

Political Personalism and Democratic Culture in San Luis, Argentina.

Quiroga Sergio Ricardo.

Cita:

Quiroga Sergio Ricardo (2021). *Political Personalism and Democratic Culture in San Luis, Argentina. European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities*, 10 (1), 1-18.

Dirección estable: <https://www.aacademica.org/sergio.ricardo.quiroga/193>

ARK: <https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pgPS/nQm>



Esta obra está bajo una licencia de Creative Commons.
Para ver una copia de esta licencia, visite
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.es>.

Acta Académica es un proyecto académico sin fines de lucro enmarcado en la iniciativa de acceso abierto. Acta Académica fue creado para facilitar a investigadores de todo el mundo el compartir su producción académica. Para crear un perfil gratuitamente o acceder a otros trabajos visite: <https://www.aacademica.org>.

Political Personalism and Democratic Culture in San Luis, Argentina¹

Sergio Ricardo Quiroga

ICAES

National San Luis University

Argentina

Date of submission: September 9th,2020; Date of acceptance: December 10th,2020; Date of publication: January 25th,2021

Abstract

This paper addresses the phenomenon of political personalism, populism and democratic culture in the province of San Luis, Argentina, in the period 2015-2019 and intends to formulate a preliminary analysis to understand the complexity of the social and political phenomena experienced by San Luis. Since the advent of democracy in Argentina in December 1983, the brothers Alberto and Adolfo Rodríguez Saá have governed the province of San Luis. The Peronist party has a clear hegemony in San Luis, since December 1983, without interruptions. Political personalism has been relatively researched in the Latin American political / communicational field and under that concept different ideas and conceptions can be deployed. On the other hand, democratic culture is linked among other factors to mobilization and citizen participation. In this context, there is a perception that more and more citizens are disconnected from a political party in a context of electoral disorder and volatility, reducing the role of party representation and improving the personalization of the representative process. Personalism is related to representation: the public person is split from the group-partisan. The individual who has representation in the collegiate bodies adopts decisions more by autonomous decision convenient to their own interests, than by mandate of their represented. The weakening of political parties and the difficulties of representation have been factors that have promoted personalization as a political attitude and political personalization has also affected political parties by fragmenting and weakening them. The opacity of these democracies (Quiroga, 2016) is a breeding ground where political personalism finds a favorable environment for its presence in addition to existing in the case of San Luis, symbolization processes where the political leader is confused with popular symbols to achieve greater adherence of citizens. An opaque democracy is characterized as that in which a power (executive power) has more influence and imposes itself on the other powers.

Keywords: Political personalism, democracy, symbols

¹ The first version of this paper has been accepted at the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference #VGC'2020 (Virtual Event), Section S63: "The Citizens and the State: The Relationship Between Polity Dynamics and Political Culture", Panel#376: "State-Building and Democracy-Building - Legitimacy and Trust: A Political Culture Approach to Political Stability".

Corresponding Author: Magister Sergio Ricardo Quiroga

Affiliation: ICAES, Argentina

Address: National San Luis University

e-mail: sergioricardoquiroga@gmail.com

Copyright © 2021, Sergio Ricardo Quiroga

European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities - EQPAM, Volume 10, No.1, January 2021, pp. 1-18.

ISSN 2285 – 4916

ISSN-L 2285 – 4916



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

1. Introduction

The state administration requires the action of the three powers of democracy: executive, legislative and judicial, institutions that have associated specific roles and ways of acting and that, in the case of the executive and legislative powers, its representatives are mainly elected through elections, periodically formulated by citizens in electoral acts. However, sometimes, that ideal functioning that we describe and that should work in all democracies does not happen. This work pays special attention to the phenomenon of political personalism, a prism through which we can take a look (among many possible) at the democracy of San Luis, Argentina.

In Argentina and Latin America, we note the exhaustion of traditional politics, particularly in the growing contradictions that governments experience when deepening extractivism, allowing scandalous levels of corruption and increasingly intolerant of dissent. Anti-democratic authoritarianism has begun to grow in the region showing its most terrible face, in which political participation begins to be risky for people.

In the case of the province of San Luis, in Argentina, the *Justicialista Party* (heir to the teachings of Juan Domingo Perón, three times president of Argentina), has been in power for more than thirty-six years since the arrival of democracy in Argentina in December 1983. Its leaders are the brothers Rodríguez Saá, Adolfo and Alberto. San Luis is a small province, located almost in the geographic center of Argentina with just 500,000 inhabitants.

These characters in the political history of San Luis built their political power day by day on the basis of the construction of an epic and myths as a style of communication aided by the low relative weight of the provincial press, heavy investment in public works and purchases of wills. Public works were an important engine of its management, often of low quality, although strategic areas such as health, public education and security were neglected for many years. Under the government of Adolfo Rodríguez Saá (five times governor of San Luis and former president of Argentina in a mandate that lasted five days), plans were promoted for small social houses, some carried out in inadequate places and with few controls on the companies awarded these plays.

San Luis was in 1970 a province where livestock and agriculture prevailed. The incipient industrialization of San Luis began around 1982, with the industrial promotion regime that governed the country. The industrial regime established that the industries established in the provinces of La Rioja, Catamarca, San Luis, and San Juan were exempt from paying income tax and value added tax. Law 22.021 was enacted in 1979 and only granted these benefits to the province of La Rioja. Then, between 1982 and 1983 the extension and validity of the tax promotion regime for Catamarca, San Luis and San Juan was sanctioned (Quiroga, 2018).

The Industrial Promotion Law made it possible for different companies with tax benefits to settle on San Luis land since 1980. Citizens of different Argentine provinces came to San Luis with the dream of working, obtained employment and settled in the province. Both the new social composition and the emerging changes that arose as a consequence of the demographic growth produced by the arrival of new settlers (workers, businessmen, etc.) since the implementation of the Industrial Promotion Law since 1980, have modified the urban and social geography of the province (Quiroga, 2018). The offer of employment in San Luis was attractive due to the stagnation and recurrent economic crises that Argentina was experiencing in that period and allowed new settlers to arrive in search of employment in San Luis.

The Peronist party of San Luis with the Rodríguez Saá brothers in government, knew how to construct the myth of good government in a climate of social peace and a certain economic boom thanks to a government strategy that included various public policies, such as the development of myths, the control of government and allied media, concealment of information, official press services, distribution of "official" advertising in media close to power in a context of artisan journalism and famine. Trosello (2008) and Heredia (2019) thoroughly described the corrupt regime in San Luis. Heredia (2015) narrated extensively how Alberto and Adolfo Rodríguez Saá were denounced on three occasions for illicit enrichment, but all the complaints were dismissed by a Judicial Branch subject to the impositions of the Executive Power. These characters were two lawyers who in 1983 only had one house each, in addition to two modest cars and thanks to corruption with industrial settlement and management of public works, in a short time they became the billionaire rulers who, with its immense economic power has been digging up the destinies of the province of San Luis for 36 years, without any spring of power escaping its management. In San Luis, in August 2017, the *Justicialista Party* led by Alberto and Adolfo Rodríguez Saá, lost the Open, Simultaneous and Compulsory Primary Elections (PASO) against the candidate Poggi. Far from mourning the defeat, the Rodríguez Saá brothers put into operation the entire machinery of the state to win the legislative elections in October of the same year, inaugurating picnic areas and all kinds of social aid to the neediest sectors that they themselves helped to create by their permanence in the power. By force of social plans, picnic areas and subsidies, the *Justicialista Party*, with these political figures at the head, won the elections. The same happened in the year 2019, winning Alberto Rodríguez Saá another term as 4-year governor. They were new disappointments for the progressive sectors of the province of San Luis.

The democracy of San Luis in the forms and an authoritarian regime in the action of the two Rodríguez Saá brothers over the years with the construction of an epic, a myth (Quiroga, 2018) with strong social and media. Epic stories often attract and sensitize, easily relate people to the characters and as a consequence, it is easy to reproduce these stories while leaving the community itself feeling part of it.

2. Opaque Democracy and Hybrid Democratic Culture

Opaque democracies are characterized by tenuous or non-existent institutionalized division of powers, political personalisms, and personal business linked to the state, lack of public

transparency, recurring disqualifications to the press and little citizen participation in public affairs, etc. When the executive power has preeminence over other powers of democracy, there is no transparency in the management of the state and confusion between public and private businesses and a personalistic political culture usually develops, we are in the presence of an opaque democracy (Quiroga, 2018).

An opaque democracy is one in which one power (executive power) has more influence and is imposed on others, that is, there is a preeminence of the executive power over other powers and is characterized by the concentration of control and power in few hands, where citizen participation is not favored, is restricted and scarce, government information is not abundant, and a general context where opposition and transgressor voices have great difficulties to express themselves (Quiroga, 2016). The space between citizens and rulers is wide, characterized by growing inequality that tends to widen.

In this approach, we characterize personalism in a negative way as a tool for building a participatory democracy, but we leave open the question about the possibility of the existence of participatory democracies without the presence of personalist leaders.

3. Political Personalization

The study of personalization is important for the development of democracy in general and of institutions in particular, because it challenges the key role of political parties or political groups that are formed for eventual elections or to act in a sustained manner in the democratic system. However, the conceptual understanding of personalization, as well as the theoretical explanations for why and when personalization begins, are not yet sufficiently illuminated, and the empirical evidence on this phenomenon is still scant and inconclusive.

Recent research is drawing a distinction between centralized personalization characterized by the presence in the democratic universe of a few political leaders who concentrate the majority of the preferential votes on the list, and decentralized personalization that occurs when a greater number of candidates manage to attract personal votes. Despite the relevance of personalization in political communication research, as well as other areas of study, there is a state of confusion in the literature on this concept. The main reason is that there is no consensus around a widely shared definition or concept. A general definition of personalism in politics could be understood as a complex construct characterized by the appropriation of the public for individual benefit carried out by actions that do not have institutional or cultural restrictions. You can understand personalism as a particular way of exercising a function, leadership and / or representation, where the social or institutional regulation of such exercise is exacerbated by its own criteria. Political personalization is a

"process in which the political weight of the individual actor in the political process increases over time, while the centrality of the political group (that is, the political party) decreases" (Rahat and Sheaffer, 2007, p.65)

Rebolledo (2017, p.152) affirms that personalization exists when "it lies in turning the politician at the center of the message through his image, making him a key element in

interpreting the political reality that is taking place". Personalism in public organizations is an emerging phenomenon of the social order and is basically characterized by the claim of certain individuals to belong, own and dominate the public scene in a long time. The weakening of political parties and the difficulties of representation have been factors that have promoted personalization as a political attitude and at the same time, political personalization has affected political parties, fragmenting, and weakening them. Parties suffer an erosion of partisan identities by average citizens and the gap has widened between representatives and represented.

The personalist action of some politicians in a democracy has privileged their personal desires and ambitions over the public interest, alternately testing the indiscriminate use of authoritarian policies and the increase in repressive and control mechanisms, while also presenting an idea of administration of the It has been a space hidden from public light as an ideal place to generate your own business. Personalism is related to representation that is to say, with the public person in the personalist becoming appears split from the collective-partisan. Political personalism is also a consequence of the lack of interest in the public, which chooses to give a subject the power to make decisions and which exposes citizens disinterested in public action. In this sense, personalism is any exercise of power derived from an institutional role, where the action is executed without taking into account of-, or without applying all the institutional channels established for taking such action. The individual who has the representation of his mandates in the collegiate bodies tends to make decisions convenient to his own interests, rather than by mandate of the represented. Personalism is the conjunction of *the political man* and *his strong message around him* that makes a group of citizens see reality through his eyes and that his personal figure is generally above the ideology of the political party.

The faces of political personalism in the Latin American region carry negative signs. In Latin American countries, personalizing politics undermines political representation, creates a breeding ground for populist leadership, and can lead to political instability.

The main triggers for personalization are the role of the media (Keeter, 1987, Brants and Voltmer, 2011) and the weakening of the electorate's identifications with political parties (Wattenberg 1991; Wattenberg, 1998; Mughan, 2000).

Consistent with this view, different factors have contributed to the development of political personalism. On the one hand, the weakening of political parties, the difficulties of representation, the character of media stars of politicians, the rise of social media, and some abstention from citizen participation in public issues have been factors that have promoted the personalization as attitude and political conduct. Although personalization can, also be understood as part of the process of individualizing social life (Bauman, 2001).

The emergence of different personalist cultures in Argentine democracy and their permanence over time has been the result of different factors. Among them: the weakness of political parties, the phenomenon of the transformation of politics as a spectacle, the decrease in citizen participation, the rise of social media and the promotion of epic discourses, among other factors.

Development of Political Personalisms

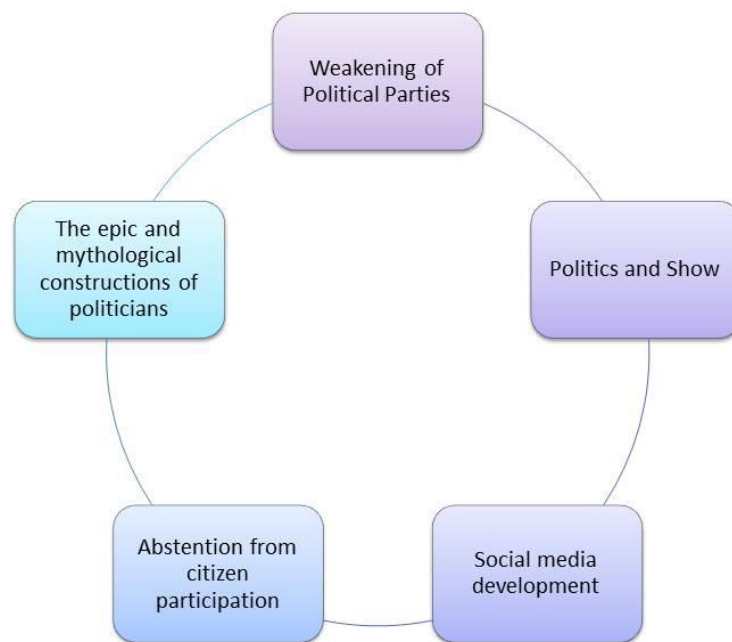


Diagram 1.
Political Personalism

4. The Weakness of Political Parties

The weakening of political parties has allowed the development of personalizing political phenomena and, in turn, political personalization has also affected political parties, fragmenting and weakening them. One process helps the other and they occur at the same time. These traditional parties suffer an erosion of partisan identities by citizens, and the gap between representatives and represented is widening, according to various dynamics. On the other hand, reason yields to the more emotional dimensions, so the elections for representatives are usually more emotional than logical or rational. Personalism in politics has arisen in the erosion of democratic periodic elections based on a decrease in the electoral relevance of traditional political parties, progressively replaced by short-term factors, such as the nomination of figures from entertainment and sport to compete in the electoral game according to the leaders of those parties. Martínez Pandiani (2006: 68) considers that television is causing a great impact on modern political communication through five processes: mediating politics, audio-visualizing politics, spectacularizing politics, personalizing politics and marketing about politics. Bernard Manin (1998) has argued that the media have profoundly changed the structure of political representation and has replaced it with a "hearing democracy". For Manin, electoral competition

increasingly depends on the media's presentation of leaders, because "voters increasingly tend to vote for the person instead of the party or the program" (Manin, 1998, p. 267).

Personalization would involve three factors: one, the very dynamics of the media, and especially audiovisual media, which tend to focus the discussion around people, rather than ideas; two, the weakening of political parties, the ideological fractures that would weaken the attractiveness of traditional political parties and that exposes their crisis and the uncertainty that arises from globalization and the formation and development of complex societies, favoring the need to delegate and trust the figure of a leader to face successive crises.

5. Politics as a Show

Personalization and spectacularization, applied to the field of political communication, constitute two phenomena that were gradually introduced in the western media, especially in television, stemming from the communication and marketing practices exercised in North American politics (Gil-Ramírez, Gómez de Travesedo-Rojas, Almansa-Martínez, 2019). Politicians have become characters who seek to capture the voter's attention. The logic of electoral disputes is within the media logic of the impact they can achieve and the speed of them due to their superficiality. The content or the background ideas do not matter, but what interests are the characters and their performance. On the other hand, when politics and entertainment are combined, the concept of *politainment* (Berrocal, 2017) arises, characterized as a union that is interesting for television networks that seek to attract and maintain their audiences.

Some academics consider the union between information and entertainment as an advance in the media due to the interest they generate for young audiences or those far from politics, and others have a pessimistic view, since they consider that the rest of the information and journalism lose quality. The conventional media system configured by the press, radio, and television as the main vehicles of communication, has served for decades as an instrument of mediation between the political sphere and the citizenry, establishing itself as a key piece in shaping public opinion in democratic systems western.

Edelman (1991) has early pointed out the role of the media as determining factors in the public perception of political reality, a reality constructed and permanently transformed by the set of symbols and meanings provided by the media. Stephen Lukes (2014) created a three-dimensional model of power that was not ostensibly over the media. The first dimension of power was given by the media that people consume or the particular texts that citizens choose and that exert influence and power over them. The second dimension of power is constituted by the establishment of an agenda of issues that people should think about, and the third dimension of power is feasibility, that is, the means have to shape interests and desires. Likewise, the concept of "agenda" poses its difficulties, since it designates "*the consciousness of the existence of an object and of the relative importance attributed to it*" (Charron, 1998, p.81) and is presented as a hierarchical list of themes. McCombs (2006) explained that the media, when selecting the themes, construct representations of reality, although not all the media have the same power or capacity to set the agenda and, in the long term, they organize the way the

world is perceived, understanding that the media tell people what to think about and generate important hierarchies.

6. Communication and Epic

The government as an institution tends to propose government advertising as a substantive part of government communication (Rose, 2000), that is, it organizes those messages aimed at sustaining the epic and myth (Quiroga, 2020), highlighting the persuasive use of communication, associated with the organization of arguments that expose how governmental power and legitimacy are maintained through advertising (Rose, 2000).

This epistemological perspective is located within the framework of political communication in the line of constructionism, which seeks to understand reality as a social product and that perceived reality, built by the first meanings that language gives. From constructionism, myths are considered as *"a political development based on the long cycles of political communication"* (Riorda, 2006, p.1) and also constituted by images of government management linked to the persuasive process, associated with the communication of myth and its risks, transformed into a coherent and complete belief system.

The construction of myths helps the government's management, the construction of political consensus, the construction of power and its permanence on the public scene in a given context. In democracy, the media help create those positive or negative images of the management of government authorities through public discourses that are perceived and sensitized to citizens.

In this context, the position of a ruler constitutes *"an organized system that is based on the concept that communication can only take place at the right time and under the right circumstances"* (Sánchez Galicia, 2013, p. 55). For Homs (2018) the only possibility of generating political credibility in more critical and mature societies is to align political discourse and actions to the daily problems of the citizen, to their fears and expectations, to their aspirations and moral values, and to the public image. of a ruler in the positioning of citizens has three possibilities for Homs (2013):

They are:

- Spontaneously, where each person identifies a public character through a more representative attribute or characteristic that also constitutes an element of differentiation.
- By adversary strategy produced when the positioning of someone derives from the strategic aggression of an adversary.
- By the ruler's own strategies that occurs when the ruler's main strength stands out and becomes a competitive advantage

7. The Rise of Social Media and Its Use as Communication Channels

The era of new media began approximately in the 1980s with the tendency of the media to broadcast information and entertainment. Television and radio talk shows and tabloids were

assuming a more relevant political role in political news coverage. Political candidates intensified their movements in them and used Twitter, Facebook or YouTube for political debate. Facebook and Twitter became a direct communication path with voters where political candidates launched themselves to promote their ideas. Social media was a channel for debate, for conversation, for listening, responding, and analyzing. The spectacularization of politics moved from traditional media to new media. In Argentina in 1983, with the arrival of democracy and the memory of the Military Dictatorship (1976-1983), citizens had renewed hopes for the possibilities of progressive transformation through democracy.

Social networks became essential intermediaries that political and media actors use to communicate and guarantee their influence in front of citizens. Political leaders (and more personalists) have appropriated these means to achieve their ends and increasingly push the limits of discourse to the extreme. In the case of Alberto Rodríguez Saá, apart from the use of social media, the purchase of government advertising spaces on YouTube is observed.

The changes became more radical when, in the 1990s, the Internet became a diffuser of political content (Owen, 2018). Initially, digital technology enabled platforms with some rigidity, and later it was able to offer portals with interactive elements. This allowed citizens to increase their capacity for political participation through technological devices that allowed them to react to political events or problems, communicate directly with candidates and leaders, contribute their own news, images, video and content, and participate in activities such as supporting candidates, and the organization of demonstrations (Owen, 2018), a phenomenon also marked by media individualization.

Political marketing came to complement communication and the idea that networks handle an entire universe of data, which has been segmented according to the interests of each politician, likes (likes), location, etc. So now, understanding big data and the audience means understanding the juncture to plan a message for each segment of the audience. Politicians incorporated these new ways to convey messages to the population, other elites, and the press, and to influence the views of their constituencies, recruit volunteers and donors, and mobilize voters (Davis and Owen, 1998; Owen, 2017a).

The political role of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in the United States was consolidated during the 2008 presidential elections. Democratic candidate Barack Obama's social media strategy revolutionized campaigns, altering the structure of the political organization. The campaign exploited the potential of social media for networking, collaboration, and community development. The Obama campaign adopted social movement characteristics with a strong component of grassroots digital mobilization (Bimber, 2014) and used them to make personalized appeals to voters, based on data analysis and messages tailored to specific sectors. Voters created and amplified messages about the candidates without going through either the campaign organization itself or the political parties (Stromer-Galley, 2016).

A common mistake of politicians is to use social media at election time and then forget about it and lose the possibility of communicating with citizens. Following the Obama phenomenon, the political role of social media in governmental campaigns and political movements, as well as their role in the media information ecosystem, rapidly expanded their

reach and relevance. Today politicians around the world share not only political proposals, but also private elements such as family photos, hobbies or personal opinions, trying to generate a closer impression with voters. The political campaign can be characterized as "permanent". The Internet has produced an absolute revolution in political campaigns since it has become a way to increase the popularity of options or political actors without the need to invest in traditional media such as television, the press or radio.

Political polarization has rendered evaluation and rational commitments obsolete. The spread of disinformation hampers responsible decision-making coupled with the increasing use of political leaders by negatively influencing the power of social media. The digital revolution has developed more rapidly and has had broader, deeper and more transformative political and information consequences than any previous recorded transition in communication technologies, including the advent of television.

Despite the development of digital media that would enable aspirations for direct democracy, practice has shown that they reinforce inequalities or that they are a breeding ground for the circulation of false information.

8. Abstention from Citizen Participation

According to Carpentier (2016), the process of political participation can be minimalist or maximalist. The first is characterized by representation and participation in the selection of elite through elections that form the expression of a homogeneous popular will, and the second expresses democracy as a more balanced combination of representation and participation, and where it is about maximize representation. Politics is seen as part of the social, which allows a broad application of participation in many sectors of society, both more at micro than macro levels, in relation to social diversity. From the prism of democracy theory, participation can be examined from the dynamics of power and agency.

In the *Communication for Development*, Servaes (1999, p.198) writes that participation "*deals directly with power and its distribution in society. It affects the heart of power relations*". Shirley A. White (1994, p.17) also highlights this central link between power and participation, when she states that "*power and control seem to be fundamental sub-concepts that help to understand the diversity of expectations and anticipation of the outcome of the participation of people*". For Melucci (1985) community participation is the integration and communion of individuals in daily, community, cultural and local life that manages to transcend the scope of traditional politics. In the construction of collective actions that seek social transformation Rebollo and Martí (2002) emphasize that participation is an instrument to achieve something, but that it must be understood as a right Participation can be understood as all those processes in which citizens feel involved to promote their permanent actions changes or transformations.

Carpentier (2016) highlights that there are two main approaches to participation: a sociological approach and a political approach. The sociological approach defines participation as part of a particular social process, and the idea of participation includes many (if not all) types of human interaction, combined with interactions with texts and technologies. Power is not excluded from this approach but remains one of the many secondary concepts to support it. An

example of how participation is defined in this approach is Melucci's definition when he states that participation has a double meaning: "*it means participating, that is, acting to promote the interests and needs of an actor, as well as belonging to a system, identify with the general interests of the community*" (Melucci, 1989, p.174).

Carpentier (2016) highlights, that the political approach produces a more restrictive definition of participation, referring to the equality of power inequalities in decision-making processes. There, participation is then defined as the equalization of power relations between privileged and non-privileged actors in formal or informal decision-making processes. Parteman defines partial participation as "*a process in which two or more parties influence each other in decision-making, but the final power to decide rests with only one of the parties*" (1970, p.70), while the Full participation is considered "*a process where each individual member of a body where decisions are made has equal power to determine the outcome of decisions*" (1970, p.71), taken from Carpentier (2016, p.73).

However, there is also a cultural dimension to participation. Dueñas Salmán and García López (2012) emphasize the cultural concept of participation and define it as a process "*that includes the possibility of doing, when taking part in something, in order to provoke a reaction, participating must then be understood as a cause and as a consequence*" (Dueñas Salmán and García López, 2012, p.2). The authors clarify that motivating also has a dose of manipulation, so the phenomenon of motivation is not innocent, like any communicational message. The idea of participation as the manipulation of the will to be part of a transformative process, the authors warn, should not necessarily be viewed negatively.

Citizen expression is valuable in democratic interplay. In opaque democracy, inequality of power is wide. However, citizens have two types of discourse against power in Scott's (1980) terms: public discourse and hidden discourse. In the thesis put forth by Gloria Trosello (2008) in her book *The Manufacture of Servant Citizens: Political Culture and Neopatrimonial Regimes*, the author has asked herself what kind of culture (personalistic political culture) has occurred in a province where the government remains for long periods making each citizen depend on the state for the development of populist public policies. In other words, it is asked who appropriates the state in a context where the government remains for a long period and whose rulers are characterized as the modern patrimonial lords.

Faced with the appropriation of the state by personalist politicians, citizens have at least two types of discourse against power in Scott's (1990) terms: public discourse and hidden discourse. Subordinates in democracy and with unequal power will not dare to openly reject the conditions of their subordination, but it is very likely that they can create a social space in which they express their marginal dissent to the official discourse of power relations. As Scott (1990) has shown, even servant citizens can resist. For this, it is necessary to denature this situation of submission and become aware of that situation, a fact that is expressed in citizen mobilization.

The subordinates adopt a strategic attitude in the presence of the powerful since each group produces, from their suffering, a hidden discourse that represents a critique of power behind the dominator's back (Scott, 1990). However, citizen participation is closely linked to citizen power and where there is power, there is also resistance to that power. Faced with the possibilities of participation generated by access, interaction and participation exposed by

Carpentier (2016b), and have a proposed the idea of mobilization as a prior instance of this complex process (Quiroga, 2020).



Diagram 2.
Citizen Participation

With the increasing mobilization of citizens in public affairs, the voices of dissent can transmit and channel their outrage, first using rhetorical or hidden strategies of rejection of the current order and second, having a participation and an attitude of permanent denunciation of the abuses that it suffers and finally the participation in the electoral acts where representatives are elected and in the actions of democracy.



Source: *El Chorrillero*

Figure 1.

Villa Mercedes: inscriptos de viviendas se presentaron al acto por el Día de la Independencia. (*Translation of author "Villa Mercedes: home registrants showed up for the act on Independence Day", July, 10, 2020*).

It is precisely in democracy, when knowledge and wisdom are built collectively, they are elaborated in the plural, respecting the positions of those who think differently. Aristotle already affirmed that "*a citizen is one who knows how to govern and be governed*". On the other hand, "*there is no democracy without citizens, a condition that is not achieved only by claiming the individual right to see our private needs satisfied, but, above all, through the obligation to assume that we are talking about collective projects and public needs*" (Brugué Torruella, 2019, p.12).

In San Luis, these voices of dissent, long isolated on the margins, today constitute a growing and beneficial presence and an existential threat to the traditional consensus of the current regime, formerly legitimized by industrial promotion and public works and now by plans of social aid. Citizen participation not favored by current norms, could generate the appearance of opposing voices of citizens, could imply a progressive transformation on how to make politics and manage state resources, while it could modify institutional commitments and generate tolerant and balanced governance.

References

- Adam, S. & Michaela M. (2010). "Personalization of Politics. A Critical Review and Agenda for Research," in C. T. Salmon (ed.) *Communication Yearbook* 34. New York: Routledge, pp. 213-25.
- Adler Lomnitz, L. (1994). *Redes sociales, cultura y poder. Ensayos de antropología latinoamericana*. México: Miguel Angel Porrúa.
- Adler-Lomnitz, L. (2007). Simbolismo y Ritual en la Política Mexicana. *VI Congreso Chileno de Antropología*. Colegio de Antropólogos de Chile A. G, Valdivia.
- Arnstein, S. (1969). A Ladder of Citizen Participation, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 35: 4, 216 — 224.
- Balmas, M. (2014). Two routes to personalized politics: Centralized and decentralized personalization, *Party Politics*, 20(1): 37-51
- Bauman, S. (2001). *The Individualized Society*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Behr, T. (2012). *Lessons Learnt. Social unrest in the Arab world: what did we miss?* Swindon: Art and Humanities Research Council.
- Bermeo, N.(2016). "On Democratic Backsliding". *Journal of Democracy* 1: 5-19.
- Bimber, Bruce (2014): «Digital media in the Obama campaigns of 2008 and 2012: adaptation to the personalized political communication environment», en *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, vol. 11, n.º 2, pp. 130-150.7.
- Bittner, A. (2011). *Platform or Personality?: The Role of Party Leaders in Elections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Blondel, J., J.L. Thiebault. (2010). *Political Leadership, Parties and Citizens: The personalization of Leadership*. London: Routledge.
- Bobbio, N. (2001). *El futuro de la democracia*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Brants, K. y Voltmer, K. (2011). Introduction: Mediatization and de-centralization of political communication. En K. Brants y K. Voltmer (Eds.), *Political communication in postmodern democracy* (pp. 1-16). Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brugué Torruella, Q. (2019). Prologo. *Participación ciudadana y gobernanza. Materiales para la facilitación* en Álamo Bolaños, A. y Pérez Artilles, J. (Comps.). Ediciones OCTAEDRO, S. L.
- Calise, Mauro. (2011). "Personalization of Politics," in Bertrand Badie & Dirk Berg-Schlosser & Leonardo Morlino (eds.) *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*. London: SAGE. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412994163>

- Carpentier N.(2016a). Différencier accès, interaction et participation, pp. 45-69, in : Morelli P., Pignard-Cheynel N., Baltazart D., dirs, *Publics et TIC. Confrontations conceptuelles et recherches empiriques*, Nancy, PUN-Éditions universitaires de Lorraine.
- Carpentier, N. (2012). The concept of participation. If they have access and interact, do they really participate? *Fronteiras estudos midiáticos*. 14. 10.4013/fem.2012.142.10.
- Carpentier, N. (2016b) Beyond the Ladder of Participation: An Analytical Toolkit for the Critical Analysis of Participatory Media Processes, *Javnost - The Public*, 23:1, 70-88, DOI: 10.1080/13183222.2016.1149760
- Charron, J. (1998). Los medios y las fuentes. Los límites del modelo de agenda setting. En *Comunicación y Política*. Gauthier, G., Gosselin A., y Mouchon, J. (Comps.) Barcelona, España. Gedisa. Págs. 72-94.
- Colomer, J. M. (ed.) (2011) *Personal Representation: The Neglected Dimension of Electoral Systems*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Cooley, A. (2016) Countering Democratic Norms. En *Authoritarianism Goes Global*, editado por L. Diamond, M. F. Plattner y C. Walker, 117-134. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Dalton, R. J. (1985). 'Political Parties and Political Representation; Party Supporters and Party Elites in Nine Nations', *Comparative Political Studies*, 18 (3): 267-299.
- Dalton, R. J. (2000). 'The Decline of Party Identifications' in R. J. Dalton and M. P. Wattenberg (eds.) *Parties without Partisans. Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 19-36
- Dalton, R. J., D. M. Farrell and I. McAllister. (2011) *Political Parties and Democratic Linkage: How Parties Organize Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Drummond, A. (2006). 'Electoral Volatility and Party Decline in Western Democracies: 1970-1995', *Political Studies*, 54(3): 628-64.
- Dueñas Salmán, L., García López, E. (2012) El estudio de la cultura de participación, aproximación a la demarcación del concepto. *Revista Razón y Palabra*. N° 80, Agosto-October. Disponible en www.razonypalabra.org.mx
- Edelman, M. (1991). *La construcción del espectáculo político*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Manantial.
- Foucault, Martial, (2017). "Le clivage gauche-droite n'a pas disparu", *Le Monde*, Sept 2, 2017.
- Garzia, D. (2014). *Personalization of Politics and Electoral Change*. London: Palgrave.
- Hermans, L. and M. Vergeer. (2013). "Personalization in e-campaigning: A cross-national comparison of personalization strategies used on candidate websites of 17 countries in EP elections 2009," *New Media & Society*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 72–92.
- Gil-Ramírez, M., Gómez de Travesedo-Rojas, R. y Almansa-Martínez, A. (2019) "Politainment y personalización política. ¿De la televisión a YouTube?". *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 74, pp. 1542 a 1564. <http://www.revistalatinacs.org/074paper/1398/81es.html> DOI: 10.4185/RLCS-2019-1398
- Gong P., Zhang J., Zhan Y., Chi H. (2018) Participatory Communication as a New Research Direction in State Governance Studies: An Interview with Professor Nico Carpentier. *Chinese Journal of Journalism & Communication*, Issue 7, Page 163-176.
- Heredia, G. (2019). *Los archivos de Rodríguez Saá. 36 años corrupción y de poder despótico* Buenos Aires, Dunken.
- Hjarvard, S. (2008). 'The Mediatization of Society. A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change', *Nordicom Review*, 29(2): 105-134
- Karvonen L. (2010). *The Personalization of Politics: A Study of Parliamentary Democracies*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Homs Quiroga, R. (2013). *La comunicación de la empresa*. México. Grupo Editorial Iberoamericana.
- Homs Quiroga, R. (2018). *Estrategias de marketing político*. Prólogo de H. González Casanova. Guía para conseguir liderazgo político a través de una visión humanista.
- Jasper, James M. (2018). *The Emotions of Protest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Jebnoun, Noureddine. (2013). Introduction: Rethinking the Paradigm of “durable” and “stable” authoritarianism in the Middle East, en: Jebnoun, Noureddine et al. (eds.). *Modern Middle East Authoritarianism. Roots, ramifications and crisis*. Nueva York: Routledge, p. 1-22.
- Katz, R. (1987). “Party Government and its Alternative,” in R. S. Katz (ed) *Party Governments: European and American Experiences*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Kriesi, H. (2012) “Personalization of National Election Campaigns”, *Party Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 6, pp. 825-844.
- Keeter, S. (1987). The illusion of intimacy: television and the role of candidate personal qualities in voter choice. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51, 344-358.
- Laguna A. (2011) Liderazgo y Comunicación: La Personalización de la Política. *Anàlisi* 43, 2011 45-57. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/13306339.pdf>
- Laguna, A. (2003). Las perversiones de la democracia. *Ámbitos*. Revista Internacional de Comunicación. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla.
- Lobo, M.C. and J. Curtice (eds.). (2015). *Personality Politics? The Role of Leader Evaluations in Democratic Elections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: a Radical View*. London: Macmillan.
- MacBride Commission [The International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems], 1980, *Many Voices, One World. Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order. Report by the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems*, Paris and London, UNESCO & Kogan Page.
- Manin, B. (1998) *Los principios del gobierno representativo*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial.
- Mancini, P. and Swanson, D. L. (1996). “Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy: Introduction,” in David. L. Swanson & Paulo Mancini, (eds.), *Politics, media and modern society*. Westport, CT.: Praeger, pp. 1-26.
- Marcus, George, W. Russell Neuman, and Michael MacKuen. (2000). *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Martínez Pandiani, G. (2006). El impacto de la televisión en la comunicación política moderna. *Signos Universitarios*, Revista de la Universidad de El Salvador. Año 25, número extra 1, 2006, pp. 67-88.
- McAllister, I. (2007). “The Personalization of Politics,” in Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McCombs, M. (2006). Cómo funciona el establecimiento de agenda. En *Estableciendo la agenda*. Barcelona: Paidós, pp. 81-134.
- Melucci A., (1989). *Nomads of the Present. Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press.
- Melucci, A. (1989). *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Mughan, A. (2000). *Media and the presidentialization of parliamentary elections*. Londres: Palgrave.
- Musella, F. (2015). “Personal Leaders and Party Change: Italy in Comparative Perspective,” *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp 227-247.
- Owen, D. (2017a): «The new media’s role in politics», en Fernando Gutiérrez Junquera (ed.), *The Age of Perplexity: Rethinking the World We Know*, Londres, BBVA/Penguin Random House. [Ed. esp: *La era de la perplejidad. Repensar el mundo que conocíamos*. Madrid, OpenMind/BBVA].
- Owen, D. (2017b): «Tipping the balance of power in elections? voters’ engagement in the digital campaign», en Terri Towner y Jody Baumgartner (eds.), *The Internet and the 2016 Presidential Campaign*, Nueva York, Lexington Books, pp. 151-177.
- Owen, D. (2018). “La última década y el futuro de la comunicación política: la hegemonía de las redes sociales”, en *¿Hacia una nueva Ilustración? Una década trascendente*, Madrid, BBVA.
- Pateman C., (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Poguntke, T. and P.Webb (2005). *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Quiroga, S (2020) Mobilization and citizen participation: the absent social dialogue and the possibility of participatory communication. Paper, PCS, IAMCR Tampere.
- Quiroga, S. (2016) Digital Journalism and Education. How Public Authorities Lower the Voice of Citizens. *Revista Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Communicatio*, 3, pages 21–32. Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania Scientia Publishing House. <http://acta.sapientia.ro/acta-comm/C3/comm3-02.pdf>
- Quiroga, S. (2016) Digital Journalism, Democracy and Social Transformation. A Public Word Depriving Citizens? En *Digitization and its Impact on Society*. Michele Infante, Luciana Taddei (eds.). Editorial Aracne Editrice Internazionale S.r.l Roma.
- Quiroga, S. (2018) *Mitos gubernamentales, políticos-medios y apatía ciudadana*. En XIII Congreso Nacional y VI Congreso Internacional sobre Democracia: los escenarios democráticos del siglo XXI: disrupción, fragmentación, nacionalismo, populismo y nuevos actores globales / Franco Bartolacci (Comp.)– 1a ed. – Rosario: UNR Editora. Editorial de la Universidad Nacional de Rosario. <https://es.scribd.com/document/394877924/4-Memoria-Opinion-Pub>, págs. 168-181.
- Rahat, G. and T. Sheafer (2007) The personalization(s) of Politics: Israel 1949-2003, *Political Communication*, 24(1): 65-80.
- Rebolledo, M. (2016) La personalización de las campañas electorales en España y Francia: estudio comparado de los anuncios televisivos en el siglo XXI. Doctoral Tesis. Universidad de Navarra- Université Paris-Est, Pamplona.
- Rebolledo, M. (2017) La personalización de la política: una propuesta de definición para su estudio sistemático. *Revista de Comunicación* 16 (2) (147-176). <https://doi.org/10.26441/RC16.2-2017-A7>
- Rebolledo, M., Rodríguez-Virgili, J. y Jandura, O. (2016). Media coverage in times of crisis: a comparative study in different European contexts. In Ó. G. Luengo (Ed.), *Political Communication in times of crisis* (pp. 101-119), Berlín: Logos Verlag Berlin.
- Reinemann, C. and J. Wilke (2007) It's the debates, stupid! How the introduction of televised debates changed the portrayal of chancellor candidates in German press, 1949-2005, *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 12(4): 92-111.
- Renwick, A. and Jean Benoit Pilet (2016) *Faces on the Ballot: The Personalization of Electoral Systems in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thomassen, J. and R. B. Andeweg (2004) Beyond collective representation: individual members of parliament and interest representation in the Netherlands, *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 10(4): 47-69.
- Riorda, M. (2004) Mitos y política: estilos comunicativos de los gobernadores cordobeses (1983-2003), en *Estudios*, N° 15, Otoño, Centro de Estudios Avanzados, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.
- Riorda, M. (2006). Los mitos de gobierno. Una visión desde la comunicación gubernamental. *Hologramática*. Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, UNLZ - Año III, Número 4, V2, pp 21-45. <http://www.hologramatica.com.ar>.
- Riorda, M. y Elizalde, L. (2013) Hacia dónde va la comunicación gubernamental? En *Comunicación Gubernamental 360*. Elizalde, L. Riorda, M. comps. La Crujía, Buenos Aires. Pp: 7-13.
- Riorda, M. y Elizalde, L. (2013). Planificación Estratégica de la comunicación gubernamental: realismo e innovación. En *Comunicación Gubernamental 360*. Elizalde, L. Riorda, M. comps. La Crujía, Buenos Aires. Págs. 15-46.
- Riorda, M., Rincón, O. (2016). *Comunicación gubernamental en acción. Narrativas presidenciales y mitos de gobierno*. Biblos. Buenos Aires.
- Riorda, M.; Avila, C. (2016). El mito político y su aplicación en la comunicación de gobierno. En *Comunicación gubernamental en acción. Narrativas presidenciales y mitos de gobierno*. Biblos. Buenos Aires.
- Rose, J. (2000). *Making "Pictures in Our Heads": Government Advertising in Canada*, Westport, Praeger Publishers.
- Sánchez Galicia, J. (2013). Comunicar para Gobernar. En *Comunicación Gubernamental 360*. Elizalde, L. Riorda, M. comps. La Crujía, Buenos Aires. Págs. 47-68.
- Scott, J. (1985). *Weapons of the weak. Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Scott, J. (1990). *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven y Londres, Yale University Press.

- Scott, J. (1998). *Seeing like a state. How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, J. (2009). *The Art of Not Being Governed. An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, New Haven y Londres, Yale University Press.
- Servaes J., 1999, *Communication for Development. One World, Multiple Cultures*, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Sottilotto, C. (2013). Political stability in authoritarian regimes: lessons from the Arab uprisings». IAI Working Papers, n.º 13/01 (January), p. 1-14. <http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iaiw1301.pdf>
- Stromer-Galley, J. (2016): *Presidential Campaigning in the Internet Age*, Nueva York, Oxford University Press.
- Trosello, G (2008). *La manufactura de ciudadanos siervos: cultura política y regímenes neopatrimonialistas*. Universidad Nacional de San Luis. Facultad de Ciencias Humanas. El Ágora Colección. Nueva Editorial Universitaria. San Luis.
- Van Aelst, P., T. Sheafer and J. Stanyer (2011). The personalization of mediated political communication: A review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings, *Journalism*, 13(2): 203-220.
- Van Aelst, P., T. Sheafer, N. Hube and Stylianos Papathanassopoulos. 2017. "Personalization," in Claes de Vreese, Frank Esser and David N. Hopmann (eds.) *Comparing political Journalism*, London: Rotledge, pp. 112-130.
- Villa Mercedes: inscriptos de viviendas se presentaron al acto por el Día de la Independencia. (10 de Julio, 2020). El Chorrillero <https://elchorrillero.com/nota/2020/07/10/215186-villa-mercedes-inscriptos-de-viviendas-se-presentaron-al-acto-por-el-dia-de-la-independencia/amp/>
- Wattenberg, M. (1991). *The rise of candidate-centered politics: Presidential elections of the 1980s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wattenberg, M. (1994). *The Decline of American Political Parties 1952-1992*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University,
- Wattenberg, M. (1998). *The decline of American political parties, 1952-1996*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Open Access

This article is distributed under the terms of the **Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License** which permits any noncommercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and source are credited.