarappa, S. S. (2018). How Content Valence and Online Impression Influence Goal Achievement in Social Media Environment? *Global Business Review*, 0972150918793964. https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150918793964

Omilion-Hodges, L. M., & Sugg, C. E. (2019). Millennials' Views and Expectations Regarding the

Communicative and Relational Behaviors of Leaders: Exploring Young Adults' Talk About Work.

Business and Professional Communication Quarterly, *82*(1), 74–100.

https://doi.org/10.1177/2329490618808043

Panama: 2018 Country Review (No. 15201120; pp. 1–322). (2018). CountryWatch Incorporated.

http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=129151346&site=ehost-live

Parry-Giles, S. J. (2014). Hillary Clinton in the news: Gender and authenticity in American politics. *Hillary*

Clinton in the News: Gender and Authenticity in American Politics, 1–258.

Patterson, L. (2009). *Online customer communities: Perspectives from customers and companies*.

https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.gcd.ie:2443/doi/abs/10.1177/0266382108101307

Piazza, A., & Jourdan, J. (2018). When the Dust Settles: The Consequences of Scandals for Organizational

Competition. *Academy of Management Journal*, *61*(1), 165–190.

https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2015.1325

Pich, C., & Armannsdottir, G. (2018). Political brand image: an investigation into the operationalisation

of the external orientation of David Cameron's Conservative brand. *Journal of Marketing*

Communications, *24*(1), 35–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2015.1072577

Pich, Christopher, Dean, D., & Punjaisri, K. (2014). Political brand identity: An examination of the

complexities of Conservative brand and internal market engagement during the 2010 UK

General Election campaign. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *22*, 1–18.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2013.864321

Pillow, D. R., Crabtree, M. A., Galvan, M. J., & Hale, W. J. (2018). Not Simply in the Eye of the Beholder:

Authenticity as a Product of Candidate Preference and Unfettered Speech. *Political Psychology*,

39(4), 849–868. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12440

Political Conditions (No. 15201120; p. 12). (2001). CountryWatch Incorporated.

    http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=5229258&site=ehost-live

Ricardo Lombana (@ricardolombanag) Instagram. (n.d.). Retrieved January 6, 2020, from

    https://www.instagram.com/ricardolombanag/

Scammell, M. (1999). Political Marketing: Lessons for Political Science. *Political Studies*, *47*(4), 718–739.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00228

Scammell, M. (2007). Political Brands and Consumer Citizens: The Rebranding of Tony Blair. *The ANNALS*

    of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, *611*(1), 176–192.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716206299149

Schneiker, A. (2019a). Telling the Story of the Superhero and the Anti-Politician as President: Donald

    Trump's Branding on Twitter. *Political Studies Review*, *17*(3), 210–223.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929918807712

Schneiker, A. (2019b). Telling the Story of the Superhero and the Anti-Politician as President: Donald

    Trump's Branding on Twitter. *Political Studies Review*, *17*(3), 210–223.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929918807712

Serazio, M. (2017). Branding politics: Emotion, authenticity, and the marketing culture of American

    political communication. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *17*(2), 225–241.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540515586868

Smith, B. (2003). An Empirical Investigation of Marketing Strategy Quality in Medical Markets. *Journal of*

    Medical Marketing, *3*(2), 153–162. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jmm.5040114

Speed, R., Butler, P., & Collins, N. (2015). Human Branding in Political Marketing: Applying

    Contemporary Branding Thought to Political Parties and Their Leaders. *Journal of Political*

    Marketing, *14*, 129–151. https://doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2014.990833

Telemetro. (2019). *Ricardo Lombana - Libre Postulación - Candidato - Elecciones Panamá - Voto 19 -*

    Telemetro. http://www.telemetro.com/politica/elecciones-Panama/voto19/candidatos/Ricardo-

    Lombana/

Warren, C., Batra, R., Loureiro, S. M. C., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2019). Brand Coolness. *Journal of Marketing*,

    83(5), 36–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919857698

Wright, G. C., & Schaffner, B. F. (2002). The Influence of Party: Evidence from the State Legislatures.

    American Political Science Review, *96*(2), 367–379.

    https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055402000229

Wymbs, C. (2011). *Digital Marketing: The Time for a New "Academic Major" Has Arrived*. *33*(1).

    https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.gcd.ie:2443/doi/abs/10.1177/0273475310392544

Appendices

Appendix A: Notes About the research
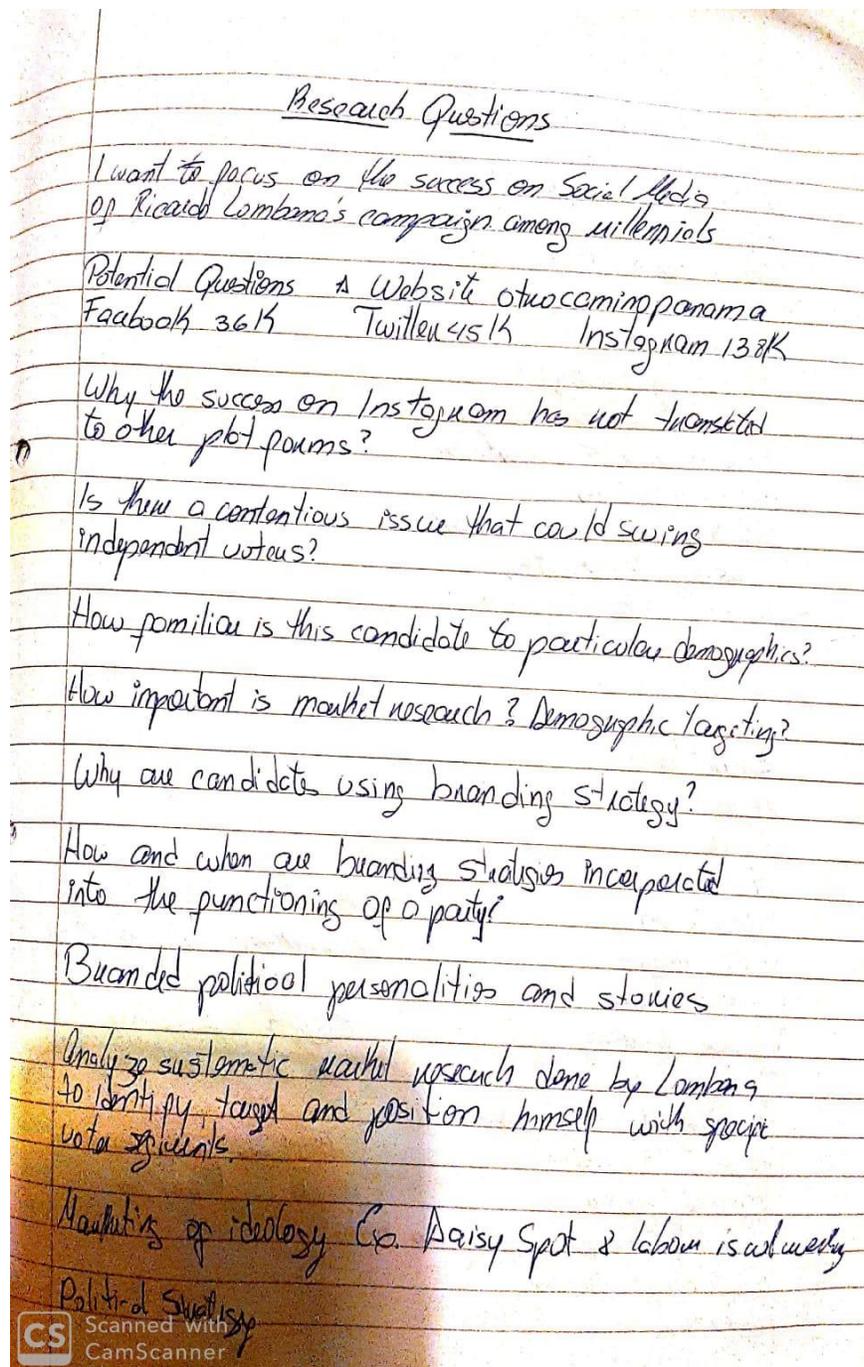
Questions Sample

1. What were the social media channels used for the political campaigns?
2. Which tactics were used in these social media channels?
3. Can this social media tactics lead us to a better understanding of a social media strategy success?
4. Is social media an effective source for communications between campaign & voters?
5. Which is the preferred channel for voters to receive information from candidates?

1. What were the key social media channels used for the #NoALaReeleccion campaign?
2. How did they used social media to mobilize protests?
3. How did they used social media for fundraising purposes?
4. How did they created a collective identity?
5. How did the # contributed to the politics narrative?
6. Do social media messages from # motivated people to vote?
7. What were the motivations and expectations of the organizers?
8. Do people who shared # info see themselves as participating in a social media campaign to influence elections?

[margin note:] No. if because is was PR than digital fusion

1. How do political campaigns communicate with citizens using social media?
2. What is the function of social media in political campaigns in terms of communication strategy?

1. Why did young voters followed more Lombana than other candidates?
2. What are the factors that made this campaign appealing to young voters?
3. What are the characteristics people whom voted for Lombana shared?
4. Why wasn't it enough to win elections? What should he do to win not?

Evaluating a Brand

Influencing
Describe brand to a priori

Weakness
Authority
Debating Skills
Visual Elements
Political Image

Understanding Audience
Political Involvement
Leadership expectations

Audience
Effectiveness of communications

Evaluation of Political Brand
&
Suggest Improvements

Appendix B: Coding

Appendix C: Raw Questionnaire

Interview 1
S: Student
P: Participant

S: Participant # 1 of the Political Branding interviews.

I wanted to start by telling you that this is an interview for academic purposes, on January 10 the interview will be destroyed, I will not use your name, I will use numbers or some code to identify the candidates, do you agree to participate?
Q: I agree, correct.

S: Let's start. Generally speaking, how interested are you in politics?
Q: Pretty interested. Because I feel that during the general elections in Panama this year, young people have been more involved in knowing about the candidates and in getting involved in the things that are happening in the country, and what things can be improved.

S: Did you vote in the May 2019 elections?
Q: Yes, I voted.

S: What do you think are the reasons why people lose interest in politics nowadays in Panama?
Q: It is the feeling that the same situation will be repeated, there will never be a change, it is linked to that word that everyone repeats that it is corruption, that politics itself is damaged, rotten. There are people who say, 'why am I going to vote? if it is a waste of time' and it really is not, you need to vote, but it is what is happening.

S: How would you define leadership?
Q: For me it is a person who takes you and leads you to a north or direction, leading by example, not imposing. In Panama it is happening that the leadership is imposed on you and it is not that they are leading by example, that can be seen in the people they designate, for example, if a minister is appointed, his resume must be in accordance with the position to be filled, which in Panama is not real. There are people whom are more prepared for certain positions, but due to politics they place people with whom they are simply paying favors, that is not an example of leadership. This is how I perceive it, how they are showing it to me or teaching it to me.

S: Are there any international or national leaders you admire?
Q: I feel like any millennial, regarding politics I feel suspicious. I pass.

S: What words do you associate with leadership?
P: Empathy, distribution of wealth, respect.

S: How do you feel about the political parties in Panama?

P: They need a change, they need to be redesigned and give new generations a chance because it is more of the same, corruption, everything is marked as a personal benefit, so that is the perception I have.

S: How do you feel about independent politicians in Panama? of those who hold positions right now who are independent

Q: I feel at ease, I feel good, I feel that there are a couple of people that can make interesting changes and I feel that, although many politicians were reelected this is a path that is not short term. That may not change to 100% right now, but a good precedent has been set for the following elections. And these people who have the positions of deputy in the assembly I think they are making precedent and are getting noticed and this is the beginning of good things. I'm positive.

S: What are the three main problems that you think need solution in Panama?
P: Transportation, wealth distribution, health (especially medication supply).

S: Which problem do you care about the most?
Q: Transportation.

S: Why is transportation the most important to you?
Q: Because of the heavy traffic at all times, I feel that if there were good connections, if the subway covered the country and more routes, people instead of buying a car because they already buy it as a necessity and not as a luxury, they would think in using public transportation as a means of transport and that would help with traffic and noise pollution in every way.

S: This is an investigation about the brand strategy of Ricardo Lombana, presidential candidate of the 2019 elections. When was the first time you heard about Ricardo Lombana?
Q: Personally, about a year and a half before the elections and I know he was a journalist.

S: What do you know about Ricardo Lombana?
P: Ricardo Lombana is a journalist, a small-scale entrepreneur because he had his law firm. I understand that he has no dark past to recriminate him. I see him as an honorable person of family, of principles. That is what inspires me.

S: If you had to describe Ricardo Lombana to a friend, how would you describe him?
Q: As a person of character. Of principles. And a person who had the guts to go against a system and created precedents.

S: Do you think Ricardo Lombana is authentic?
Q: Yes, I do consider him to be authentic.

S: Why?
Q: An example, Lombana does not accept donations from important economic groups in the country and campaigned with very few tools, with social networks, by word of mouth, in order to do that you need to have guts and believe in yourself and have authenticity to dare and to have done what he did

without accepting money from important economic groups to whom he had to later owe favors. That proves authenticity to me.

S: If you could have a beer with Lombana, what would you ask?
Q: More than asking, I think I would tell him not to stop, that, having not won the elections, does not mean that he lost, but that he won, that he was the first independent candidate that goes that far. He criticized the political parties, he tried not to go into criticism that much and that's part of being authentic, but to talk about his vision more that criticizing others, not like the other politicians that 80% were criticizing others and 20% their own content, for him I think it was the other way around, I would dare to say that it is the other way around. I would ask, why creating a political party? because if he always said that political parties did not work and he used the phrase was 'more of the same'. I would also ask; how would your political party differentiate from others? what would be the line his political party?

S: Do you know the vision of the policies that Lombana supports?
Q: Right now not, maybe at the time of the elections I did.

S: Orange is the color that they associate with Lombana. What does the orange color tell you?
Q: I don't know, honestly when I was looking at the website, I feel that it is cheerful, I feel like a certain light, a certain empathy. I feel it as authentic in that sense, but I feel that it is different, perhaps it is being considered as being different, because others are more traditional using the blue tones, reds, green tones. Orange, feels like he wants to be considered as something different, not more of the same.

S: What do you think of the Lombana logo?
Q: I feel it is basic. The arrow up is that everything will be better. Panama will continue to grow, but fine. Better things come.

S: What do you think of the slogan Otro Camino (Another Way)?
Q: He wants to show that it will not be more of the same and that Panama will continue to redirect to another direction, to another path, there he is talking about the issue of corruption, part of his mission is to eliminate the corruption. Then we are in another way, because right now we know how damaged the way is.

S: What would you say are Lombana's weaknesses?
Q: Not having enough money, which is in part for not accepting donations from important economic groups and money is very important for political campaigns and is a decisive part.

S: What do you think are Ricardo Lombana's strengths?
Q: His independence. His resume not stained. His youth.

S: What are the things that differentiate Ricardo Lombana from other politicians in Panama?
P: The youth, because most politicians are not young. He is not an aristocrat, he is not part of important economic groups, but rather he is part of the people and has accomplished success doing the right thing. And that is important and that shows a lot.

S: Are you aware of any of the policies that Lombana supports or wants to carry out?
Q: No, not recently. I feel that he has been quite low profile after the elections and I have heard that from several people, that is, the perception of me and other people.
S: How do you expect Ricardo Lombard to behave? How should a politician's behavior be?
Q: It should be ethical, responsible, leader. In charge of your country, worried about your country. Tolerant. Must have an impeccable behavior.

S: What words come to your mind when you hear Ricardo Lombana?
P: Different, another way, change, independent. Youth, fresh. Leadership.

S: I'm going to show you some images of Ricardo Lombana, what do you think about your physical appearance?
Q: It's nice. He always has a gesture of a smile and that gives you a perception of kindness, of sincerity.

S: What do you think about how he dresses?
Q: He is always well dressed, depending on the occasions, when he has to be relaxed, when he has to be in a hat. He usually has a short sleeve shirt, he wants to show that he is part of the common people, but also if he is in an interview he is suited up and when he is, he wears his suit well and when he is in the street he dresses for the situation well.

S: When I say these words, Tell me if you think it is positive or negative.
P: politics negative
negative political party
laws in Panama negative
positive independent politicians
National Assembly of Panama Negative
Positive president
Negative deputies.
Negative Justice System

S: Have you had any direct experience with Lombana?
Q: None

S: Have you ever seen any of your Instagram Live, debates or interviews?
Q: Yes

S: What do you think about how he handled himself in debates?
Q: I like it, he controls the situation, he expresses himself well, I like how he expresses himself, I like what I have explained previously that he doesn't focus on criticizing others and he says that we need a new path, another path, we need changes, but he talks a lot about his policies that were the things he needed to change and he seems natural, spontaneous and he is sure of what he wants to do and what Panama needs.

S: Do you follow Ricardo lombana on social media?
Q: No, I don't follow him, I don't follow many people.

S: Where do you usually receive news about politics?
P: Twitter

S: Do you share politics content on social networks?
Q: No. But on Twitter I got to share about Lombana. To retweet and everything.

S: What would you suggest Ricardo Ricardo must change to win your vote in 2024?
Q: He needs to establish a structure, either of a political party or if he wants be independent. He needs to work now. Keep working, not to disconnect himself as I feel has happened lately. I only heard from him last week and right now I am traveling and I am not soaked at all in politics but recently I have heard that he has been disconnected for a long time. So he needs to stay current. And he needs to plan and have a structure with a well-trained team and work on that. Structure the action plan well, its content, its position. And to stand firm in the things that took him so far, without accepting donations from economic groups and with the mission of eliminating corruption that right now is a very important moment. You are seeing that youth is involved and more adult people are also open to change. So he needs to take advantage of that. Stay in full force.

S: Do you think young people in Panama are currently involved in politics?
Q: They are not involved in politics because they are more entertainined watching content on instagram, in social media about influencers or artists, but they are more involved than before it is also thanks to social media, So it has its pros and its cons, but we are better than before I think.

S: Do you think social media is a useful tool for a politician?
P: Yes, they are.

S: Why?
Q: Because you have to take advantage of the time that youth is devoting to social media. So that is a powerful means of communication to reach them and there are several ways to connect with them, people want direct connection.

S: Why do you think young people are protesting against the Assembly?
Q: I like it, I agree with them. Because we all want a change, but few go and work to achieve it, right? So right now the young people are getting involved and not only from the National University but from the usma, La Latina and several other private universities also got involved in that and the young people themselves are sharing in their social media, they are encouraging other young people to participate. It is seen that young people are already getting more involved and are informing themselves why they are there, why they are protesting and not just letting things happen, but that they want change, everyone is tired of corruption and it is not only seen in Panama, in Latin America, in several other countries of the region, they have given us examples and changes are happening that are creating precedents.

S: Did you saw anything about the political campaign that Lombana led in the 2019 elections? What is your perception about the campaign?

Q: I feel that by not having so much money for propaganda, to deliver gifts, souvenirs and such things, he relied heavily on social media and word of mouth. From Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and that I knew when he was going to the street because I found out by a social media acquaintance, that he was near my house and he was in many other places that I could have easily seen him if maybe I had come out in some moments that he was close to me, because he made tours and also worked to create empathy with the people who were following him and fell in Grace with those people, because people were following him for free, they were believing in him. It was like hope. So those who supported him, supported him with an energy and with a joy of wanting to share it as if they were paying them for that, then that was what I think was his spearhead and his main strategy was the Social media, his own presence on the streets and that was an important part. The day of the elections, lots of people were wearing orange, the ones who voted for other parties were going in no particular color, but the ones tha were voting for lombana were excited and wanted people to notice it so that's why they were wearing orange.

S: Do you think that the fact that he ended up as a second runner up is merely an economic factor? Or why do you think he didn't win?

Q: because the country was not yet prepared for an independent leader, we cannot change the perception and change a culture in only a year and a half, which is where the political campaign is strongly seen and Panama is accustomed to political parties and although I saw that things were happening and that a change was going to happen, it was not going to happen in these elections. It was almost impossible.

S: Do you think that if the independent candidates who are occupying positions in the national assembly play a good role, could that give rise to an independent Panama president at some point?

P: Yes, of course. In the next elections. These elections that have just happened were virtually impossible for Lombana to win. Maybe if he would have had more money, invested more in advertising would have ended up as a first runner up, but he would hardly have won because he had to fight against too much, that is, against the ideology of a country and that is not easy and is not done in a short time But Having already worked with a group of independent deputies and running a good campaign these five years or whatever is the rest, Yes, Panama can have an independent leader.

S: He formed a party by political party two weeks ago, another way Panama. What do you think about him forming a political party? According to what he has said is because he wants to compete on equal terms. What do you think of that? What do you think of the formation of a political party?

Q: I feel that we have demonized the political party figure, but with Lombana. I realize that this is how the political parties started at some point, so the other political parties were with a leader who at that time moved you and moved emotions throughout a country and created a party that in the end were followed by many people and years pass by and that's why people go on and on because at some point at the beginning they maintained an ideal that people think is going to be maintained for the rest of the time. Then at that time when lombana was participating as an independent, I considered the option of the creation of a political party, and now it makes a lot of sense to the phrase that the aforementioned being able to compete on equal terms. Because you need to have a structure to be able to carry a

country and be able to carry your message, you need a well-formed structured and this is a political party. Then one had to reset the image of rotten, damaged, from associating the word political party with all this and knowing that at one time all the political parties had leaders that generated something in the population. Then I see it as something positive. I like that he created a political party because I was waiting for it. It was a matter of time because I imagine that it was difficult for him for the same reason, for the image of the parties, but that is the way to carry out a campaign. And create that change that everyone is looking for.

Appendix D: Consenting form

Griffith College GBS
Informed Consent Form

I.   Research Study Title

The Political Branding of an Independent Politician in the Digital Era

II.   Clarification of the purpose of the research
The purpose of this research is academic, as part of a master's degree research.

III.   Confirmation of particular requirements

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)
I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)	Yes/No
I understand the information provided	Yes/No
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	Yes/No
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions	Yes/No
I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped	Yes/No

IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary
I may withdraw from the Research Study at any point.

V.   Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations
The interview data will remain confidential and will be destroyed after January 10th

VI.   <u>Signature:</u>

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Date: _____