

Political Cartoon in Ecuador:

Exploring a *chilling-effect* after the sanction against ‘Bonil’ and El Universo

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Abstract

Cartoonist Xavier Bonilla and El Universo newspaper were sanctioned in 2014 after publishing a cartoon which, according to the sanction, motivated social agitation and was inaccurate. Against a backdrop of continuous friction between Rafael Correa’s government and private media in Ecuador, the text examines if the sanction created an environment of fear or self-censorship (chilling effect) in other cartoonists in Ecuador. For the analysis, 81 cartoons from three newspapers were monitored and analyzed during the month following the February 23th elections in Ecuador, in which the results were not as favorable for the government as in several previous elections. The results the paper shows signal there is no chilling-effect influencing how cartoonists draw cartoons or how they choose what to draw. On the other hand, it evidences that El Telégrafo, tough a public newspaper, eschews publishing cartoons portraying Correa or members of the majoritarian political party in Ecuador, Alianza País.

Key words: political cartoon; chilling-effect; freedom of speech; Ecuador; newspaper.

Introduction

The entry into force of the Communications Law in Ecuador, on June the 26th, 2013, introduced an interesting but ambiguous normative framework in the country's political landscape. Ambiguous wording in several articles of the Law grants the Communications and Information Superintendence (Supercom) flexibility and discretion when interpreting the Law. Furthermore, as it is an organ which employs a rhetoric very similar to that of the government, Supercom acted as a judge and a party during the legal process against El Universo, Ecuador's biggest newspaper, and its cartoonist Xavier Bonilla 'Bonil'. On December the 28th, 2013, Bonil released a cartoon in which he portrayed a police raid on the home of a journalist and opposition deputy assistant, Fernando Villavicencio. The cartoon's caption reads: "Police and Public Ministry raid Fernando Villavicencio's home and confiscate documents related to corruption cases." After the release, Supercom declared in a report that the cartoon "delegitimizes authority and supports social agitation", as El Universo wrote. Beyond demanding the cartoonist's rectification within 72 hours, Supercom sanctions El Universo newspaper with administrative measures. The aforementioned cartoons can be found in the Annexes section of this paper.

It is disturbing to learn that the organ entitled to regulate communications in Ecuador considers Bonil's cartoon as a threat to the authority and a support for social disorder. Authors and scholars who will be mentioned and cited in this text agree on the responsibility the cartoon has: wielding a smart but amusing critique of the powerful and ensuring they are hold accountable. Some of those authors, as Villareal Morales, believe cartoons are, along being a mobilization trigger, an educational tool. Authors agree on several of the characteristics that define political cartoons: this paper defines them as an interpretation of reality through drawings and a way of criticizing. This is why, the analysis this text develops when identifying components of political cartoons in Ecuador is worth revising to understand which are their characteristics, which are the most common or popular figures portrayed in cartoons in the analyzed period of time and which are the most popular or relevant topics according to cartoonists.

Literature Review

Political cartoon: definition and characteristics

There is a common consent over the definition of 'political cartoon' in Latin America. Briceño (2005) describes it as "one of the faces of satire, this is, a way of unmasking, criticizing or attacking a person, a family, a party, a social class, an institution, a government, a situation, a

nation, an ethnic group, usually emphasizing their ridicule or negative aspects” (Briceño, 2005, p. 179). Pedrazzini (2012) reminds us that the term ‘cartoon’ – or ‘caricatura’ in Spanish – comes from the Italian *caricare*, which translates to ‘loading’, which not only serves the purpose of “giving weight or relief, squeeze or insist, exaggerate” but also it is “a weapon that is able to hurt”, whose spirit is critical and anxious about denouncing, “aiming at the disqualification of the political class and, particularly, of those ruling” (Pedrazzini, 2012, p. 27). The critique message is subtly transmitted by graphic and linguistic symbols and it could achieve a similar or wider effect than an editorial (Sanín, 2011, p. 37). Briceño states political cartoons transmit information and opinion, developing a fundamental role in the consolidation of democratic governments, expressing the realities of a society in a critical manner (Briceño, 2005, p. 181). For Briceño, cartoons “are able to discover and synthesize the positive and negative side of social structures”. That is why they reach a broader audience and, furthermore, they can be understood by different social groups (Briceño, 2005, p. 179). On the other hand, Sánchez Guevara (2012) states cartoons enjoy a “critical function towards social problems”, along with the function of “making readers laugh to mitigate, to some extent, the suffering of everyday national dramas” (Sánchez Guevara, 2012, p. 2).

Enumerating the characteristics of the political cartoon becomes a complex task when we consider the broad scholarly work written about it. However, there is common ground on which we can stand. It is particularly important to mention rhetorical figures the cartoon uses, specially the political cartoon. Sánchez Guevara states politicians themselves utilize rhetorical figures to “mask the failures of their public policies” (Sánchez Guevara, 2012, p. 6). Therefore, a certain kind of ‘revenge’ is achieved when those resources are employed by cartoonists, including parody, satire, analogies, drills or simulations, hyperboles, litotes or understatements, metaphors and metonymies (Sánchez Guevara, 2012, p. 11). In her text, Sánchez Guevara describes the strategies and context in which political cartoons parodied about the global economic crisis of 2009 and its effects in Mexico. The resources cartoonists frequently employed were litotes and hyperboles. The first one reduces the significance or relevance of objects or events, for instance, when describing the crisis as a brief or minor flu. In contrast, using hyperboles implied exaggerating something to make it relevant, as when transforming a crisis into a “Tsunami or a Category 4 Hurricane” (Sánchez Guevara, 2012, p. 4).

The importance of cartoons transcends this sphere, as they become tools to document historical events and create historical consciousness. Keane (2008) cites Spielmann, the creator of *Punch*, when emphasizing the importance of cartoons to understand history. In the words of Spielmann,

the cartoon "is not to be considered merely as a comic or satirical comment on the main occurrence or situation of the week, but as contemporary history for the use and information of future generations cast into amusing form for the entertainment of the present" (Keane, 2008, p. 849).

History is an important element in cartoons, and their influence is not at all recent. Johnson (1937) wrote during the thirties about the discovery of what is believed to be the oldest kind of cartoon, drafted around 1360 B.C. in Egypt. Since then, cartoons remained useful for those who wished to speak up their minds and they received a boost once printing was invented. The development of caricatures is explained by Villarreal Morales (2013), who locates their origin in the Middle Ages, arguing that illiterate peasants mobilized to criticize the Catholic Church (Villarreal Morales, 2013, p. 38). There were two objectives behind this tactic: to strategically mock the powerful and to indoctrinate the illiterate (Villarreal Morales, 2013, p. 38). According to Sanín (2011), caricature drawings are documented to have been exposed clandestinely. Before periodic publications were released, "until the middle of the eighteenth century", caricatures were released or displayed only at the domestic level, in intimacy. Later on, with printing, they acquired value as a potential image of public opinion (Sanín, 2011, p. 21). To the view of Johnson, Holland became rife for cartoonists during its Golden Age (seventeenth century). "Exaggerated drawings of an individual's deformities were hailed as the height of humor. The more malignantly cruel, the funnier the drawing was deemed to be" (Johnson, 1937, p. 21). Later on, already during the twentieth century, this author identified a shift in cartoons away from "personal caricature" towards a more "subtle and intellectual" type of drawing, as the individual "is rarely attacked today except as the sponsor or symbol of principles which the artist disapproves" (Johnson, 1937, p. 21).

In Ecuador, the public to which caricature magazines as "Caricatura" (1919), "La Bunga" (1966) or "El Pasquín" (1982) was small minority, and this threatened their success and survival. According to historian Carlos Freile, from Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ, their success was actually limited.

"I always paid attention to the fact that general or political humoristic magazines in Ecuador did not have a broad success. This was interesting, as I compared this case to the context of other countries. I guess this is due to the fact that the average Ecuadorian does not read much. Therefore, as these magazines did not enjoy a massive diffusion, their economic revenues were scarce, despite the fact that some of them, as "El Pasquín" or "La Bunga" were attached to newspapers. Unfortunately, these newspapers did not enjoy

a broad audience either. I consider the cartoonists working in those magazines to be excellent, but they suffered from those limitations because their readers did not actually read” (Freile, 2014).

It’s interesting to hear Freile’s opinion of whether a cartoon is art or not. In his opinion, cartoons cannot always be called art, unless their shapes and lines were extraordinary and deserved exposure. “They are basic strokes that emulate a specific moment”, as if they were frozen in time. This is similar to the opinion of Sánchez Guevara, who states that caricatures occur in a defined moment, without a past or a future. For this reason, the drawing’s efficiency when transmitting a message relies on how well informed about the represented situation the reader is (Sánchez Guevara, 2012, p. 8).

Chilling effect or self-censorship

La Marche (1991) states that “chilling effect” is a metaphor alluding to the self-censorship produced by the fear of legislation that sanctions opinion (La Marche, 1991, p. 56). According to Hurley (2009), “the fear of being sued prevents articles from getting printed and many others from even being written”, referring to the fear writers have of facing strict legal norms because of opinion or facing pressure from agents which also provoke self-censorship. The disadvantage, a writer answers to Hurley (2009), is that “real content may have been stripped off the articles which in fact were published” (Hurley, 2009, p. 1006). Legislation, as it was written, is one of the triggers of *chilling effect*; however, causes include violence from organized crime or from power groups whose interests are at stake (Salzburg Academy on Media & Global Change).

Communication’s Law

The sanction against Xavier Bonilla ‘Bonil’ has its origins in the cartoon he published on December the 28th, 2013, against the backdrop of continuous friction between private media and President Rafael Correa’s government. This friction became more evident in June 2013, when a new Communications Law was approved and entered into force, among a polarization of opinions surrounding it. The Law had been voted on favorably few days before it entered into force by Ecuador’s National Parliament –majorly composed by the President’s party, Alianza País. The last step, the President’s approval of the Law, occurred on June the 24th, as rejection was unlikely due to a majority in the Parliament favoring its approval. The 2013 Communications Law, reforming its 1975 antecessor, has ever since been heatedly debated. On the one side, the government praised its attributes, as that of guaranteeing more space on TV for national productions; punishing prior censorship established by editors and media owners; or distributing

TV and radio frequencies on a fair basis: 33% for public media, 33% for privately-owned media and 34% for community-owned media.

In this respect, Ecuadorian lawyer Xavier Flores, a political analyst, commends several components of the document. Although several principles as subsequent responsibility and respect for dignity are already enshrined in international conventions signed by Ecuador and guaranteed by its Constitution, the new Law recognizes them in its content. To this matter, he argues,

“People do not understand completely that information is a right. They think freedom of expression is saying what they want to say. But that right also implies that if one’s information is published inaccurately or without any evidences, one counts on resources to complain and confront the media” (Flores, 2013).

The fledging Communications and Information Regulation and Development Council, created in the Law’s body, is entitled to regulated universal access to communication and information, establishing mechanisms for the satisfaction of rights, regulating contents, elaborating and releasing regulations for the completion of its functions, elaborating reports to decide the conclusion or extension of TV or radio frequencies contracts, among others (Asamblea Nacional del Ecuador, 2013, p. 10). The Council, which is described by Flores as “a tiger with sharp teeth and claws which would not attack if it is not harassed”, works along the Communications and Information Superintendence (Supercom), a “technical organism” created in the Law’s body, “for the surveillance, audit, intervention and control, with punishing capacities”, which ensures the guidelines established by the Council are respected and fulfilled (Asamblea Nacional del Ecuador, 2013, p. 11). The concern private media workers and international human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Reporters Without Borders and The Committee to Protect Journalists voice is based on the fact that both organisms and their leading figures share political views with the government (Otis, 2013).

Methodology

In order to understand the topic at hand, several articles of the Communications Law and their impact on the development of public opinion in Ecuador were analyzed, taking into account widely-accepted conceptions of freedom of speech. Furthermore, cartoons in the web pages of three Ecuadorian newspapers (El Comercio, El Universo, El Telégrafo) were monitored from February the 24th to March the 24th, finally collecting and examining 81 cartoons. This period of time was crucial to investigate whether cartoonists had shifted to a more moderate or aggressive stance towards power, as it followed the sectional elections of February the 23th in the country,

commonly recognized as an “electoral defeat” by the political rivals of President Rafael Correa and remembered as “23-F”. In these elections, candidates belonging to other than today’s majoritarian political party, Alianza País, won the post of Major in several provincial capital cities, as Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca.

Three criteria were analyzed:

- **General categories**, whether it was Politics, Sport, Economics, Society, Culture, Others.
- **Topic**, classifying them according to national or international relevance.
- **Character**, analyzing them according to the frequency with which they are drawn, classifying them into ‘national’ or ‘international’. The category ‘Others’ corresponds to those cartoons which did not include known characters. The category ‘Objects’ corresponds to those cartoons showing objects.

Finally, a brief analysis of two cartoons was developed, in order to evidence the two moments of cartooning in Ecuador, before the elections and after them: Bonil’s cartoons published on December the 30th, 2013, and March the 17th, 2014; and El Comercio’s Pancho Cajas’ cartoons published on May the 2nd, 2012, and March the 19th, 2014.

Analysis

In his column in the Opinion pages of El Universo newspaper, Bonil’s caricature represented the Police and Public Ministry’ raid on the home of journalist and opposition deputy assistant Fernando Villavicencio. Villavicencio faced accusations of having hacked the email addresses of President Rafael Correa, vice President Jorge Glas and the Presidency’s judicial secretary Alexis Mera, and is known for having a strong opposition discourse towards Correa’s government. The cartoon’s caption read: “Police and Public Ministry raid Fernando Villacencio’s home and confiscate documents related to corruption cases” (El Comercio, 2014). On January the 31st, Supercom sanctioned ‘Bonil’ and El Universo newspaper. The former was obliged to rectify his cartoon within 72 hours and the later was fined with the 2% of its average billing amount of the last three months (Teleamazonas, 2014). According to El Universo, the newspaper was sanctioned as it did not abstain from adopting an institutional position on the innocence or guilt of the accused, Xavier Bonilla (Teleamazonas, 2014). This aspect is justified by Article 25 of the Communications Law, which states that “communications media shall abstain from taking an institutional position on the innocence or guilt of people involved in legal investigations or judicial criminal processes until a sentence is established by a judge” (Asamblea Nacional del

Ecuador, 2013, p. 6). This clause and its implications have the capacity of hindering investigative journalism.

Against this backdrop, Bonil's defense became challenging. His lawyer, Ramiro García Falconí, assured that the caricature of December the 28th was based on information obtained from several sources as the newspapers *El Comercio*, *La Hora*, *El Telégrafo* and *El Nacional* in the previous days (Superintendencia de la Información y Comunicación, 2014, p. 3). Nevertheless, the Resolution Supercom issued to inform about the sanction states that the documents presented by Bonil and his defense do not include information "affirming that the Police or the district attorney's office took "documents related to corruption cases"". The Resolution states that this affirmation is only based on declarations made by Fernando Villavicencio in respect to the raid. The Resolution mentions a newspaper article where Villavicencio's complaint, what he assures are, in his words, "corruption cases", are written by the newspaper as "alleged corruption cases", as there are no evidences about it (Superintendencia de la Información y Comunicación, 2014, p. 3). Once again, investigating if this case is, in fact, denouncing corruption cases would not be possible considering Article 25 of the Communications Law, banning media from "taking an institutional position on the innocence or guilt of people involved in legal investigations or judicial criminal processes until a sentence is established by a judge".

Additionally, the sanction was further justified when Carlos Ochoa, the director of Supercom, cited Article 10 of the Communications Law, regarding deontological norms and the practices of communications media, which states that "responsibility over published opinions and information should be borne by the media" (*El Telégrafo*, 2014). This article adds that newspapers bear responsibility over the opinions included in their pages, as they participate in the "communicational process" where those are created. Along with this article, Article 20 obliges media to expressly assume responsibility for the contents published in their pages or attribute them to the author in order to eschew sanctions "in the administrative, civil and criminal" scopes (Asamblea Nacional del Ecuador, 2013, p. 5). However, in the case we analyze, Bonil enjoys a space in the Opinion pages of *El Universo* newspaper where his caricatures are clearly attributed to his pseudonym. Therefore, his case should not be included in this framework, although it is.

If we analyze this statement from the perspective of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we will find that Article 29 enables the Law to limit this right and freedom "solely for the purpose of securing due recognition for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare of a democratic society" (UN General Assembly, 1948), although Article 19, expressing the most widely-accepted conception

of freedom of speech and opinion, grants everyone the “right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers (UN General Assembly, 1948)

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has, as well, repeatedly expressed the necessity for increasing tolerance to opinion, as it reinforces democratic values within a society. “The democratic control exercised through public opinion encourages the transparency of State actions and promotes the responsibility of public officials in the performance of their duties. Hence, the greater tolerance to the statements and opinions expressed by individuals in the exercise of such democratic power. [...] These are the requirements of the pluralism inherent in a democratic society, which requires the greatest possible flow of information and opinions on issues of public interest”. (Case of Kimel v. Argentina, 2008)

Cartoon analysis

It must be stated that there were very few occasions in which the newspaper did not publish a cartoon in its web page or in which it published more than one cartoon at the same day. El Telégrafo did not publish any cartoon on March the 9th and 12th, 2014. El Comercio did not publish any cartoon on March the 3rd, 13th and 17th. Nevertheless, it classified two cartoons on the same day, on March the 1st and the 5th. It must be also stated that there are two cartoonists in El Telégrafo (for the period which we analyze): Clavin and Alfons López. On the other hand, there are three working in El Comercio: Roque, Asdrúbal and Pancho Cajas. In El Universo, there is only one cartoonist: Bonil.

- *General categories*

In **Table 1** and **Graphic 1**, a highly political content is evidenced in cartoons. The definition of whether the content refers to Politics can be based on the analysis of **Illustration 1**, in which the message and debate are not only centered on the extraction of oil in the Yasuní National Park, but also to the campaign of collection of signatures of the general public to ask if the oil should be kept underground, an effort undertaken by the environmentalist group Yasunidos. The cartoonist was aware that a second and different kind of questionnaire, produced during the collection of signatures and deemed as “fake” by Yasunidos, would divide or curtail the process (Ecuador Inmediato, 2014). Therefore, he represented the probable outcomes of choosing either one of the questionnaires, in **Illustration 1**. In **Table 1** and **Graphic 1**, the topic category ‘Undefined’ refers to topics which did not fit in any of the offered categories, including as a

reason the little amount of information this author possessed at the moment when the drawing was analyzed.

- *Topic*

Table 2 and **Graphic 2** show the topic each caricature developed. As the monitoring process followed the sectional elections in Ecuador on February the 23th (where Majors, Heads of Province and others were elected), a significant number of cartoons were related. El Comercio and El Universo, sharing an opposition stance towards the government, focused on Alianza País' "electoral defeat". On the other hand, El Telégrafo, a public newspaper, approached the results in a more general way or focusing, for example, in the low participation of traditional political parties, as in **Illustration 2** and **Illustration 3**. Additionally, there were cases in which two topics were included in the same cartoon in several occasions. In El Comercio, the outcome of the elections and Correa's constitutional reform to get reelected as President in 2017 is an example, as shown in **Illustration 5**.

It is remarkable to see how newspapers focused their attention on different topics, as following a political line. El Telégrafo focused more frequently in the civil conflict in Ukraine and the referendum of March 2014 in Crimea. Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, was represented in the cartoon celebrating an electoral victory obtained "with no weapons or pressure", as shown in **Illustration 4**. On the other hand, El Comercio focused more frequently on the 23-F elections, as in the constitutional reform for the reelection of Correa and on a normative which obliges workers to acquire the State's social security programs (although it was called 'voluntary'). El Universo approached similar topics although it included a wider variety than El Comercio. Its most frequently topic was, again, the 23-F elections, the constitutional reform for the reelection of Correa and the government's voluntary-obligatory social security program. Topics considered as 'Undefined' were those whose event or reference was not clear or which did not reflect common knowledge.

- *Character*

The section where the analysis of characters takes place include **Table 3** and **Graphic 3**. It is curious that El Telégrafo, for instance, did not cartoon Rafael Correa or any member of his party, Alianza País. This newspaper focused more frequently, instead, on characters which have been criticized by President Correa or which are portrayed as rivals, as United States' Secretary of State John Kerry. As well, characters which are seen with a positive lens, as President Vladimir Putin during the referendum in Crimea, were also portrayed. On the other hand, El Universo

included the President in five cartoons and *El Comercio* included him in nine. It must be taken into account, as well, those cartoons where Correa or any members of *Alianza País* shares space with other characters. The number, naturally, increases. **Table 3** and **Graphic 3** include the category ‘Others’, which refers to unknown or common citizens. The section ‘Objects’ did not portray any human beings but just objects.

Analysis of single cartoons

To demonstrate that the critical tone of political cartoons in Ecuador did not decrease after the sanction against Xavier Bonilla ‘Bonil’, I chose two cartoons from the most critical newspapers we have analyzed in this text, *El Comercio* and *El Universo*. The cartoons correspond to May 2012 and March 2014 for *El Comercio*; and December 2013 and March 2014 for *El Universo*.

- *El Universo*

One can interpret the hats on Correa’s head in **Illustration 7**, corresponding to December 2013, as the ostentation of the President’s accumulated power and prestige, exhibiting academic achievements in reference to honorary degrees he received in 2013, but also wielding police authority. The camera he holds alludes to the recording before and after the raid of Fernando Villavicencio’s home, to which Correa pronounced “We have everything on film”. Another reference to this is found in **Illustration 6**. This illustration is compared to **Illustration 8**, which portrays President Correa as a wolf trying to persuade Little Red Riding Hood about his honesty. This cartoon is drawn on reference to the promises Correa had repeatedly made of not becoming a candidate for the presidential elections of 2017, contrasting them with his alleged intentions of reforming the Constitution and running for president again. Bonil draws green and blue clothes on Correa, in reference to *Alianza País*’ colors. In the dialogue Correa develops, he states: “Yes... I recognize having committed some mistakes. I spoke badly of your grandmother; I roared at everyone; I cheated on you with several things... But I swear I will not cheat on you so much again...” Bonil confirms in this way his critical position towards Correa when he infers that the possibility of a shift in Correa’s plans or attitudes exists.

- *El Comercio*

The chosen cartoons for the analysis were drawn by Pancho Cajas and portray Correa in two distinct moments: his critique against private media in Ecuador and his pondering upon presidential reelection in 2017. In the first cartoon, corresponding to **Illustration 9** of May the 2th 2012, one day before the remembrance of World Press Freedom Day, Correa is about to

shoot a canon full of garbage, wearing a hat blinding his eyes, made out of a newspaper that reads “Free Press”. At that moment, the struggle between private media and Correa escalated, and the day when this cartoon was published, US President Barack Obama pronounced a speech urging President Correa to guarantee freedom of the press in Ecuador (El Universo, 2012). In **Illustration 10**, Pancho Cajas draws Correa sitting in a royal chair, pondering upon getting reelected while discussing with an assistant. This topic was utilized by cartoonists to evidence shifts in Correa’s plans and attitudes, something that was skillfully portrayed by Bonil in **Illustration 8**.

Conclusion

By observing the work of El Telégrafo when cartooning characters or public figures, it is interesting to see that there is a clear political line, which is evidenced when no members of Alianza País are portrayed during the analyzed period of time. Moreover, by focusing more strictly to opposition public figures, countries or institutions which do not follow the line of the Ecuadorian government, the aforementioned conclusion can be confirmed. To be more specific, the focus on Guayaquil’s major Jaime Nebot (considered by Correa as an opposition leader), institutions as the International Monetary Fund or governments as that of the United States or those of the European Union are examples of this tendency.

On the other hand, El Universo and El Comercio have focused on topics which are commonly treated by most of the private media in Ecuador. For instance, the tone with which both newspapers treat the exploitation of the Yasuní National Park does not focus on the urgency of developing extractive operations there but mainly on the possible impact on nature the operations would have. While El Telégrafo did not portray President Correa pondering upon reelection in a single cartoon, El Comercio and El Universo utilized repeatedly this issue, making Correa the most popular character of their cartoons. With these evidences it is shown how both sides differ and represent today’s political and opinion polarization in Ecuador.

Following the definitions of *chilling effect* revised in this text, we conclude with two ideas. Firstly, those newspapers more prone to suffer from *chilling effect* would be El Universo and El Comercio, because of their critical tone and discourse towards the Government. Secondly, however, it is recognized that political cartoons did not experience *chilling effect* after the sanction against Bonil. To prove this conclusion, it is useful to revise the results of this brief study in regards to which was the most popular topic in each newspaper. For El Comercio, the humorous critique focused on the 23-F elections, Correa’s reelection and the State’s obligatory-voluntary social security

system. El Universo's major pronouncements approached the same topics, announcing, along with El Comercio, their direct critique to the Rafael Correa's government.

Finally, it must be recognized that the main limitation of this research paper lies on the brief period of analysis: February the 24th and March the 24th. It represents, nevertheless, a remarkable opportunity to examine the contents newspapers choose based on 81 cartoons. However, developing a wider and more exhaustive research, including more analysis criteria, is highly recommended.

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Interviews

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Appendices

Tables and graphics

Table 1			
General Categories	El Telégrafo	El Comercio	El Universo
Politics	21	24	23
Sport			
Economics	1		
Política – Sport	1		
Política - Economics	1		
Society	2	1	2
Culture			1
Others			2
Undefined		1	1

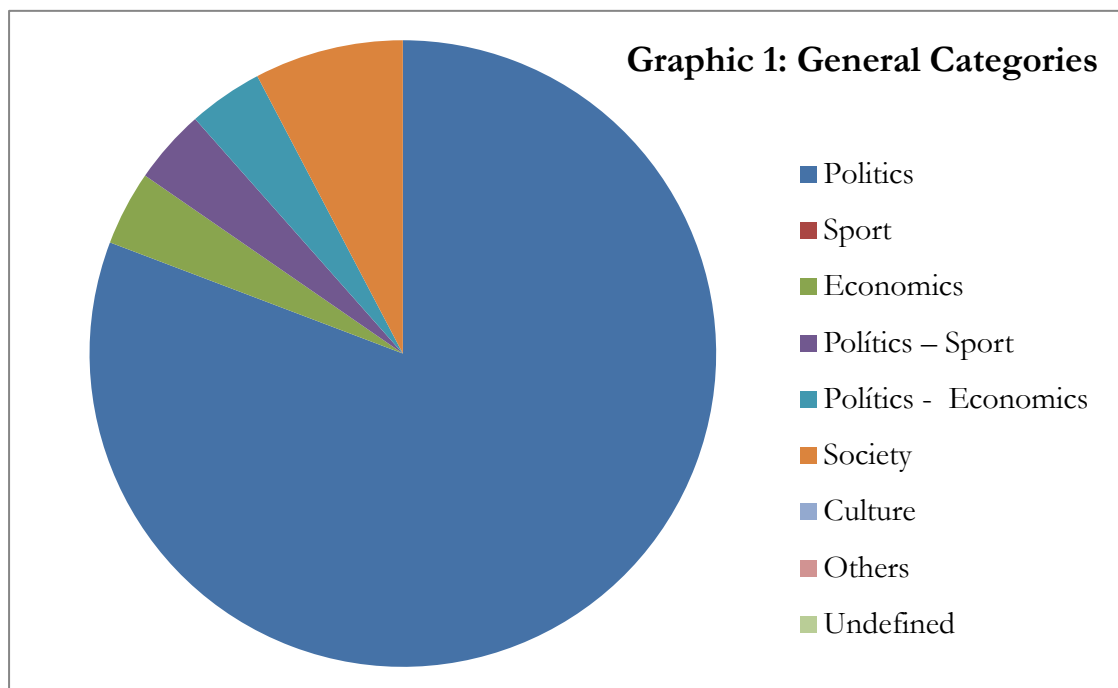
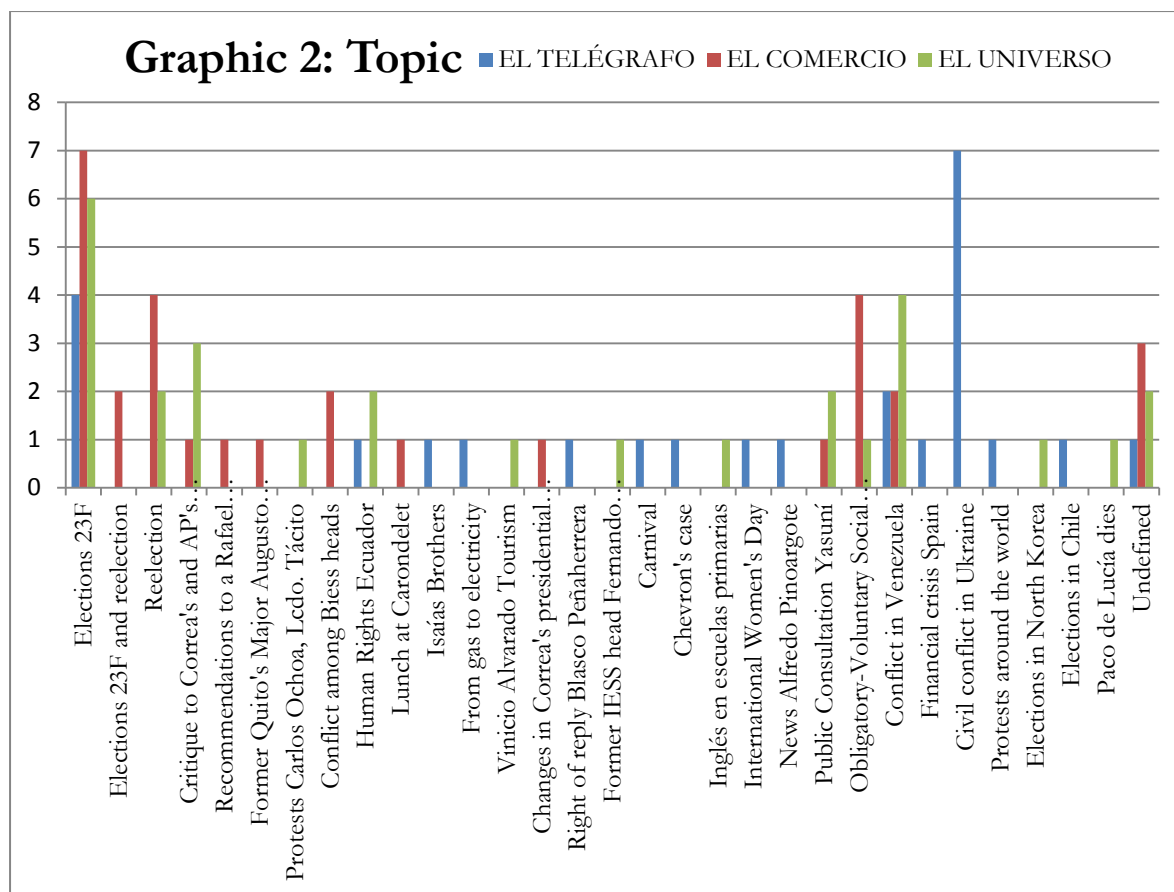
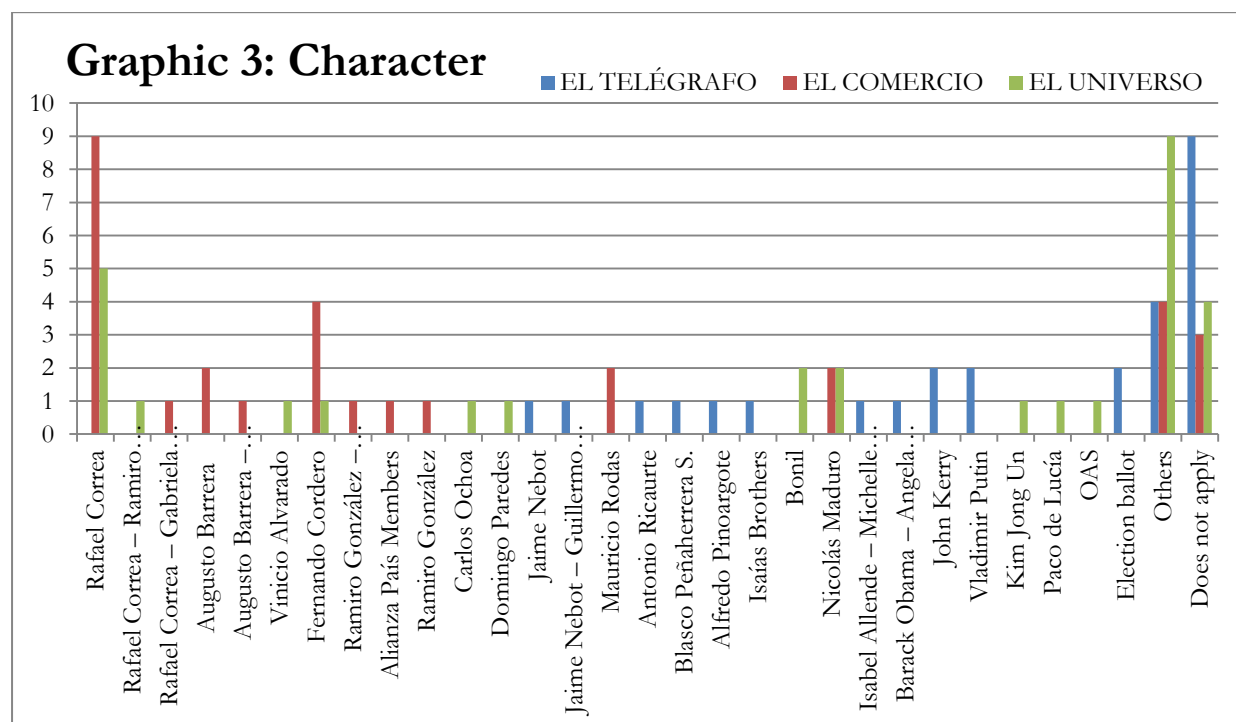


Table 2			
Topic	El Telégrafo	El Comercio	El Universo
Elections 23F	4	7	6
Elections 23F and reelection		2	
Reelection		4	2
Critique to Correa's and AP's government		1	3
Recommendations to a Rafael Correa		1	
Former Quito's Major A. Barrera management		1	
Protests Carlos Ochoa, Lcdo. Tácito			1
Conflict among Biess heads		2	
Human Rights Ecuador	1		2
Lunch at Carondelet		1	
Isaías Brothers	1		
From gas to electricity	1		
Vinicio Alvarado Tourism			1
Changes in Correa's presidential team		1	
Right of reply Blasco Peñaherrera	1		
Former IESS head Fernando Cordero resigns			1
Carnival	1		
Chevron's case	1		
Inglés en escuelas primarias			1
International Women's Day	1		
News Alfredo Pinoargote	1		
Public Consultation Yasuní		1	2
Obligatory-Voluntary Social Security IESS		4	1
Conflict in Venezuela	2	2	4
Financial crisis Spain	1		
Civil conflict in Ukraine	7		
Protests around the world	1		
Elections in North Korea			1
Elections in Chile	1		
Paco de Lucía dies			1
Undefined	1	3	2



CHARACTER	EL TELÉGRAFO	EL COMERCIO	EL UNIVERSO
Rafael Correa		9	5
Rafael Correa – Ramiro González			1
Rafael Correa – Gabriela Ribadeneira		1	
Augusto Barrera		2	
Augusto Barrera – Mauricio Rodas		1	
Vinicio Alvarado			1
Fernando Cordero		4	1
Ramiro González – Fernando Cordero		1	
Alianza País Members		1	
Ramiro González		1	
Carlos Ochoa			1
Domingo Paredes			1

Jaime Nebot	1		
Jaime Nebot – Guillermo Lasso	1		
Mauricio Rodas		2	
Antonio Ricaurte	1		
Blasco Peñaherrera S.	1		
Alfredo Pinoargote	1		
Isaías Brothers	1		
Bonil			2
Nicolás Maduro		2	2
Isabel Allende – Michelle Bachelet	1		
Barack Obama – Angela Merkel	1		
John Kerry	2		
Vladimir Putin	2		
Kim Jong Un			1
Paco de Lucía			1
OAS			1
Election ballot	2		
Others	4	4	9
Does not apply	9	3	4



Illustrations

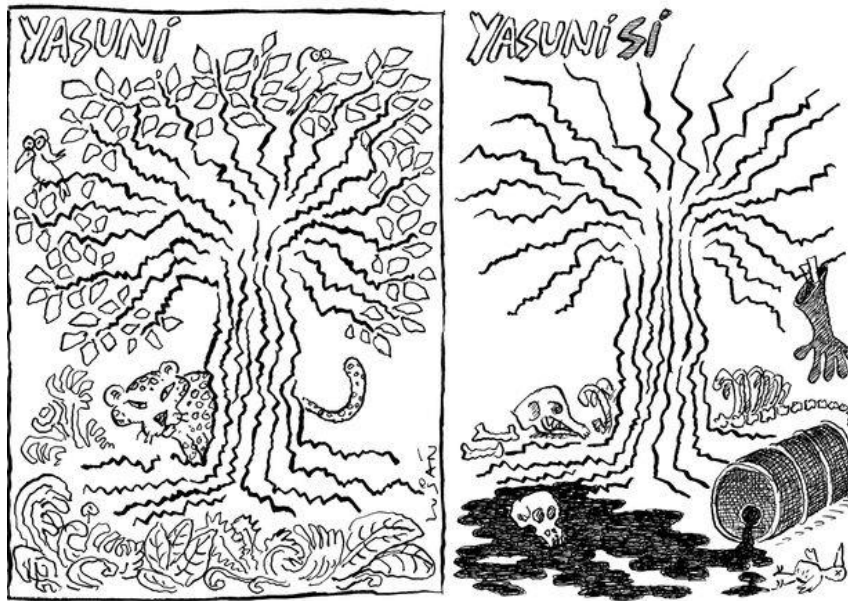


Illustration 1. Cartoon which alludes to both of the questionnaires presented to the citizenry. The group Yasunidos denounced that the second one, “YASUNÍ SÍ” (right of the picture) was fake. Source. El Comercio, March 15, 2014.



Illustration 1. This elections ballot argues: “In these elections democracy won...” Source. El Telégrafo, February 24, 2014.

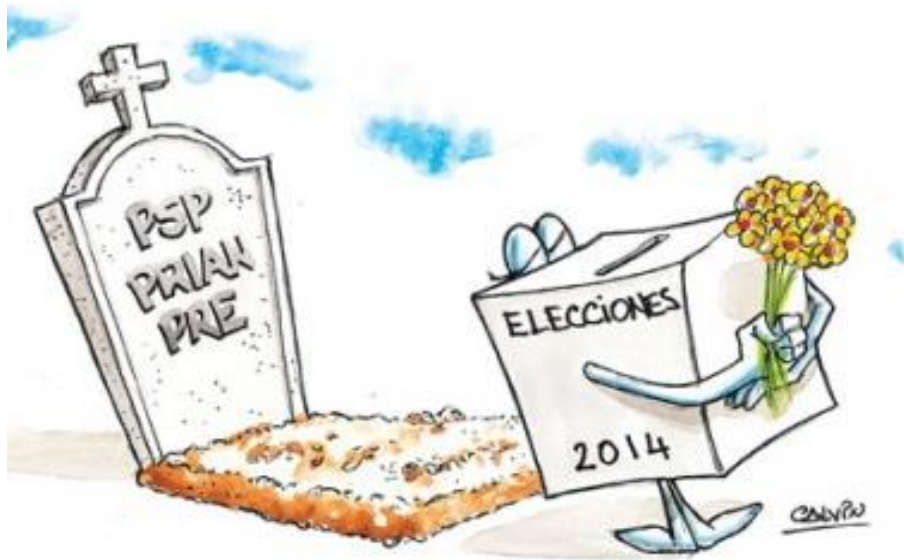


Illustration 2. Partido Sociedad Patriótica (PSP), Partido Renovador Institucional Acción Nacional (PRIAN) and Partido Roldosista Ecuatoriano (PRE) were all traditional political parties. Source. El Telégrafo, February 26, 2014.



Illustration 3. Vladimir Putin says: *¡“Welcome to the first “Intervention” realized by referéndum...! And without any bullets or victims...”* Source. El Telégrafo, February 24, 2014.



Illustration 4. Gabriela Rivadeneira, President of the Ecuador’s National Parliament, states: “We solved the mayoralty’s defeat: “Let the boss run for president again, but without him becoming his own chief of campaign”. Source. El Comercio, March 4, 2014.



Illustration 5. Rafael Correa’s twitter account. Messages referring to the raid on Villavicencio’s home. It reads: “Months long hacking of the President’s and high profile civil servants. Investigations led to Cléver Jimenez and his “assistant” Fernando Villavicencio. With a judicial order, raids have been developed. Surprising discoveries. We have everything on film, so pretending they are the victims will not be useful as usually. We have discovered really serious stuff, which will be legally and timely unveiled. ¡What this people had been doing is terrible!” Source. Twitter, December 28, 2013.



Illustration 7. Rafael Correa states: “We have everything on film”. The cartoon’s caption reads: “Accused of spying”. Source. El Universo, December 30, 2013.

Mejorar el cuento...



Illustration 8. Correa, as a Wolf, states: “Yes... I recognize having committed some mistakes. I spoke badly of your grandmother; I roared at everyone; I cheated on you with several things... But I swear I will not cheat on you so much again...” The cartoon’s captions read “Improving the fairy tale... to eat you in a better way...”, as remembered in the original fairy tale. Source. El Universo, March 17, 2014.



Illustration 9. Source. El Comercio, May 2, 2012.



Illustration 10. The ballot Rafael Correa holds in his hand reads “Indefinite reelection”. Source. El Comercio, March 19, 2014.