

# Ada Colau: from Activist to Mayor. An analysis of Ada Colau's Facebook *ethos*

*Ada Colau, de activista a alcaldesa. Un análisis del ethos de Ada Colau en Facebook*



**Santiago Castelo-Heymann.** Degree in Political Science from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). Master's Degree in Political and Corporate Communication from the University of Navarra (UNAV). PhD Candidate in Communication at Pompeu Fabra University (UPF).  
University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain  
santiagoc@ideograma.es  
ORCID: 0000-0003-3122-6224

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## Abstract:

This paper analyses the self-presentation of Barcelona Mayor Ada Colau in a period in which she had to consolidate her political identity as a result of her victory in the elections on May 25th 2015. Studying the Mayor's posts on her personal Facebook site during her first year and a half in office, we will analyse the configuration of Colau's discursive *ethos*. We will take into account five types of *ethos* we have identified in the *corpus*: that of activist, humanitarian, politician, mayor and leader. Based on the hypothesis that this *ethos* is extremely complex. We consider that her *ethos* is extremely complex due to the fact that it is based on various characteristics, which gives rise to a multi-form 'I' that fulfills Colau's need to legitimize her public image from a new position of power.

## Keywords:

Ada Colau; Discourse Analysis; Self-presentation; 'Subjectivisation' of politics; *Ethos*.

## 1. Ada Colau, from activist to mayor

"I admit that I'm nervous and excited. Today a change begins in Barcelona, but a change in my life starts as well [...] Today I will enter the City Hall at 5:00 p.m. and will be invested with a position that inspires the utmost respect from myself:

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## Resumen:

*Este trabajo propone analizar discursivamente la presentación de sí de la alcaldesa de Barcelona, Ada Colau, en un momento de afianzamiento de su identidad política disparado por su triunfo en las elecciones del 24 de mayo de 2015. A partir de un abordaje de las publicaciones de la alcaldesa en su página personal de Facebook durante el primer año y medio de su mandato, estudiaremos la construcción discursiva del ethos de Colau. Consideraremos cinco tipos de ethos que hemos identificado en el corpus: activista, humanidad, política, alcaldesa, líder. Sostenemos que su ethos es sumamente complejo en tanto radica en la conjunción de diferentes rasgos, dando lugar a un yo multiforme que responde a la necesidad de Colau de legitimar su imagen pública desde un nuevo lugar de poder.*

## Palabras clave:

*Ada Colau; Análisis del Discurso; Presentación de sí; Subjectivización de la política; Ethos.*

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that of Mayor". That was the beginning of the message that Ada Colau posted on her Facebook page two hours before the beginning of the act that would make her Mayor of Barcelona.

At the beginning of May 2014, Colau announced that she was leaving the post of spokesperson for the Platform for People Affected by Mortgages (PAH) and a month later, together with other social and neighbourhood movements, she launched *Guanyem* Barcelona, a citizen's platform created with the aim of participating in the 2015 municipal elections. In March 2015, Colau was proclaimed head of the list of the electoral coalition known as *Barcelona en Comú*, which on May 24 would win the electoral victory with 25.21% of the vote.

The new mayor had to build a new identity that would make her reputation as an activist, founder and spokesperson of the PAH compatible with her new political position. Here we will analyze the *ethos* of Ada Colau during her first year and a half as Mayor of Barcelona, and to do so we will study the posts that appeared in her personal Facebook page during this time. Understanding *ethos* as the self-image that a speaker envisions in his/her speech, whether or not he or she is aware of it (Amossy, 1999, 2010, Charaudeau, 2005, Montero, 2012a), our hypothesis is that Colau's speeches, influenced by the situation of political transition, display a complex presentation of herself after going through the tension of having two roles, that of activist and Mayor.

Social networks have brought with them a series of formats that reward brevity and the use of images that have a colloquial code and are marked by immediacy and the one-to-one effect. When political discourse joins with these predetermined formats (Qués, 2013), the enunciator and his or her ability to seduce become very important: "the policy of clips relies almost entirely on the subject's power of persuasion and not on the discourse" (Sarlo, 2007).

In accordance with this subjectivization of politics (Slimovich, 2011, 2016), we will investigate a case in which the public presentation of the political self is central. Halfway between a consolidated activist and a beginning Mayor, Ada Colau needs to legitimize herself as a politician 'of public institutions', and at the same time preserve her legitimacy as a 'street' politician.

Next, we will introduce the notion of *ethos*, in order to later specify the corpus and work methodology. The results of the analysis will be divided into five sections corresponding to each type of *ethos* identified in Colau's speeches. Finally, we will return to central points and propose perspectives for future research.

### 1.1. The notion of *ethos*

Barthes defined *ethos* as "the character traits that an orator must show the audience to make a good impression. [...] The orator enunciates information and at the same time says: This is who I am, not that other person" (1970: 212).

Although the notion comes from Aristotelian rhetoric, from the end of the 1960s to the mid-1980s, an "*ethos* boom" (Montero, 2012a) occurred as a result of the "subjective turn" that brought attention back to the subject after the hegemony of structures, systems and ideologies (Sarlo, 2005; Arfuch, 2010). This return to *ethos*<sup>1</sup>, which affected all social and human sciences, occurred "in parallel with the domination of the audiovisual media", as Maingueneau (2002) points out. According

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1 Le Guern (1978); Ducrot (1986); Maingueneau (1984).

to this author, *ethos* consists of the presentation that the speaker creates of him or herself in the speech when enunciating, which goes beyond the content of his or her statements.

According to Amossy (2000) '*previous ethos*' refers both to the role of the speaker in the social space, with regard to their institutional functions and status, and to the stereotype that is collectively associated with their personage. The *oratory ethos* is influenced by pre-existing components and will try to substantiate, modify or refute the idea that the public already has of the speaker. In the same vein, for Charaudeau (2005), role and social status give the orator the right to speak and legitimize its use.

Therefore, *ethos* is dialogical and polyphonic, due to fact that factors such as previous discourses, ideologies, power relations, etc., intervene in its development. Moreover, identity is co-constructed in social exchange, and the subject is "partially influenced by forces that pass through him without his knowing it: the will and intention of a speaker do not determine the meanings with which his words and gestures will be interpreted" (Dagatti, 2017: 40).

*Ethos* has been the object of assorted taxonomies, from Ancient Rhetoric to the Analysis of Contemporary Discourse by authors such as Charaudeau (2005), Amossy (2010), and Maingueneau (2002). Recently, Montero (2012b) and Dagatti (2017) have carried out systematic analyses of Néstor Kirchner's *ethos*, establishing specific classifications for the speeches of the former Argentine president. In this article we propose a new classification, and being inspired by its precedents, it is strictly linked to the political identity of Ada Colau. We will try, therefore, to deepen the understanding of the presentation of a leader who is in a new public position, which seems initially to be in conflict with the previous one.

## 2. Corpus and methodology

The *corpus* is composed of the 185 texts that were published on Ada Colau's<sup>2</sup> Facebook page between May 24, 2015, which was the day of the municipal elections that placed her in the Mayor's office, and January 18, 2017, the day when this investigation began. The May 24 election is an appropriate date for the purpose of analysing the discourse of a political leader at the precise moment when her position of stable power was questioned as a result of a change in institutional status. The choice of the channel is based on two criteria related to the characteristics of the social network, on one hand, and how the network is used by Colau, on the other.

Regarding the first, Facebook is not only the most extensive social network and leader in user engagement time, but it follows a biographical model that organizes activities in a chronological way, as if it were a personal diary, in a type of "updated biographical continuum" (Gurevich, 2016). This is significant when considering Colau's presentation in relation to her political career. Regarding the second criterion, instead of the extended daily post, the mayor only publishes one post

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2 For the present analysis, it is considered that any use of the word of a political leader in the public space - and here Facebook is included - implies a presentation of oneself. This is independent of the material authorship of the content, that is, it does not matter who writes and finally publishes the messages, it is understood that, being a verified account, the politician is responsible for what is published and his user is exhibiting a self-image (Amossy, 2000; Maingueneau, 2002; Dagatti, 2017).

every three days<sup>3</sup>. In addition, while the tendency in online communication is to write less and include more images and videos, Colau's publications are mostly text, averaging 984 characters per post.

We will adopt the perspective of Discourse Analysis as an interpretive practice (Arnoux, 2006), according to which the categories of analysis are determined by the problems that arise in the research and by the materials with which we have carried out our work, and not the other way around. Within this framework, the options presented by the discourses are fundamental. Moreover, they are manifested in linguistic materiality and are generally opaque for the subjects (Pêcheux, 1984). Starting from these options, the analytical input is defined, which in this paper consists of strategies of the controversy, emphasis on the assertion, negation, lexical selection, argumentation, and modalities, among other discursive procedures that allow for the identification of the *ethical* features of the enunciator. In this way, from the analysis of the corpus, we can identify the different *ethos* of Colau.

### 3. Results

Throughout the period analyzed, Colau was developing a complex and multifarious self-image, composed of five types of *ethos* that are interrelated and mutually determined. Her *ethos* as activist responds to the interest in safeguarding the good reputation that Colau had gained as spokesperson for the PAH. The humanitarian *ethos* allows her to establish an identification with her followers. With her *ethos* as politician, she differentiates herself from her opponents while at the same time strengthening the collective identification with her adherents. The mayor's *ethos* is aimed at gaining legitimacy by highlighting the fulfilment of her governmental duties. Her *ethos* as leader is linked to the development of authority at the national and international levels.

Table 1: Classification Of *ethos*

Activist <i>ethos</i>	Reputation
Humanitarian <i>ethos</i>	Unity
<i>Ethos</i> as politician	Controversy
<i>Ethos</i> as mayor	Legitimacy
<i>Ethos</i> as leader	Authority

Source: created by the author

#### 3.1. *Ethos* as activist

The sudden transition from activist to Mayor required Colau to build a new identity capable of preserving the reputation she had achieved as an activist. Let's look at the following fragment:

**“La paraula Alcaldessa m'imposa respecte.** Quan vam començar l'aventura de crear una candidatura ciutadana i em preguntaven si em veia com a alcaldessa, em costava trobar la resposta. No podia dir 'sí' sense matisar-ho amb uns quants peròs [...] El dia 13 hi haurà una **cerimònia formal, protocolària, de la qual sortiré amb un títol**, amb un càrrec, però amb

3 In 2017 it reached 2 billion active monthly users worldwide.

les mateixes idees i les mateixes ganes que he tingut sempre de transformar la societat per millorar la vida de la gent”<sup>4</sup>  
(09/06/2015)<sup>5</sup>.

When Colau took office it appeared to be a milestone breach in the form of “yes, but”, which following Ducrot (1986), has a polyphonic character that underscores a controversial dimension: Colau confronts *other* voices, which from the viewpoint of *doxa* puts her position in doubt with respect to power. Faced with this situation, the enunciator distinguishes between the present and the past through the creation of a political self, which on one hand distances itself from institutional power (“a ceremony that is formal and that follows protocol”, “a title, a position”) and on the other hand, it presents a coherent passage from the street to the mayor’s office (“The same ideas and the same desire that I have always had”).

“One of the main commitments I made when I first became Mayor of Barcelona was to never lose contact with the street, with the neighbourhoods, with the real specific problems of the residents of my city. However, **as soon as I arrived at the mayor’s office, I realized that it was not going to be simple** [...]. I decided to formally set up regular meeting spaces with the residents of the neighbourhoods to make sure it is always on the agenda.

I have given it the name, ‘Encounters with the mayor’, which is a regular cycle of informal conversations in different neighbourhoods without a pre-established agenda in order to listen, to respond as much as possible, but also to share reflections on the city and its priorities” (22/ 11/2015).

The enunciator exposes a difficulty in the position of Mayor (“it would not be easy” from the perspective of activist, and thus she presents herself as a person who overcomes adversity. The selection of the *syntagma* “(Encounters with) the mayor”, instead of “Encounters with Colau / with the neighbours / in the neighbourhoods” or other variants, displays the tense coexistence between the new position and the previous one.

While the name of the position legitimizes the statement, it questions the role of activist that should be highlighted with other linguistic options, such as the “street” lexeme, *subjectivème* (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997) loaded with positive valuation. Colau “formalizes” the “informal conversations” with neighbours and then incorporates them into the city government, which finally assimilates her role as an activist.

In this effort to maintain her reputation and at the same time demonstrate her own coherence, she repeats a similar phrase in several publications:

“... two days after the electoral victory I went as a volunteer to the annual count that the *Fundació Arrels* carries out each year of the people who sleep in the streets of Barcelona. **Let us never forget who we are and why we are here**” (05/28/2015).

**“Let us remember who we are and why we are here.** [...] We have said it, and we repeat it: if many ordinary people like ourselves have been involved in institutional policy for the first time, we have not done it to take the place of the usual ones, but to change the way of doing politics” (03/07/2016).

<sup>4</sup> All bold underlines are ours.

<sup>5</sup> “The expression Woman Mayor imposes respect on me. When we began the adventure of creating a citizen’s candidacy and they asked if I saw myself as mayor, it was hard for me to find the answer. I could not say “yes” without qualifying it with a few “buts” [...]. On the 13th day of the month there will be a ceremony that is formal and that follows protocol, from which I will leave with a title, with a position, but with the same ideas and the same desires that I have always had for transforming society to improve peoples’ lives”.

This formula has characteristics of a slogan: a concise, easily repeated statement that contains a controversial dimension and an intentional directive (Reboul, 1975). While referring to the memory-based identity (“let’s not forget” or “remember”), she establishes a difference between the traditional political class (“the usual ones”) and the new politics (“ordinary people”), displaying a controversial dichotomy (Amossy, 2016). With polemic denial (García Negroni, 2009), when she says “we have not done it to take the place of the usual ones”, Colau rejects the view that arriving to a position of power implies the abandonment of convictions.

Perhaps for that reason, on the day of the first anniversary of her government, the enunciator affirms that it is not just a public slogan, but a slogan that guides municipal decisions:

**“A year ago we hung a sign on the door of the mayor’s office: ‘Let us never forget who we are or why we are here’. For the past year we have faced contradictions, we have learned, and we have enlarged our understanding of complexity. Today, the sign is still hanging on the office door, and not a single day passes that it does not resonate with every decision we make. We have not forgotten who we are: those who neither have, nor have ever had power. We have not forgotten why we are here: to govern by obeying those who do have the power: the people. We deserve a day to stop, look back, and celebrate everything we have done. Happy First Year in Common” (25/05/2016).**

We are facing a sloganization that has two persuasive objectives with two target audiences: toward the internal group of government officials who “must not forget” their essence, and toward an external receiver who explains who ‘we’ are (“those who neither have, nor have ever had power”) and why ‘we’ are there (“to govern by obeying those who do have the power: the people”). By specifically listing actions (“we have faced”, “we have learned”, “we have enlarged”), the enunciator not only refers to ‘we’ who identifies with the politicians, but also outlines a new trajectory in an institutional setting.

At the same time, it refers to the contrast between activism and the Mayor’s office:

“Apparently I have more power than ever, and yet in a certain sense I feel more powerless: unlike the social activism in which I have been involved for many years, **now I cannot act to resolve individual cases**. Using the power given by the mayor’s office to resolve individual cases that arrive to me on a personal level could be considered clientelism, and even influence peddling” (10/08/2015).

**“He tingut l’honor de presidir com alcaldessa el que tant havia reclamat com activista: una taula on ens hem assegut a parlar tots els actors implicats a fer front a l’emergència social: entitats, govern i oposició, representants del cos judicial i representants d’entitats financeres” (30/06/2015)<sup>6</sup>.**

Ambivalence toward the new position exposes, on one hand, the disinterest of the enunciator toward power, and on the other hand, the opportunity the position offers her in carrying out her activist objectives. Thus, in the first fragment, Colau states that she complies with the rules in addition to pursuing her interest in resolving “individual cases”: the institutional framework legitimizes her behavioural changes with respect to her past as an activist. In the second fragment, the position allows her to face a social emergency. It is not a coincidence that her claim to institutional status is given in Catalan, through

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6 “I have had the honour of presiding as Mayor over what I had also requested as an activist: a meeting where all of the participants involved in dealing with urgent social issues have sat down to speak: entities, Government and the opposition, representatives of the judicial body, and representatives of financial organizations”.

which she demonstrates the fact that she belongs, and she establishes a continuity of identity. The claim of this *ethos* is accompanied by references to the PAH:

“Segon moment emocionant: **visita sorpresa a la PAH**. No volia premsa ni soroll mediàtic. Volia sentir-me com una més entre la gent que, **durant els últims anys, ha estat la meva segona família**. No era una visita oficial: hi vaig anar com Ada, no com alcaldessa. Moltes llàgrimes i abraçades, perquè la PAH és així: emotiva, sentimental... i reconec que això em carrega les piles” (17/06/2015)<sup>7</sup>.

The pathemic dimension is linked to a sort of return to the origin, where the metaphor “second family” accompanies the emotion enunciated in the terms “exciting”, “emotional”, “sentimental”. Memories are associated with this, and they refer to the time when Colau was a spokesperson for the movement:

“**The PAH was growing and had incorporated the ‘Yes, it can be done’ as a war cry to stop evictions**. The 15-M Movement served as a great loudspeaker, and the radically optimistic ‘Yes, it can be done’ took on a deeper meaning [...]. It was the motto of the excluded, of the evicted, of those in a precarious situation. Of a whole generation that went from being victims to being protagonists of a historical change” (15/05/2016).

This fragment was published on the fifth anniversary of the 15-M Movement<sup>8</sup>, a date that served as a decisive event for the inclusive ‘we’ in passing “from victims to protagonists”. The Mayor identified her leading role with that of her followers, thereby mitigating her individuality by appealing to a common origin based on activism and the condition of being “excluded”.

### 3.2. Humanitarian Ethos

Another important element in Colau’s identity development is her self-presentation as an ordinary person. Charaudeau (2005) indicated the central importance of an ethos focused on the humanitarian nature of a politician who shows his or her own feelings, but weaknesses and personal preferences as well. This was observed hours before the takeover:

“**I have to admit, I am nervous and excited**. Today a change begins in Barcelona, but **a change in my life also begins**, which a little over a year ago I could not even have imagine [...]. Difficult moments will come. **I will experience tension, pressure and live through a thousand contradictions that are part of the job** [...] I have never liked protocol very much, although I understand its importance, and I will go through it. But of everything that will happen this afternoon, what delights me the most is the idea of going to the square and seeing you there, ready to celebrate the change and to govern with me” (13/06/2015).

The lexeme “I recognize”, the mention of sensations, and the use of the first person singular creates a confessional stage-setting arrangement (Maingueneau, 2002). Colau tends toward intimacy with the receivers of her message when showing herself to be sincere in an atmosphere that replicates the features of an informal conversation. At the same time, through allusion to change, the parallel nature of “Barcelona” and “my life” has a self-legitimizing effect.

7 “Second exciting moment: surprise visit to the PAH. I did not want noise from the press or media. I wanted to feel like just another person among the people who, during the last few years, have been my second family. It was not an official visit: I went as Ada, not as Mayor. Many tears and hugs, because the PAH is like that: emotional, sentimental ... and I realize that it recharges my batteries” (17/06/2015).

8 The movement of the indignados or 15M refers to the massive demonstration that took place on May 15, 2011, in which different political groups participated.

**“Primer dia de feina com alcaldessa. Intens.** Tot just puc seure a pensar amb una mica de tranquil·litat sobre aquest inici i el llarg camí que ens espera. **Suposo que aniré acostumat-me, però reconec que l’Ajuntament impressiona per dintre i que em costarà una mica adaptar-me a l’espai.** Encara em perdo per anar d’un lloc a un altre [...] **També ha estat emocionant conèixer els meus nous companys de feina:** els treballadors i treballadores que depenen directament d’alcaldia. Estic segura que farem un gran equip!” (15/06/2015)<sup>9</sup>.

**“Dia 2. Ahir vaig arribar a casa tard i esgotada,** però aprofito el petit descans del migdia per resumir el meu segon dia com alcaldessa. **Ja puc arribar al meu despatx sense perdre’m pel camí. Anem avançant!** Això sí, tinc molt clar que passaré més temps a peu de carrer que tancada al gabinet d’alcaldia” (17/06/2015)<sup>10</sup>.

With the format of a private diary, Colau highlights the intensity of her new work and what it means for her personal life. The epideictic discourse allows her to reinforce the image of a person outside institutional policy who will need to adapt, and exalts her hard working *ethos* that will allow her to identify with “the people” mentioned in other publications.

“I want to share an emotion: when I leave these plenary sessions of political parties, **I leave tired and disappointed** with politics in general. **I am filled with the opposite emotion when I leave the meetings with the residents of different neighbourhoods,** which I have started to do every 15 days throughout the city. They are informal spaces, not covered by the press, where a ‘conversation’ between neighbours and the Mayor takes place” (30/01/2016).

Colau again shares her emotions to distinguish between the feelings in the plenary sessions of the City Council and the ones by which she is “imbued”, inevitably, in meetings and conversations with neighbours. Thus, she differentiates between formal and territorial politics, which arouses her emotions, and at the same time is linked to an intimate environment, foreign not only to institutions but also to the press.

**“My grandfather was a shepherd in a town in Huesca.** During the war, there was a lot of fear. In the post-war period, he suffered hunger. I remember my grandfather eating an entire loaf of bread at every meal, afraid that he might not have any food in the next few days. **I remember my grandfather telling me, ‘child, don’t get involved in politics’,** don’t look for problems. Fear and hunger are powerful tools. They sculpt the spirit. But **all of those grandfathers and grandmothers who were forged in the post-war period and during the long dictatorship** taught us that no men or women deserve different treatment because of their origin, and that dignity is within, that honesty is priceless, and that you have to help those who suffer and respect those who help” (24/06/2016).

Through the recurrence of the *doxa* embodied in the voice of the loved one (“don’t get involved in politics”), the speaker breaks with the traditional representation of politics and legitimizes her own position as mayor by exalting the values of “dignity”, “honesty” and “respect”. Thus, while contradicting her grandfather, she also exalts him as a leading player in Spanish history, and with that, a source of learning. In this way, by identifying her own grandfather with “all those

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9 **“First day of work as mayor. Intense.** Only now can I sit down to think with a bit of tranquillity about this new start and the long road ahead. **I guess I’ll get used to it, but I realize that the City Hall impresses your entire being and that it will be a bit difficult to adapt to the place.** I still get lost going from one place to another [...] **It has also been exciting for me to meet my co-workers:** the workers who depend directly on the Mayor’s office. I’m sure we’ll make a great team!” (15/06/2015).

10 **“Day 2. Yesterday I arrived home late and exhausted,** but I took advantage of the small break at noon to review my second day as Mayor. **I can already get to my office without getting lost on the way. I’m making progress!** Of course, I know clearly that I will spend more time in the street than inside the Mayor’s office”.



grandfathers and grandmothers who were forged in the post-war period”, she creates a common history, both national as well as regarding family, between speaker and listener.

According to Vitale (2016), the presence of affection and feelings in discourse is characteristic of the feminine *ethos*, which also consists of evading confrontation and controversy, the use of dialogue, and the search for consensus. One of the most common resources of this *ethos* is the “explicit use of argument according to gender”, or put it another way, the use of femininity to justify or explain:

“**Women know** very well what it means to have the spotlight placed on our appearance in the absence of arguments, and to be vilified because of our hairstyle or clothes. Pablo Iglesias is also harshly criticized for ‘not having the appearance of a president’, as if a president had to have a specific look. **As a woman, I want to give my full support to Pablo: women know very well what it feels like** when those who have always ruled treat you like an intruder” (12/12/2015).

Being a woman is associated with receiving unfair criticism based on appearance. Through the creation of that which is feminine by using an *ethos* proverb (Maingueneau, 2002) (“we women know”), the enunciator defends herself from attacks by others and generates a ‘we’ in which there are women, but also the presence of a man: Pablo Iglesias. The common condition of being criticized without argument while at the same time being a politician allows Colau to validate her position, paradoxically against the group that is socially-endorsed and designated as oppressor.

On another occasion, Colau resorts to her identity as a mother:

“**I cannot separate my memory of 15-M from the crucial circumstances I was going through 5 years ago. I had just become a mother, and the excitement of city squares** filled with people was mixed with the **emotion of becoming a mother**. Hannah Arendt wrote that motherhood is a radically activist act, because it is the ultimate affirmation of life. With each new life, the potential on the horizon expands, a new adventure begins in which anything is possible. In my case, **it also meant a change of attitude: from the “realistic pessimism” that had accompanied my youth, I consciously decided to move toward a “militant optimism”, not naive, but rather more pragmatic**” (15/05/2016).

Here you can see an indirect argument for gender, or in other words, the use of collective imagination, stereotypes, and clichés regarding women. In Colau’s story, motherhood complements and completes her professional life. According to the relationship between politics and affection, being a mother is also activism for Colau, which is strengthened by the reference from Arendt’s citation.

A mother’s identity is resumed when Colau announces her second pregnancy:

“With each new life, it seems like anything can be accomplished on the horizon, another new adventure begins in which everything is possible. **I am very happy to share with you that I am thirteen weeks pregnant** [...] Every woman experiences motherhood in her own way. Luckily, we women are many and are diverse. **Being a mother has given me strength and made me very happy** [...] **In the coming months, I will continue with my duties of mayor as usual, with a growing mid-section, and even more motivation to make Barcelona a better city for those who are already here... and for those who are yet to come**” (22/10/2016).

In a gradation, and starting from the rejection of other people’s comments that may have put in doubt her future dedication to the position, the speaker considers her pregnancy to be an extra motivation to “make Barcelona a better city”, and tends to lean toward a causal relationship between the emotional dimension and political effectiveness.

### 3.3. *Ethos as political*

“Political speech seems inseparable from the creation of an adversary” (Verón, 1987). All political discourse has an inevitable polemic dimension in which an explicit or implicit dialogue with a counter-receiver is established; the adversarial discourse is thematised and becomes an object of dispute (Montero, 2016). This verbal representation of agonal confrontation is a requisite for the existence of modern pluralistic democracy (Mouffe, 1999).

In the period analyzed, two general elections took place (20 December and 26 June), which act as a framework for the controversial passages in the corpus in which Colau is presented as a different political option. Sometimes, she does so by outlining a binary world:

“The day of 20 December is not just an electoral contest between parties to decide a government and a president, it is also a **battle between ideas and forces: the declining strength of an exhausted regime** (which will make every effort possible to stay in power), **against the growing force of real change from below**, driven by ordinary people who have suffered the consequences of the crisis and have fought for a long time to defend their rights and freedoms” (29/10/2015).

“This week the change from the bottom up has arrived to Congress, and we have witnessed a struggle between **two forces: the usual ones**, resisting and unable to adapt to the movement, making non-transparent agreements and sheltering themselves in regulations and legal arguments in order to maintain their status quo, and **the forces of change**, claiming a real space that their voters have given them to clearly show that society has already changed and to demand that these changes be reflected in their institutions, [...] seems to be the prelude to a great coalition of **Old versus New**” (15/ 01/ 2016).

The enunciator defines the political game by using war rhetoric (“contention”, “battle”), which translates into the confrontation between old and new: “the declining strength of an exhausted regime” and “the same forces as always” versus “the growing force of real change from the bottom up” and “the forces of change”. It is a “Dichotomization” (Amossy, 2016) that exposes the old and new politics as mutually exclusive notions. This process also encourages polarization (Amossy, 2016) in terms of social groupings. Colau differs from traditional politicians while at the same time she identifies with a group that is associated with new political models.

In the typology of Charaudeau (2005), the *ethos of caractère* alludes to the temperament, usually associated with strong personalities or caused by highly polarized political contexts. One of its varieties is vituperation, consisting of a controversial and combative reply, more or less controlled, in which a previous discourse is rejected. In the following text, Colau responds to a comment from Susana Díaz, president of the Junta de Andalucía:

“There is only one formula: respect and fraternity. Thanks to these ingredients, we have won the elections in Catalonia and have created solid alliances throughout the State. Yesterday, **Susana Díaz still did not understand it. ‘Coffee for all or just for Colau’, she said, and that phrase sounded old to me, it sounded like something from the past** [...] The two-party system is agonizing. It is worrying that we can hardly differentiate between statements by Susana Díaz and those of Esperanza Aguirre. The ways of doing politics will not change much with the ‘baronesses’ of the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) or the ‘countesses’ of the People’s Party (PP)” (23/12/2015).

The famous phrase “coffee for all” refers to the debate on the model of territorial organization that took place during the Spanish Transition, when the autonomy of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia was being discussed. Colau mentions it not for the purpose of dealing with the issue of independence, but to highlight the dichotomy between old and new and

to differentiate from the “‘baronesses’ of the PSOE” and the “‘countesses’ of the PP”, who are equal in *syntagma* where the quotation marks create distance with regard to the representatives of these criticized groups.

Another interesting reply is the one dedicated to Félix de Azúa, a member of the Royal Spanish Academy, for his statements that “Colau should be serving in a fish stall”<sup>11</sup>:

“Scrubbing floors or selling fish are jobs just as worthy and respectable as serving as mayor, or working in a grocery store, cleaning toilets, etc. [...] I feel sad that there are still men who are so sexist and classist that they use the work carried out mostly by women as a form of insult, yet for myself, I profoundly respect these women [...]

Mr. Félix de Azúa, as the professor of aesthetics that you are, you know this proverb well: *Nulla aethetica sine ethica*. **There are no aesthetics without ethics. There is a lot of beauty in a fish stall, and a lot of ethics in the lives of women who get up at dawn to make a living by working in such places.** Your gratuitous disdain toward them and toward the thousands of people who have elected me as mayor has, on the contrary, very little beauty and very little ethics” (02/04/2016).

The enunciator focuses on gender stereotypes and retrieves a similar comment made a month earlier by Oscar Berman, PP Mayor of Palafròlles: “In a serious and healthy society, she would be cleaning floors, not acting as mayor of Barcelona”. Thus, she produces a collective adversary that is identified with that of “men who are highly sexist and classist”.

The Latin maxim “*Nulla aethetica sine ethica*” works as an argument of authority, with which the mayor reinforces her credibility and presents herself as a cultured person. The provocative directness (“Mr. Félix de Azúa”) increases the controversy: while vituperation is a response to a previous discourse, provocation is an intentional and deliberate act that seeks a reaction from the receiver; it is a direct attack, often with name and surname (Charaudeau, 2005).

“**Pedro Sánchez, I understand that it is difficult for you to carry out article 135, express eviction or bank bailout, but you will have to look for better arguments** because I assure you that to the group of decent citizens of this country, what matters is not how the president combs his hair or dresses, but that he is honest, fair and compliant with his commitments” (12/12/2015).

“Cs (Ciudadanos) still does not listen to the citizens. With everything that has happened, they still do not accept the demands of the PAH (where they are experts and know about evictions) [...] They defend the banks and the big companies of the IBEX stock exchange and have the nerve to say in their meetings, “Yes, it can be done”. Mr. Rivera, if you want to shout “Yes it can be done”, get in front of the houses yourself and do it. Put yourself at risk as half of the country has done, in front of the police, and in front of the banks” (13/12/2015).

In these texts, enunciated during the December 2015 campaign, Colau addressed two of the main candidates directly. In the first, after listing some criticisms of the last socialist government, she disqualified Sanchez by rejecting his arguments against Pablo Iglesias and sheltering herself in a pluralistic “we” she makes her criticism of others seem as if it comes from all “decent citizens”. In the second, the provocation is even clearer and more direct due to the reiteration of the imperative mode (“get”, “do it”), and to the attribution of inconsistency in the contrast of defending the powerful groups while at the same time repeating the slogan “Yes, it can be done”.

“The PSOE appeals to a ‘progressive ideological fusion and says that being in agreement with a right-wing force represents the ‘only possible change’. **This expression reminds me of the adage that ‘there is no alternative’ or ‘we do what needs to be**

11 The quote corresponds to an interview that the writer gave to the magazine *Tiempo* in April 2016: “A civilized and European city like Barcelona has Colau as mayor, a thing of laughter. A woman who should be serving at a fish stand. She has no idea how a city works and she does not care much. The only thing she cares about is changing the names of the streets” (Available at <http://www.tiempodehoy.com/entrevistas/felix-de-azua>).

**done'**, which has been the PP's mantra for four years in dismantling that which is public, and acting in ways that are offensive to basic rights [...]

**Do not ask us, Mr. Sánchez, to trust.** Do not ask us to let you do whatever you want. We remember [...] Mr. Sánchez, we cannot vote in favour of, or even abstain from, a proposal 'for the right wing'. But we can get to work seriously, starting tomorrow, on a proposal 'for rights' with the strength, knowledge and experience of those who have been defending them for years. It all depends on you having the **true will** to do it" (04/03/2016).

The analogy between "the only possible change", one of the slogans used by the PSOE, and "there is no alternative", which was taken literally from the text initially attributed to Margaret Thatcher and associated with conservative thinking, allows the adversary to be identified with widely rejected values. The interpellations toward Pedro Sánchez contain the recriminations made by Podemos toward the PSOE throughout the campaign. However, the "we" also brings about a new polarization: the speaker identifies herself with the citizens, in contrast to "them" attributed to the unreliable politicians. Meta-discursive denial (García Negroni, 2009) "do not ask [...] us to trust" rejects the speech attributed to Pedro Sánchez in his campaign, and is justified with the attribution of malicious objectives that can be deduced from the term "truly". At other times, Colau resorts to irony:

**"Rajoy says that the new mayors of Madrid and Barcelona put the country's economy in danger.** Aha! This is being said by the one who has been president since 2011, who has led some of the worst cutbacks and financial rescues ever; said by the highest representative of the most corrupt party in the history of democracy. He also says that he wants to govern with a great coalition, together with the PSOE and Cs, to guarantee stability. THEIR stability" (29 May 2016).

"Yesterday on Radio 4, the Industry Minister José Manuel Soria criticized the moratorium on tourist accommodation licenses that we have promoted in Barcelona. BUT WAIT! Almost at the same time, eldiario.es reported that Mr. Soria has spent his holidays in a luxury resort in Punta Cana, supposedly invited (**to be confirmed**) by a hotelier who, what a surprise, has a hotel in the Canary Islands that was built during the real estate bubble [...]

I would like to remind the minister, **with all due respect**, that some of us have learned something after the long ordeal that resulted from not stopping the real estate bubble in time [...] about not accepting gifts in exchange for turning a blind eye to licenses, because that has another name. **I hope, Mr. Minister, that you will find those invoices soon, and I reiterate my invitation to change Punta Cana for the Barceloneta neighbourhood next year**" (11/08/2015).

In both passages, there are informal interjections ("Aha!" and "BUT WAIT!"), which sharply change the tone of the speech and are emphatic. These are stylistic isotopic ruptures (Maingueneau, 1980) that lead to a marked reaction to the adversary's position. In the first text, an attempt is made to "unmask" Rajoy with an *ad hominem* argument. Through accusation aimed at past actions, Colau discredits anyone who she accuses of being guided by individual interests, emphasized by the capital letters of the possessive "their".

In the second fragment, she denies the statements of Soria, toward whom she tends to distrust by means of the term "supposedly" and the parenthetical lexeme, "to be confirmed". The irony in the expression "surprise" marks the reproach, justified by the metaphor "turn a blind eye" that has an emphatic function (Angenot, 1982). In addition there is an ironic statement, with a literal meaning ("you find these invoices soon") and a tropological one (her suspicion about the existence or legality of those bills).

### 3.4. *Ethos as mayor*

The *ethos* as mayor (or civil servant) relies on the *ethos de compétence* (Charaudeau, 2005): the image of the politician who knows what needs to be done, and above all, knows how to do it. This *ethos* requires both knowledge of the area where the subject exercises its activity and a demonstration that has the necessary means to translate knowledge into specific objectives. It is the *ethos* of effectiveness, suitability and capability of action, tangible in the announcement of one's achievements:

**“Today we have announced the first 4 large sanctions toward banks**, which despite having been notified and fined three times, have not put their empty flats on the rental market. SAREB, BBVA and BANCO SANTANDER will have to pay fines of 315 thousand euros per empty flat [...] These admonitory fines are intended to send a clear and forceful message to banks and large owners: in Barcelona we will fight the battle against real estate speculation” ((21/11/2016).

**“Today we have announced the firm will of the Barcelona City Council to lead a transition toward energy independence** of the city. We want to promote a new energy culture under public control that prioritizes people and cares for the environment.

**We are going to create a new public energy service** [...] that will guarantee fair prices and end supply cuts for economic reasons. **Barcelona will confront** the electric oligopoly” (14/07/2016).

In both passages, Colau identifies herself a *we*-government by which “singular-person responsibility is diluted, and the authority or legitimacy associated with a collective is acquired” (Calsamiglia and Tusón, 1999). This pluralistic enunciator attributes malicious objectives to the adversary, due to the concession of “despite having been warned ...”. The adjectives and assertive method used in saying that these “are admonitory fines” qualifies the action itself as praiseworthy with an exemplary character that is undisputable. In the second fragment, there is an alternation between the governmental “us” and the personification of Barcelona.

In the majority of these management announcements, an identical argumentative structure is repeated: i) the definition of the problem, which generally includes data that show the seriousness of the matter; ii) the governmental measure that will solve the problem; and iii) an inspirational-style closure that links political decisions with ideology:

**“... in Barcelona this week we have presented the first Mental Health Plan** that this city has ever had, with a budget of 51 million euros, of which the City Council will pay 97%. You will not see measures like this on the front page of any newspaper, but it is precisely these measures that will change the city and improve the quality of life of its citizens. **I feel very proud of the team that is making this possible with an enormous amount of continuous hard work**” (24/07/2016).

The use of the third person allows her to flatter her own team. “I am very proud of the team that is making this possible ...”) from what appears to be a distance that creates objectivity, and as such legitimizes one's achievements (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997).

Another feature of the mayor's *ethos* is the reference to promises, which exposes the coherence between saying and doing: **“We said that we did not come to occupy the chairs of others to make policies that are the same as always.** We said that we would put this institution at the service of citizens.

**Today in Barcelona we have presented** measures to implement the ILP program for emergency housing and energy poverty driven by citizen's platforms” (26 October 2015). We also said that **“If we were committed to governing, it was to do this type of thing.** We can and should put empty houses at the service of social welfare rentals. And this is just a first step. We

must do more, and we will do more" (16/12/2015). With the counterpoints between the past ("we said", "we wanted") and the present ("today", "gives us", "it is possible"), Colau establishes a causal link between promises and political measures.

The comparison with previous governmental management also reinforces the competitive *ethos*: "From now on, directors of the cultural centres of Barcelona will be chosen through a public tender and not by direct appointment. [...] **We have done more for transparency in 8 months than had been done in decades**" (25/12/2016). The controversial denial of "direct appointment" falls back on the adversary and allows for the presentation of a transparent self-image.

"To the 200 residences ceded by the SAREB a few months ago, we have incorporated into social welfare rentals 255 more homes coming from cessions and acquisitions. Therefore, in total, and in the eight months that we have been in office, **we have obtained the management of 455 residences that were previously empty and in the hands of financial entities**, and now they will be transferred to families in an emergency situation who will pay social welfare rent. **The previous government only obtained 33 homes from banks in 4 years**. To go from 33 to 455 in such a short time is a great achievement and the result of a large collective effort" (03/03/2016).

Numerical rhetoric works as a legitimatizing factor in exposing an effective *ethos* by making comparisons with "the previous government", given the clear difference between 455 and 33 residences. In turn, the recurring contrast between ordinary people ("families") and economic groups ("financial entities") indirectly attributes individual interests linked to increases in wealth to the previous government.

In the following fragment, statistics are linked to their impact on society:

"An additional 2.8 million euros allocated to subsidized school lunches in Barcelona means that some 6,000 more families will be able to ensure a good diet for their sons and daughters during the next academic year. **This means securing the present and the future** of our children. **It means ending the anguish** of thousands of mothers, fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers. **It means guaranteeing a right**, and above all, taking a big step toward ending child malnutrition in Barcelona" (30/07/2015).

Through the use of anaphora, Colau emphasizes the positive impact of her management, linking it with values of justice that emanate from the image of malnourished children whose innocence contrasts with their discomfort. The explicit emotion ("anguish") and the common nouns that indicate loving relationships ("mothers, fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers") accompany this pathemic construction (Amossy, 2010). Again, the enunciator is on the side of the "families" and gives a new name to the notion of "statistics" in contrast to what the numbers meant to previous officials.

### 3.5. Leadership *ethos*

The year 2015 was, according to UNHCR, the year of the refugee crisis in Europe: more than one million immigrants arrived on European shores and at least 3,770 people died along the way. This situation prompted intense debates and forced various politicians to take a stand and express their views publicly. The following statement exposes Colau's position on the crisis<sup>12</sup>:

"We have a sea that is full of dead people. Borders that are packed with wires, spikes, blades... and dead people... **So Europe, Europeans, we have to open our eyes**. There will not be enough walls or wire to stop this, nor tear gas, nor rubber bullets.

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12 In August 2015, after it was known that refugee arrivals to the EU had tripled, at least two new tragedies followed one another: an abandoned refrigerated truck near the Austrian-Hungarian border with more than 70 dead and shipwreck of two barges on the coast of Libya that left hundreds of victims.

Either we address a human drama with the ability to love that makes us human, or we will all end up dehumanized [...] **from Barcelona we will do everything we can to participate in a network of refuge cities.** We want cities that are committed to human rights, and to life; cities to be proud of” (28/08/2015).

The idea that “we have to open our eyes” - instead of possibly “opening” them - mitigates the powerful position of Colau, which is marked by the imperative form (Maingueneau, 1980). Here, she appeals to “the ability to love” and not, as we have seen in the previous section, to rationality and effectiveness. The dramatic scenario exposed by metaphors and enumerations activates a strong epideictic dimension (Aristotle, 330/335 arc.) which can only be fought with another emotion.

Through the appeal to feelings, the enunciator exposes two options: one positive, identified with love, and another negative, linked to dehumanization. This dichotomization (Amossy, 2016) legitimizes one’s own position regarding the political measure that she proposes - forming a “network of refuge cities” - identified with the values of life, human rights and pride. Thus, the mention of its location (“from Barcelona we will do”) makes her the legitimate representative of Barcelona, whose actions set an example to follow (“we want cities [...] to be proud of”).

**“Our cities have to gather our voices to make ourselves heard in the spaces where the decisions that affect us are made.** Because the laws are dictated to us by the EU or States, but finally our cities are the ones that welcome people” (10/10/2015).

By inviting other cities to express themselves and participate in decision-making, Colau adheres to municipal diplomacy and to the recent theories that have redefined the role of cities in the globalized world, from Edward Glaeser’s Triumph of the City (2011), to Benjamin Barber with his If Mayors Ruled the World (2013). Along these lines, she contends with Spain and the European Union (EU), considered responsible for “dehumanizing policies” and working “from above”:

**“We will not keep waiting; if the refugees do not come because of the dehumanizing policies of the EU and the Spanish state, the city will send aid where it is most needed.** Today we have signed some agreements with the mayor of Lesbos and the mayor of Lampedusa. **Agreements of direct help from city to city** that include the possibility of sending specialized technicians to remedy deficiencies beings experienced by these municipalities [...] **If the EU works from above to strengthen Europe, cities also need to work together to build a network of municipalities from the ground up that meets the expectations of our citizens”.** (15/03/2016)

The lexeme “dehumanizing” and its derivatives are recurrent in the corpus and contrast with a horizontal policy where joint cooperation predominates. It is interesting that in the last two quoted fragments the enunciator resorts to a synecdoche by using the lexeme “city” in a self-referential way: “our cities have to put their voices together”, “the city will send aid”, “let’s help city by city”. The representative function of Colau with respect to Barcelona becomes indissoluble and contrasts with the behaviour of the State and the continent. Underlying this dichotomization is a difference of forces that places Colau on the side of the weak.

“Today we have received the mayor of Athens at City Hall, with whom we have launched a **joint petition to President Rajoy:** within the strategy “City-to-City” we request the direct relocation, from city to city, of refugees. **Spain was committed to the reception of 17,600 people. Of that commitment, only the embarrassing figure of 18 people has been effectively received.**

Faced with this inexplicable paralysis, from Barcelona we offer our help [...] **Solidarity between cities humanizes us, makes us stronger and more effective**" (16/03/2016).

A lack of humanity also characterizes Rajoy, who fails to fulfil his obligations. This criticism is exalted with the disqualification of the *syntagma* "inexplicable paralysis" and the *subjectivème* "shameful figure". Instead, the "us" is presented as "citizens", "strong and effective", lacking hierarchical power.

In other passages, the collective subject does not correspond to the citizens: "Today El País published this letter signed by Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris, Spyros Galinos, Mayor of Lesbos, Giusi Nicolino, mayor of Lampedusa, and myself as Mayor of Barcelona" (13/09/2015) Colau distinguishes herself from the group of mayors of Europe through self-reference in the singular ("myself as mayor"). Then the enunciator again uses the first person singular: "**I have added my signature** to that of the mayors of 20 European cities who are concerned about an imminent legislative change ..." (17/03/2016).

In the following fragment, the leadership is built internally with the rest of the city councils for change<sup>13</sup>: "Barcelona **will host a meeting of 8 mayors** that won the election for the city council of our cities on May 24 with the support of thousands of people who wanted to be leading players of change and who demanded to regain control of the institutions" (02/09/2015). Within Spain, Colau's protagonism is greater and more evident in as much as the city that she presides over is personified ("the hostess"). The association, this time, is determined according to political party orientation (the candidates for citizen confluence, "protagonists of change"), while at the European level she also has other intentions: to empower cities as political actors and to cooperate in the reception of immigrants.

But Colau also wants to play an international role representing Barcelona. For this reason, she recounts her first exit from Europe:

"This afternoon I'm taking a trip to Colombia and Ecuador to attend two important **international summits**. The first in Bogotá, where I will participate in the **fifth congress of United Cities and Local Governments, the main world network of cities**. Then I will go to Quito, where **I will intervene on behalf of Barcelona in Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development**" (13/10/2016).

"**United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the largest and most important international network of cities** [...] It is an honour and a responsibility to have been elected co-president of UCLG, but above all, it is a great opportunity **to regain the international leadership of Barcelona** [...] The policies that we are promoting in Barcelona are attracting great interest in many parts of the world. Many cities have their eyes on the way in which this city is facing the present challenges and preparing for those to come" (17/10/2016).

Repetition of the words "international", "global" and "world" display Colau's participation in top-level organizations and conferences that reinforce her reputation and leadership at the local level as well by showing her capability of intervening in the international arena and her interest in global challenges.

Finally, this leadership *ethos* also assumes a feminine dimension. As we have seen, if Colau presents herself as a woman and a mother, she also does it as a "political woman": "When we talk about **feminizing politics**, we speak most of all about

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13 City councils governed today by candidacies of public confluence: Barcelona (Ada Colau), Madrid (Manuela Carmena), Zaragoza (Pedro Santiste), Santiago de Compostela (Martino Noriega), Coruña (Xulio Ferreiro), Badalona (Dolors Sabater), Cádiz (José María González, better known as Kichi), Iruña (Joseba Asiron), among others.



values and changing priorities so that we can all win: men and women. But also of **the need for more and more women to occupy positions** of responsibility. There will be no real equality as long as women are underrepresented” (29/02/2016).

The lexeme “underrepresented” refers to those women whose representatives are men, and the term works as a justification to proclaim the need to increase the role of women in senior positions. In this way, Colau presents herself as a legitimate ruler in as much as she is a woman who can strongly represent, or at least correctly represent, women.

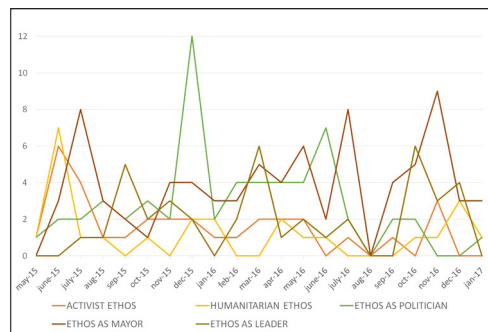
#### 4. Conclusions

This work has attempted to present the structure of Ada Colau’s public identity in her first twenty months as mayor of Barcelona, for which different discursive actions have been identified, and the result has been a typology of *ethos*. We have determined and analyzed the self-presentations offered by Colau which she, as enunciator, was promoting or lessening according to political context and scenario, and possibly based on strategic communication decisions mostly related to the transition from activist to mayor.

Colau created a complex and multiform self-image of herself with at least five identities that coexisted and responded to the need to safeguard her public image in the context of consolidating a political office of particular importance. A diachronic approach to the corpus shows the evolution of the different *ethos* over nearly twenty months.

Graph 1: *ethos* compared using diachrony

#### ETHOS COMPARED

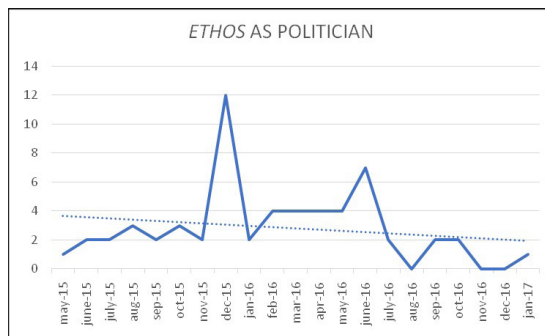


Source: created by the author

This graph shows the predominance of the *ethe* of humanity and activism in the first month of the corpus, which was a consequence of Colau’s reaction to her new responsibilities as mayor as well as to her intention to validate her solid reputation as an activist. Along these lines, it is interesting to note the marked epideictic dimension of these *ethe*, which link the enunciator with an identity anchored in her origins. In the month that followed, the first peak of the mayor’s *ethos* occurred, coinciding with the first news regarding her management and the celebration of the first 15 and 30-day periods of her Government. We have seen that this *ethos* while indicating coherence with the enunciator’s past, allows for the legitimization of Colau’s action by her having pointed out her achievements and having outlined a new political direction.

Her *ethos* as politician, on the other hand, rests on an important controversial dimension that allows her self-presentation to be based on a differentiation with regard to the adversary. The graph showing the evolution of this *ethos* highlights the impact of the different political contexts in Colau's discourse: the two highly important moments correspond to the electoral campaigns of December 20 (20D) 2015 and June 26, 2016. There is greater implication in the 20D campaign, at which time it had not been long since Colau had won the mayor's office of Barcelona and was still enjoying a strong tailwind<sup>14</sup>.

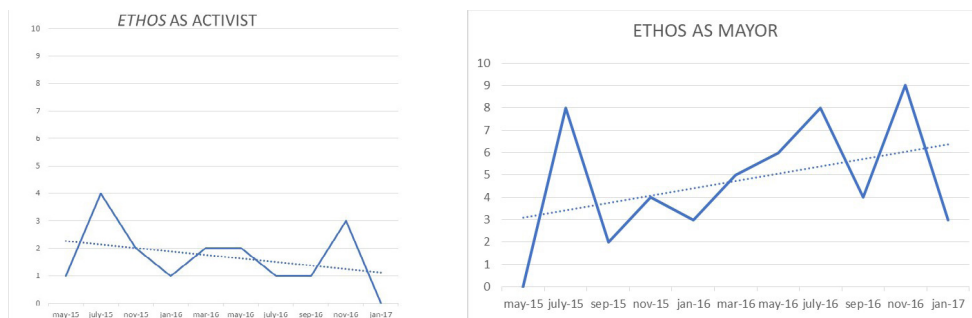
Graph 2: *ethos* as politician



Source: created by the author

One of the main questions addressed by the investigation was to see the correlation between Colau's identity as activist and mayor at a moment of adaptation to a new political position, which *a priori*, seemed to contradict the previous one:

Graph 3: *ethos* as activist and mayor



Source: created by the author

The activist *ethos* shows a marked negative trend, with exceptional values in the second and third months of the corpus; moreover, only in 2015 is it predominant in more than 50% of the publications (19 of 32). In contrast, the mayoral *ethos*

14 At that time, the media spoke of a supposed "Ada Colau effect": "Podemos is driven by the 'Ada Colau effect'" (*El Mundo*, December 5, 2015) and "the 'Ada Colau effect' catapults the options of 'Podemos' in Catalonia" (*El País*, December 13, 2015).

shows an upward trend with four of its five peaks after March 2016. This demonstrates that the activist *ethos* supports the enunciator at a time when her new position could put her image at risk, and most of all, the legitimacy she had achieved in the past.

Once the transition is made, the *ethos* as mayor begins to take on greater importance in Colau's shaping of her own identity. Her *ethos* as leader, on the other hand, is present both at the beginning and at the end of the corpus, and becomes weaker at the most ambivalent points of Colau's discourse. It is self-presentation that strengthens the role itself while allowing for a bridge between local and international scenarios.

Future research is still pending and would include analyzing other ethical dimensions that envision the paratextual features that define the corporality and constitution of the guarantor (Maingueneau, 2002) in digital genres. This aspect is central to studying the design of web identities and the way in which the old ways of doing politics are combined with the novelty that Colau preaches, which we believe should be manifested in the expressive tools offered by social networks.

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