

U.S. Foreign Policy in Clinton and Trump's presidential campaign. Discourses on ISIS in the media

La política exterior de Estados Unidos en la campaña presidencial de Clinton y Trump. Los discursos sobre ISIS en la agenda mediática

Isabel Rodríguez Toribio. Universidad Carlos III (isartoribio@gmail.com)

Patricia González Aldea. Universidad Carlos III (patricia.gonzalez.aldea@uc3m.es)

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Abstract:

During the last Presidential campaign in the United States of America, ISIS terrorism became the main concern among public opinion polls (Gallup, 2015). This issue was also the most significant topic addressed in campaign speeches on foreign policy. This article analyses the speeches of Trump and Clinton with regard to ISIS within the media framework, as well as the way in which this terrorist group and its actions were characterized in their speeches. A qualitative methodology was used. News published in U.S. digital media between November 2015 and February 2016 have been analysed using critical discourse analysis theory. The main results of this research are highlighted by the strategy of provocation, discrimination and populism of Trump compared to the tactics of Clinton based on an appeal using sound arguments.

Keywords:

Foreign policy; media agenda; presidential campaign; United States; ISIS.

Resumen:

Durante la última campaña electoral en Estados Unidos el terrorismo del ISIS se ha convertido en la principal preocupación de la opinión pública (Gallup, 2015) y en el principal tema de política exterior de la campaña. El objetivo de este artículo es analizar los discursos sobre el ISIS de los candidatos Trump y Clinton publicados en los medios, así como investigar sobre la "construcción del otro", en este caso el ISIS, en dichos discursos. Como metodología se ha optado por un análisis cualitativo, basado en el análisis del discurso de noticias publicadas por medios digitales norteamericanos entre noviembre de 2015 y febrero de 2016. Entre los principales resultados destacan la estrategia provocativa, discriminatoria y populista de Trump, frente al tono apelativo y argumentativo de Clinton.

Palabras clave:

Política exterior; agenda mediática; campañas presidenciales; Estados Unidos; ISIS.

1. Introduction

The race for the White House in 2016, like any other election campaign, occupied a large part of media programming in its coverage. However, the media did not dedicate the same space and attention to all candidates. Thus, media coverage was more heavily focused on Republican candidate Donald Trump than on any of the other candidates who aspired to govern the United States, with the second most heavily covered being Democrat Hillary Clinton. According to analyst Andrew Tyndal (2016), from the beginning of 2016 until March 11th of that year, networks ABC, CBS and NBC talked about Trump for 175 minutes, weekdays only, while the rest of the candidates received much less attention. Hillary Clinton was given a total of 60 minutes during that period, followed by Sanders with 44 minutes, Republican Ted Cruz with 32 minutes, and another Republican, Marco Rubio, with just 14 minutes. In other words, the total amount of time that the media dedicated to these four candidates was less than that monopolized by Trump.

According to a Gallup poll (Riffkin, 2015) from December 14th, 2015, terrorism was viewed by Americans as the most serious threat facing the country, compared to 3% who identified it as such in November of that same year. By December, the number had increased dramatically to 16%. The attacks on November 13th, 2015 in Paris undoubtedly influenced this perception. This implied the highest percentage of concern regarding terrorism in a decade, and in the midst of the election campaign, it was the issue that worried Americans the most, even more than other issues such as the economy, the person who would govern the country, or gun control. In addition, there were differences between supporters of Republicans and Democrats. 24% of Republicans stated that terrorism was the most serious problem to be faced, compared to 9% of Democrats.

This is the reason that terrorism by ISIS¹ - the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria - has involved numerous clashes, not only between the two candidates for the White House of the respective parties, but among their own ranks as well. Earlier this year, Hillary Clinton increasingly used foreign policy and national security in her speeches as an election strategy against Sanders. During Trump's controversial election campaign, his statements regarding ISIS were some of his most highly criticized, such as his comment that "Obama and Clinton created ISIS" (January 3rd, 2016).

On March 2nd, important figures in the Administrations of George Bush and George W. Bush stated in an open letter signed by numerous Republican members that they did not share Trump's vision and proposals regarding foreign policy. The signees demonstrated their disagreement with the point of view of the candidate on issues such as immigration, Muslims, torture, and the candidate's admiration for Russian president Vladimir Putin.

For its part, ISIS has increased the use of violence and terrorist acts in recent months, not only in areas such as Turkey, Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan, which are near its territory, but also in Europe with massacres such as those in Paris and

¹ Regarding the different names that are used to designate this terrorist group, we have opted for ISIS for methodological reasons. The American media that were analysed employed the use of the term ISIS rather than others, such as DAESH, or The Islamic State.

Brussels, actions which shocked the Western world and caught the attention of the media and the political class around the globe. On December 2nd of last year, in the United States, two ISIS militants killed fourteen people in an attack in San Bernardino, California. One must add to the previously mentioned problems the huge refugee crisis that has resulted from people fleeing the war in Syria and seeking asylum in countries of Northern Europe or North American, another issue that has also generated much controversy.

As stated by Abu-Warda and Portaña (2011: 131), “the way in which a news event and political intentions are combined will establish the parallels and divergences between the communication strategies of Republicans and Democrats”.

Interaction between political and media agendas is even greater than usual during electoral campaigns. The messages of electoral speeches do not reach the majority of citizens in the form in which they were developed in the beginning, since they undergo the filter and interpretation of the media. Weaver (1981) states that the initial image that the media provides regarding candidates will determine the information given a posteriori on them, something of special relevance in the case of new candidates, one of whom was Trump. On March 15th, 2016, The New York Times published the article “\$2 Billion Worth of Free Media for Donald Trump”, in which they talked about the abysmal difference in media coverage of presidential candidates during the campaign, quantifying what Trump gained due to the free publicity he was given by the media.

There are many factors that determine the structure of the political or institutional agenda, some of which are emphasis on government action, political debate, or citizenship. Kingdon (1984) points out that major events such as wars or Olympic Games are actions that would fill all the agendas for quite some time. Therefore, “the war against terrorism,” as the candidates themselves called the ISIS issue and which is a term reminiscent of the “war on terror” (already part of US foreign policy history), was a subject susceptible to becoming part of the political discourse and being on the media’s agenda, and in fact, this is what happened.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the ISIS-focused foreign policy speeches that candidates Trump and Clinton presented, as well as the coverage and approach that the media took toward them. Furthermore, taking into account that reality is built through language and discursive activity, it is a question of investigating, in the case of ISIS, the way in which each candidate “characterized” this group.

With this in mind, the two hypotheses are as follows:

- Republicans and Democrats created in their speeches the figure of the “other”, the threat of ISIS, and the very different ways of fighting against it. The media, for their part, transferred the confrontation of the candidates’ speeches to their own agenda.
- The negative and discriminatory tone toward the entire Muslim community of Trump’s Republican speeches contrasts with the more neutral tone of Clinton’s speeches based on sound arguments.

2. Political communication and electoral campaigns

Politics, law and education are some of the social areas that according to linguist Van Dijk (2002) are partially constructed through discourse by which ideologies, knowledge or values are transmitted, and actions and interactions are controlled.

According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 273), who consider that “any case of linguistic use makes a small contribution to the reproduction or transformation of society and culture, including mechanisms of power”, it can be said that discourse reproduces and transforms reality when interpersonal relations of role are defined or qualified, when the identities of individuals are presented, or when representations of the world are made. Laborda (2012) adds that discourse, both journalistic and institutional, can create certain ideological trends that can result in consequences such as discrimination against specific groups of citizens.

Communication is undoubtedly one key in winning an electoral victory and sustaining effective leadership (Mazzoleni and Winfried, 1999), and “there are no politics without communication” (Canel, 2006: 17). In this sense, political discourse, according to Garcia Beaudoux, D’Adamo and Slavinsky (2005: 32), is “an activity of persuasion that allows for the communication of ideas and proposals, referring to objects and/or publics, both through words as well as images, not only for what is explicitly stated but also for what is implied”.

Fontencilla (1989) explains that political discourse, in addition to being subject to the ideology of the one who presents it, is usually characterized by being persuasive with the undecided public susceptible of joining their cause, and is also capable of dedicating a part of the discourse to the idea of “us” for the purpose of reinforcing the support of their own followers, while at the same time making reference to “the other”, to whom the message is not directed.

When preparing an electoral message, one must take into account the idea that “my party is the only one that can offer what you need” (Canel, 2006: 45), something that implies a degree of argument and confrontation with all those who do not belong to the electoral platform of the candidate. Therefore, it seems that political oratory is closely linked to controversy, and this creates the need for an adversary. Candidates will attack the position of their opponent on certain issues to reaffirm their policies and proposals.

The choice of words used to create these messages is important due to the fact that through the use of language used in speeches you can “argue and persuade, establish mechanisms of identification and reinforcement, provide the speech with dramatization, or create labels” (Denton and Woodward, 1998: 51-53). Continuing with the importance of language, Pérez Herrero (2014: 249) affirms that words are the components that define the discourse because “they influence the context in which the campaign develops. The successful selection of words by the candidate determines whether or not his or her agenda will prevail over that of the media. This is due to the fact that certain words cause rejection, while others are capable of generating sympathy, both in followers of the same political cause as well as among those of the opposite cause.

As for the appropriateness of choosing the language and knowing the referential framework that each term evokes, Chomsky (2003) believes that all knowledge produced is transmitted both through political and cultural filters that represent certain interests and collective fears. As Holloway (2002) points out, accepting or rejecting the message will be influenced by previous life experiences of citizens, so that knowing the background of the audience to which the candidate addresses his or her discourse can be of great help.

The speech of candidates in electoral campaigns uses a strategy that might include the provocation of the listener, intimidation, appeal to the listener, or the use of rhetoric of fear. Fear is sometimes used to “point out that the adversary constitutes a real threat or danger due to his or her power” (García Beaudoux, D’Adamo and Slavinsky, 2005: 186).

Along these lines, we must bear in mind that campaigns serve to mobilize the electorate, gain the trust of potential voters, reinforce loyalties, convert voters who are more distant from the ideals of the candidate, and neutralize those who are most adverse to those ideals (Blacksmith and Requeijo, 2014), which may lead to the emergence of populist messages and discourses. Following the views of Laclau (1977), a populist discourse is a political speech designed to mobilize citizens against a specific enemy and serves the candidate by allowing him or her to run as leader in this struggle. Laclau (1977) warned that populist-style political discourse turns listeners into compatriots, comrades, or into the concept of “us”. Patriau (2012) speaks of the fact that in many cases this “us” is manifested through words like “people” or “nation”, and those outside the group are seen as culpable.

“What differentiates a populist discourse from any other, and which becomes key at the time of discourse analysis, is to intercept the social division between ‘us’ and ‘them’. On one side you have the people and their will, and on the other, comparable groups that attack the people”, explains Hawkins (2010: 50). Following this line of thought and the ideas of Patriau (2012), a populist discourse can be considered as one that identifies an enemy, appeals to the people opposed to that enemy, and creates a leader from below who possesses great qualities that validate him as the saviour of the people.

Canel (2006) warns, however, that electoral messages, as a rule, do not reach the population in the form in which they were developed by the parties, but reach the population through media filters, something that impels politicians to develop informative techniques they can use in order to make their messages appear to be newsworthy and to be retransmitted by the media.

3. Electoral campaigns and the media

In every electoral campaign, there are citizens, candidates and the media. In recent years, the media have gained prominence and importance in the electoral process, as they have become the main stage where politicians confront each other. In addition, García Beaudoux, D’Adamo and Slavinsky (2005) explain that journalists can influence public opinion and bring about change in a candidate’s initial agenda.

This ability to interfere with public opinion was called "Agenda Setting" in 1972 by McCombs and Shaw, a term that makes reference to the influence that the media possesses due to the fact that the issues they choose as being more important tend to be perceived by society as more important as well, and this creates a situation in which politicians follow the media's agenda closely at the time of creating their own discourse. The metaphorical name of Agenda Setting "comes from the notion that the mass media are able to transfer the relevance of a news item in their agenda to that of society's agenda". (McCombs and Bell, 1996: 17). Seymour-Ure (1974) added that the press tends to emphasize controversy and promotes confrontation among the candidates.

In order to choose "campaign themes", the key is to "produce campaign messages based on certain topics of which citizens are more inclined to be in favour, given the predispositions and attitudes existing in polls and surveys" (García Beaudoux, D'Adamo and Slavinsky, 2005: 77). In addition to making these issues "campaign themes", the messages transmitted will also be more effective.

In electoral campaigns, Dearing and Rogers (1996: 72) pointed out that what works is that "the political agenda represents the master key of all others because it generates new issues that influence both the media and the public agenda". Thus, the speeches and political actions of the candidates are likely to appear in the news and reach a large number of people through the mass media.

At the first level of the agenda, the content emphasized by the media is taken into account, but there is a second level that includes the study of the most subjective, or qualifying, elements. In other words, as McCombs and Bell (1996) explain, this second level takes into account the 'framing', which also includes emotional responses.

"Framing" puts special emphasis on the approach that journalists take regarding the news, the point of view, and the interpretation with which the facts are presented. According to Etman (1993: 52), "focusing is selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them stand out in such a way as to promote a certain definition of the problem, an interpretation of the cause, a moral evaluation, and a recommendation for a solution".

Journalists transmit the news with a certain point of view, select some aspects of reality, and make them stand out above the rest. One of the most studied 'frames' has been the "War on Terror" promoted by the White House. As explained by Reese and Lewis (2009), "in the beginning the White House obtained a consensus among Americans, the media, and political leaders. Accepting this framework, or premise, greatly facilitated public support for Bush's aggressive foreign policy in Iraq and Afghanistan".

In 1987, Iyengar and Kinder also talked about the "priming", or preparation, effect of the public with regard to certain issues of interest, and the exclusion of others. In other words, the press, TV and radio have the ability to prepare citizens to respond in a particular way to a specific political discourse. When a citizen has to exercise a value judgment on a can-

didate or politician, they take advantage of everything they know about the candidate, or use whatever is stored in their memories or that they have on hand, which according to these researchers is what they receive through the media. The segment of the population in which the ‘priming’ effect occurs most frequently is the part with lower education levels. They also consider that voters who confront the information distributed by the media with their own firm standpoint are less vulnerable to the “priming” effect.

In the race for the White House, the problem of ISIS erupted onto the scene and the candidates were forced to include it as an essential part of the campaign and to write speeches and give proposals regarding the issue.

4. Foreign Policy and Terrorism: ISIS

George W. Bush maintained a specific, planned strategy known as the “War on Terror”, a concept that served to justify the invasion of Iraq in 2003, led to the acceptance of rigid and authoritarian policies, and fed on prejudices and intolerance towards Muslims (Lifton, 2003).

In addition, in situations of conflict such as those in Iraq or the Middle East, some politicians give speeches in which they incite hatred or discrimination, and when these are reproduced by the media, they can have consequences. The fact that these texts can be accepted, allowed and reproduced must be understood within what Alcácer (2015: 48) believes to be the “American Model”, which “in the cultural and political tradition of liberalism opts for tolerance toward the intolerant, assuming that State neutrality with regard to different opinions is essential in a democracy”.

Welch reported in 2006 on the campaign by the US government and the media to defame Islam and treat all Muslims with suspicion. The tragic effects of that form of labelling were expanded and reinforced.

According to the academician Tovar (2014), in the last one hundred years there have been two paradigms that have marked the essence of American Administration in terms of foreign policy: Wilsonian Liberal Idealism, and Political Realism. However, US foreign policy has changed in the last fifteen years as a result of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The Bush Administration (January 2001 - January 2009), changed American discourse on foreign policy. When Bush took office as president, he did so accompanied by the second generation of neoconservatives with the idea that the best way to preserve the supremacy of the United States at the global level was through force. For Busso (2002), after September 11, 2001, an administration that initially focused on internal politics ended.

The 2002 US National Security Strategy set out the key points on which the country’s foreign policy would be based; this document is known as the “Bush Doctrine”. These decisions on foreign policy, especially those related to Afghanistan and Iraq, were some of the root causes that led the United States, as explained by Valdes-Ugalde and Duarte (2013), into economic and political chaos that Obama inherited.

"I have come to seek a new relationship between the United States and the Muslims of the world". With this statement on June 4, 2009 at the University of Cairo, Obama announced a new change in US foreign policy. The Secretary of State at the time, and later White House candidate Hillary Clinton, defended in 2009 the exercise of "intelligent power", which meant the prudent use of the country's economic and military resources, its innovative ability, and the credibility of Obama and his team.

During his second term, Obama had to deal with international events such as the emergence of the self-proclaimed Islamic State, the conflict with Iran, the crisis in Ukraine, and the Ebola virus epidemic in Africa, which generated global uncertainty by testing the leadership of the United States.

In his last year, with the campaign for new elections in progress, the main problem that the Obama Administration had to deal with was the growing presence of the Islamic State, its terrorist attacks, and the possible consequences both in American territory as well as internationally. This is something that the new president of the United States government will have to face.

The resurgence of Islamic radicals with a major role in international affairs since the last decade of the twentieth century, according to Kepel (2000), has determined the formation of a new international geopolitical context. Joining this group later would be the armed group of terrorists who defend expansion at the global level, known as ISIS.

In March 2015, in his article entitled "Why counterterrorism will not end the latest terrorist threat", published by Foreign Affairs, Cronin warned that "ISIS is not Al Qaeda. It is not a part of the movement. ISIS is its successor and represents the post-al Qaeda jihadist threat (which remains a danger in North Africa and Yemen)". He also criticized Washington for being very slow in adapting its policies in Iraq and Syria and in detecting the real threat of ISIS. This delay occurred because the strategy of the terrorist attacks that led the United States to these countries was focused on Al Qaeda and its allies, and this has benefitted ISIS.

On December 21st, 2015, the New York Post published an interview with Obama in which he blamed the media for giving publicity to ISIS and for the fear that had arisen among citizens after the terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino. "If you've been watching television for the past month, you've all heard of those masked boys carrying black flags who are potentially coming for us," said the president. He then added, "Look, the media are chasing profits. It's fair to see this story as a new report. I think it's up to the media to decide how they want to cover things" (Hirschfeld, 2015).

5. Methodology

Taking into account the object of study, which are the speeches regarding ISIS of presidential candidates Trump and Clinton in the United States, we have chosen a methodology of qualitative, longitudinal analysis based on discourse analysis.

As Van Dijk (1999: 66) points out, “discourse analysis provides more detailed knowledge regarding the discursive process of the discussion agenda, as well as the relations between politics, the media and public opinion”.

Van Dijk (1999: 9) distinguishes the different ways in which the analysis of political discourse has been approached, from the viewpoint of linguists (Chilton, 1985, 1988, Wilson, 1990, Wodak & Menz, 1990), to the rhetoric and communication of politics (Bitzer, 1981; Chaffee, 1975; Graber, 1981; Swanson & Nimmo, 1990). However, in his opinion, “only a few of these approaches have recently focused on the analytical mode of discourse” (Gamson, 1992; Thompson, 1987c (Van Dijk 1999: 9), on the critical analysis of discourse that also considers context and ideology, as pointed out by several authors (Van Dijk, 2002, Wodak, 2003, Labardo Gil, 2012, Pardo Abril, 2013).

The process of discourse analysis would follow these steps, according to Rodrigo-Mendizábal (1999: 103); “The first part of the analysis is mostly descriptive. From the descriptive, we go to the part that is connotative, or in other words, to the meaning of what is expressed. These two pillars help us locate the discourse context, and from there we find the actual discursive dimension of the object analysed”.

The proposed analysis is a comparison of the discursive representation of each candidate through their reflection in the media agenda, focusing attention on two aspects: the rhetorical approach, with the discursive strategies of the candidates in their statements; and the linguistic approach, with the language used to refer to ISIS, not forgetting the context of discourse and ideology.

In addition, before beginning the analysis, and with the help of the application known as Textalyser, which is an application that creates clouds of words and gathers those that are repeated more frequently from highest to lowest number of repetitions, clouds were created for each news item as a first approach to the issues, and the same was done for words that predominated each of the speeches published by the media.

- Rhetorical approach: discursive strategies

In this category, it will be determined whether the speeches are based on sound arguments, are appellative, promote fear, or have predominantly populist characteristics.

Authors such as Denton and Woodward (1998: 5) consider that “political language can serve the following purposes: to argue and persuade, establish mechanisms of identification and reinforcement, provide dramatization to the speech, or create labels”. Still to be studied is whether the candidates developed the following strategies:

- Provocation: to capture listeners’ attention.
- Appeal: to involve the listener in the system of values that the candidate defends.
- Intimidation: to dissuade the listener from a different opinion. Speech of fear.
- Arguments presented soundly.

On the other hand, in order to detect whether the discourses have populist hints, following the definition given by Labor-da (2012), the following points will be analysed:

- An enemy is identified
- An appeal is made to the people of a country opposed to that enemy.
- A leader arises from the lower ranks of society who possesses great qualities that legitimize him as the best leader of the county and the only one who can save it.

- Linguistic approach: language

The philologist Victor Klemperer (2014) emphasizes the importance of words in political discourse and warns that “Words can act as tiny doses of arsenic: one can swallow them without realizing it, they seem to have no consequences, and after a time they produce a toxic effect” (Klemperer, 2014: 31).

Thus, this section will take into account the terms used and the relationship between them:

- Which words are repeated most frequently by candidates.
- Whether or not ISIS is identified with certain issues, such as terrorism.
- Reference to sub-issues: refugees, war, Syria, the American Muslim community.

The timeframe of this research regarding the speeches and discourses on ISIS collected by North American digital media (periodicals and television network websites) was from November 2015 to February 2016. This is a period of more than three months, and it was chosen due to the fact that the attacks in Paris (November 13, 2015) and San Bernardino (December 2, 2015), had a strong impact on American public opinion regarding the terrorist threat, according to Gallup polls, and became the main foreign policy issue of the campaign.

As for the sample, after a first phase of research on all material published during the timeframe on the subject, with a total of more than 60 publications, the final sample was reduced to 20 speeches, which were the most important with regard to the issue of ISIS: 10 were made by Donald Trump and 10 by Hillary Clinton. It is a theoretical sample consistent with, as pointed out by Stubbs (1987: 224), “deliberately and explicitly choosing a sample that can provide us with special data about what we are interested in studying. It involves the search for people and situations [or stories already known] that may be especially relevant”. The news stories taken into account were those that achieved greater reach close to the dates of the events that would have generated greater debate regarding the object of study, and that showed longitudinal diversity of the period analysed.

The following is a list of the media sources and emission dates of the information used.

Table 1. Publications analysed ²

DONALD TRUMP	HILLARY CLINTON
THE NEW YORK TIMES 16/11/15	CNN 4/11/15
THE HILL ² 19/11/15	CNN 15/11/15
CNBC 25/11/15	CBS 17/11/15
CNN 3/12/15	CBS 19/11/15
CNN 8/12/15	CBS 3/12/15
CNN 13/12/15	ABC NEWS 6/12/15
CNN 3/1/15	NBC NEWS 15/12/15
NBC NEWS 9/1/2016	ABC 19/12/15
THE HILL 08/2/16	CBN 30/12/15
THE WASHINGTON POST 17/2/16	BUSSINESS INSIDER 26/1/16

Source: created by the author

The media that were analysed included mainly television network websites, especially those that gave greater coverage to the presidential campaign, as well as two specialized media, and the two most influential newspapers in The United States. Care was also taken to ensure that the sample contained ideological diversity (see Annex 1).

6. Research results

6.1. Analysis of Donald Trump's speech on ISIS

Three days after the Paris attacks (November 13th, 2015), in an article entitled “Donald Trump Repeats Call to Inspect Mosques for Signs of Terrorism”, The New York Times reported the candidate's call to “inspect and close mosques”, because according to the Republican candidate, “some of the ideas of terrorists and hatred come from those places”.

² The Hill is a newspaper specializing in political information, congressional activity, and election campaigns.

As part of the solution to end this danger, Trump has proposed a return to the use of torture techniques (banned by Obama in 2009), one of which is waterboarding³. "If it doesn't work, they deserve it anyway". The most recurring words on this occasion are: torture, CIA, waterboarding, interrogation, techniques, terrorists, and the United States. He offers himself as the candidate who can deal with this formidable enemy and asks the people to "believe" in him by appealing to their faith in him, using religious terminology.

In short, all of Trump's speeches follow the same type of strategy. He appeals throughout his speeches to the feelings of American citizens and tries to intimidate the audience by spreading fear and talking about possible threats. He creates concern and alarm by saying that there are already terrorists in the country who are preparing themselves in their mosques. He uses Islamophobic speech, which he extends widely to include Muslims in general, as well as those arriving as refugees. He proposes a hard-hitting policy in which he speaks of returning to torture techniques, or the closing of borders.

Once he has his audience convinced that something bad is going to happen, he nominates himself as the only leader capable of stopping it. To achieve this end, he discredits his opponents with whatever is necessary, including the accusation that there is a connection between Democrats and the ISIS terrorist group. He uses a populist tone in his speeches, in which there is always an "us" and a "them". He uses the painful past, and evokes tragic memories like 9-11 to appeal to listeners' feelings, or uses phrases like "the old days when America was great".

Through the use of rhetorical questions, Trump's language not only relates ISIS to violence and danger, but it includes all Syrian refugees and followers of Islam within the enemy group ISIS, both foreigners as well as members of the American Muslim community. In addition, the Republican candidate uses religious terms, makes an appeal to "believe in him", and speaks of "hell". He attributes divine qualities to himself, such as "being able to predict terrorism", and presents himself as the saviour of America.

The following table lists frequent subtopics that appear in his speeches:

Table 2. Subtopics in Trump's speeches regarding ISIS

SUBTOPICS
SYRIAN REFUGEES
FAMILIES OF TERRORISTS
9-11
OBAMA
TORTURE
WATERBOARDING
SAN BERNARDINO

Source: created by the author

³ This technique consists of suffocating the respondent by placing a plastic bag over his head, if performed using the dry method. If not, it consists of putting the head of the aforementioned in a tank of salt water, urine or other substance or substances.

Table 3. Subtopics in Clinton's speeches regarding ISIS

SUBTOPICS
CLIMATE CHANGE
SYRIAN REFUGEES
PARIS
SAN BERNARDINO
RUSSIA
ISLAMOPHOBIA
GENOCIDE

Source: created by the author

Although less repetitive than Trump's speeches, Clinton's statements were also populist in their presentation of leadership as the only way out of the US situation.

7. Conclusions

The last presidential campaign in the United States was yet another example of how politicians and the media system feed each other's agendas. Two factors influenced politicians to increase the number of speeches in their agendas related to the topic of terrorism; one factor was the dissemination of images and news related to ISIS by the media as a result of events such as the Paris and San Bernardino attacks, and the other was the result of polls such as those of Gallup that placed terrorism as the most important issue for Americans. Although there were other foreign policy issues that entered the political arena in debates between Republicans and Democrats, such as Mexican immigration or Iran, ISIS and its related issues were some of the most important topics of the campaign.

Unlike 9-11, in which the *framing* of the "war against terror" obtained high consensus among the discourse of both the media and politicians, the *framing* of the war against ISIS terrorism in this campaign did not reach the same consensus, as has been seen in the case of some media sources that were analysed and have been found to have questioned the proposals of Trump.

In their speeches, Republicans and Democrats both portrayed an image of the "other", the threat of ISIS, and how to fight it in a very different way. The provocative and intimidating tone of Trump contrasted with Clinton's discourse based on sound arguments, even though at times she raised the flag of populism as well. The words and rhetoric of the candidates influenced the context in which the campaign developed.

Trump's speeches were rarely exempt from conflict and controversy, and this situation, added to the immediacy of the moment, provided journalists with the right ingredients for news stories in the sense of what has been pointed out by Seymour-Ure (1974) or Canel (2006). The Republican candidate gained more media attention than all the other candidates with his incendiary statements, such as the accusation that Obama and Clinton created ISIS.

The populist hints of his discourse against ISIS, which coincided with the characteristics pointed out by Laclau (1977), Patriau (2012), and Laborda (2012), consisted not only of identifying an enemy and appealing to the American people to face that enemy, but also in presenting himself as a leader with almost divine qualities, the only one capable of acting as saviour of the nation.

Trump did not have a clear plan to combat ISIS, and he continually played on peoples' fear in his speeches. He even resorted to intimidating his opponent, and he also systematically created Islamophobic labels, referring to "them", ISIS, as the enemy, but letting it be understood in a discriminatory way as a comment directed at the entire Muslim community, which has no connection with the terrorist group, yet by comparison, he referred to "we" as the American nation.

At the same time, Hillary Clinton attempted in most of her speeches to give arguments for her proposals with a more conciliatory and respectful tone, but at times she used the populist formula to present herself as the only saviour of America as well. Clinton's plan against ISIS sought to convey a sense of security among citizens.

The results of these presidential elections have demonstrated that the so-called *priming* effect (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987) was successful –an effect that has the greatest impact on citizens with lower levels of education– and this effect consists of evaluating a politician according to the information citizens receive about him or her through the media. Trump's overexposure and appearance in the media with increasingly radical discourses undoubtedly contributed to this effect.

8. Bibliographic references

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Annex 1. Links to the articles analysed in chronological order

TRUMP

http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2015/11/16/donald-trump-repeats-call-to-inspect-mosques-for-signs-of-terrorism/?_r=0

<http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/gop-primaries/donald-trump-american-muslim-database-special-id-absolutely>

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/25/donald-trump-says-he-can-predict-terrorism-i-can-feel-it.html>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/02/politics/donald-trump-terrorists-families/>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/08/politics/donald-trump-ban-muslims/>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/13/politics/donald-trump-muslim-ban-state-of-the-union/>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/02/politics/donald-trump-barack-obama-hillary-clinton-created-isis/>

<http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/gop-primaries/268614-trump-to-syrian-refugee-children-you-cant-come-here>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-torture-works-backs-waterboarding-and-much-worse/2016/02/17/4c9277be-d59c-11e5-b195-2e29a4e13425_story.html

CLINTON

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/04/politics/hillary-clinton-climate-change-syria-refugee-crises/>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/14/politics/hillary-clinton-democratic-debate-radical-jihadist/>

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/in-dallas-hillary-clinton-weighs-in-on-syrian-refugee-crisis/>

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/hillary-clintons-plan-for-dealing-with-isis/>

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/hillary-clinton-we-need-to-take-action-now-on-guns-after-san-bernardino-shooting/>

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/hillary-clinton-calls-san-bernardino-shooting-suspects-isis/story?id=35611247>

<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/clinton-set-roll-out-plan-stop-spread-isis-n480376>

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/hillary-clinton-trump-isis-best-recruiter/story?id=35848986>

<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/politics/2015/December/Hillary-Clinton-Its-Genocide/?Print=true>