Incumbent versus Non-Incumbent Persuasive Speech: 2017 New York Mayoral Elections

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Abstract. In November 2017, Democrat Bill de Blasio was re-elected as the major of New York City against Republican candidate Nicole Malliotakis and the independent challenger Bo Dietl. Although many circumstances should be considered, such as their different levels of popularity, or their policies among many others, speech constitutes a crucial element for the final result. Thus, persuasive functions shown by the candidates should be examined closely. This article analyzes the rhetoric and figurative language of the contenders in the key moment of their campaign, their final debate, held on November 1st. The discussion is framed in the linguistic theories of Political Discourse Analysis (van Dijk, 1997, 2011, Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013), rooted in Aristotle's artistic proofs of rhetoric, through the examination of strategies following Charteris-Black's overview (2011), Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and the notion of Face (Goffman, 1956, 1967), polarization (van Dijk, 1993, Chilton, 2004), and euphemism and dysphemism (Allan & Burridge, 1991), with the aim to detect and compare incumbent versus non-incumbent strategies regarding political discourse.

Keywords: 2017 New York Mayoral Elections; Political debate; Rhetoric; Politeness Theory.

[es] Discurso persuasivo de los candidatos aspirantes y en funciones en las elecciones a la alcaldía de Nueva York en 2017

Resumen. En noviembre de 2017, el candidato demócrata Bill de Blasio revalidó su reelección como alcalde de Nueva York frente a la republicana Nicole Malliotakis y el independiente Bo Dietl. Aunque sin duda muchas circunstancias influyeron en el resultado final, tales como sus diferentes niveles de popularidad o el contenido de sus programas, el discurso político juega un papel siempre decisivo. Por esta razón, se propone un análisis de las funciones persuasivas de los candidatos. En concreto, este artículo analiza el lenguaje retórico y figurativo de los candidatos en el momento clave de la campaña: el debate final, celebrado el 1 de noviembre, a la luz de las teorías del Análisis del Discurso Político (van Dijk, 1997, 2011, Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013), que hunde sus raíces en la Retórica de Aristóteles, a través de su revisión por parte de Charteris-Black (2011), la Teoría de Cortesía (Brown & Levinson, 1987) y la noción de imagen (Goffman, 1956, 1967), polarización (van Dijk, 1993, Chilton, 2004), y eufemismo y disfemismo (Allan & Burridge, 1991) para detectar y comparar las estrategias entre los candidatos según su condición de alcalde en funciones o de aspirante desde el punto de vista del discurso político.

Palabras clave: Elecciones a la alcaldía de Nueva York de 2017; debate político; retórica; Teoría de la Cortesía.

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1. Introduction

Bill de Blasio, the 109th Mayor of the city of New York, was re-elected for this post on November 7th, 2017. This result was the consummation of what could be considered a relatively easy campaign, due to his favorable conditions: he was an incumbent candidate who had already won his first term with a 73.2% of the total amount of votes, and whose Mayoral policies had been approved by the voters; as a Democrat, he was representing the party supported by the majority of New Yorkers; and his only rival from a big party, the Republican Nicole Malliotakis, was not well-known among the electorate. It is therefore understood that de Blasio's approach to the campaign should differ from that of his opponents.

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the persuasive resources used in the key moment of their campaign, the second and final debate, by each of the three participating candidates: the Democratic Candidate and Mayor Bill de Blasio, the Republican Nicole Malliotakis and the independent Bob Dietl, former policeman. There also were other four aspirants who did not take part in the debate.

The study of rhetoric, well rooted on academic tradition, has its basis on the classic work by Aristotle (2015), was revitalized by the Yale Study Group in the 1950s (Hovland et al., 1953), and developed in parallel with the humanities and social sciences (van Dijk, 2011). The literature mainly focuses on the impact of rational and emotional strategies often by pointing to resemblance with the electorate (Goethals & Nelson, 1973). Rhetoric has been receiving much attention in election races (Fausing & Matlock, 2010, Wang et al., 2012, López Cirugeda & Sánchez Ruiz, 2013, 2014, Bull & Miskinis, 2015). More precisely, there is specific research on de Blasio's strategies for his appointment as the Democratic candidate for New York City Mayor in 2013 (Sánchez Ruiz, 2019). This paper aims to continue this research with the aim to add more information about de Blasio's persuasion strategies in comparison with other candidates.

2. Theoretical Framework

Voters are persuaded and thus endorse political parties through rhetoric, so discourse is inherent in political activity (Lilly, 2018, p. 9). Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) deals especially with the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse, including the various forms of resistance or counter-power against such forms of discursive dominance (van Dijk, 1997, p. 11). Political discourse differs from other types of speech by its practical nature of argumentation (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013).

Such studies rely on classic Aristotelian findings on the available means of persuasion, classified into three categories: *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. Ethos

depends on the virtue, shown by character, credibility, charisma and non-verbal messages, which is materialized in the reputation of the speaker. Pathos is the right tone to move –and influence– the audience by appealing to their emotions. In order to be successfully handled, it is necessary to empathetically connect with the audience at an emotional level. Logos is based on the proof of speech appealing to the intellect (Demirdöğen, 2010, pp. 191-192). Charteris-Black (2011) matched these three types of persuasion to three types of rhetorical strategies: *having the right intentions* corresponds to ethos and implies showing willingness to put desirable policies into practice; *sounding right* is in relation to pathos, or the activation of emotions; and *thinking right* guides to logos and communication based on logic and rational argument. Therefore, it is understood that a leader is required to prove ethics, empathy, and operational intelligence. This author also adds two other categories destined to reach the same goals: *telling the right story*, so as to provide the right frame or mental representation, and *looking right* in terms of manners and appearance, a factor whose importance has increased in the recent times of social media propaganda (for a more detailed description of these persuasive devices, see 2011, pp. 14-15). This latter resource is also acknowledged by Sheridan, Ridolfo, and Michel (2005, p. 803), who understand communication "not just through words, but also through sounds, colors, photographs, and other semiotic resources". Therefore, different material and discursive conditions regarding the production, distribution and reception of the speaker's argument will be included. These authors (pp. 805-806) consider *kairos* (opportune moment) essential for the persuader, as by assessing the "available means of persuasion".

Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) points out the importance of interaction rituals as part of the speakers' strategy in order to build this desired righteous, and therefore, trustworthy public image. However, it also shows how persuasion is a two-way path: not only is it necessary to appear as a worthy candidate, but also to discredit your competitors, either directly or indirectly. The Theory of Face (1956, 1967) expounds how this good name or *face* seems lost when a competitor leaves you without a suitable answer to defend your actions and ideas. This can be done by means of resources like dysphemism, or the offensive use of language as a weapon against others. This phenomenon is called quasidysphemism, when a neutral or positive word is charged with a negative intention (see Allan & Burridge, 1991, Crespo-Fernández, 2013, 2018, Sánchez Ruiz, 2017) and leading to face affront. Another strategy for discredit is the phenomenon of polarization, which creates a confrontation between two social groups: one in which both the speaker and the audience share some traits and, opposed to it, another one led by their rivals, who are intrinsically perceived as a menace for society (van Dijk, 1993, Chilton, 2004).

3. Corpus and Methodology

As previously stated, the corpus for the analysis is the final 2017 NYC Mayoral General Election debate, held in the City University of New York Graduate Center on November 1st as it appears on the 57-minute video cut edited and broadcast by CBS network (CBS News, 2017). The script was typed from the

video and the speech of the three contenders was analyzed by means of systematized qualitative top-down approach (Lieungnapar & Todd, 2011) composed of three consecutive steps: 1) selection of potentially persuasive units, 2) categorization under the strategies developed in the theoretical framework, and 3) explanation of the implications derived from the context.

The debate was conducted by anchor Maurice DuBois, a news presenter whose journalistic career has been profusely awarded, five Emmys included. He introduced the candidates, and opened the floor for them in random turns assigned previously in which the following topics were discussed: security measures to face terrorist attacks, and immigration policies; sexual felony crime, general crime rates, and school safety; taxes, and corruption; gentrification, evictions, affordable housing, and homelessness; traffic, and transportation; the future of the Christopher Columbus statue, constitutional conventions on the ballot of New York, and pensions. Even though there were seven candidates –Bill de Blasio (Democratic/Working Families), Nicole Malliotakis (Republican/Conservative/Stop de Blasio), Akeem Browder (Green), Sal F. Albanese (Reform), Bo Dietl (Dump the Mayor), Aaron Commey (Libertarian), and Michael Tolkin (Smart Cities)–, only de Blasio, Dietl and Malliotakis participated in the debate.

4. The candidates' profiles

Bill de Blasio (NYC, 1961), the incumbent candidate, has been the Mayor of New York City since 2014, the only Democratic on the hall in twenty years. Born Warren Wilhelm Jr., he chose to change his name to her mother's maiden one. He defines himself as a *Democratic socialist* (Stewart, 2013) and a progressive trying to guide his party to populism despite controversy among his own allies (Dovere, 2017). He elicited his own policies during his first campaign through repeatedly referring to the image of New York as a *Tale of Two Cities*, "a place where City Hall has too often catered to the interests of the elite rather than the needs of everyday New Yorkers" (Walker, 2013).

In May 2017, while the Republican candidate had not been chosen yet, polls showed that de Blasio received a 60% approval, that is, more than his predecessors Dinkins, Giuliani and Bloomberg in their re-election campaigns. This provided favorable ground for him, as recent history shows how mayors experiment significant boost before re-election. His only perceived weakness was his handling to political corruption, for which 44% disapproved (Cheney, 2017). He received the public support of 19,054 donors and a total amount of $6,816,466.29, together with the endorsement of *The New York Times* and 2016 presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. His family, composed of the politician and writer Chirlane McCray, and their two children, Chiara and Dante, collaborated actively in the campaign as well.

At the time of the electoral race, he used to tweet on his personal account (@BilldeBlasio) to remark his achievements, in which he highlighted his initiative of providing universal free pre-Kindergarten for four-year-olds, affordable housing measures, and crime rate decrease. Due to Presidential immigration policies, he appealed to emotions through a noteworthy polarization strategy in which he identified himself with those who moved to the NYC and are

part from it by repeatedly using the first-person plural form *we* as opposed to Trump and his supporters, Dietl and Malliotakis included. In the previous debate, held on October 10th, his opening words put his rivals unambiguously into the second category: "Sometimes there are elections where people feel that the candidates are all alike. You're not going to have that problem this time. My two opponents are right-wing Republicans who voted for Donald Trump" (Village Study Group, 2017). Precisely, the British newspaper *The Guardian* analyzed his possibilities of succeeding Sanders as the next left-wing leader in America, while de Blasio's lack of immediate connection with the audience –that is, pathos– was perceived as his main weakness (Lartey, 2017).

On the day before the debate, Bill de Blasio had addressed New Yorkers on the occasion of the ISIS terrorist attack in which a truck crashed causing eight fatalities and numerous injuries on a bike path near World Trade Center. He described the event as "an act of terror and a cowardly act of terror", and encouraged New Yorkers to "respond as we always do [and] be undeterred" (James & McCoy, 2017). He also told the reporters none of the present wanted to take political advantage of the tragedy (Neuman & Goodman, 2017).

Richard A. "Bo" Dietl (NYC, 1950) was a detective for the New York City Police Department. Ever since 1985, he has run his own company, Beau Dietl & Associates and Beau Dietl Consulting Services, spying on women and disclosing sexual harassment cases, frequently defending high profile men. He claims to have defended Donald Trump and some members of his cabinet, for which he has been accused of misogyny (Rosenthal, 2017). He is also a TV personality and an actor. For the campaign, he gathered an amount of $1,034,426.86 from 1,088 donors.

A Democratic who voted for Trump, Dietl run as an independent, and built his campaign on his own persona, through references to his own past, and his identification with the true New Yorker prototype –"I'm synonymous with the city" (Goodman, 2017a)–, his support to the Yankees baseball team, the use of guns, and his multiple connections in the show business, the media and politics, and appealing to emotions by revealing his newfound condition of "a compassionate grandpa" (Dietl, 2017). All of this was done under the only perspective of denigrating de Blasio, his administration and his support for the sempiternal New York rivals, the Boston Red Sox. Dietl dysphemistically calls the Mayor *Big Bird*, after the character of Sesame Street Show, and accuses him of corruption, among other charges, in direct tweets often written in capital letters. All his insults are directed at de Blasio, while ignoring Malliotakis, his most direct rival regarding his target voters. On his own behalf, he had to defend himself and restore his own face from alleged racism (Goodman, 2017b). Like Donald Trump, he insists on the fact that terrorism and fraud must not happen in the USA, or New York City specifically.

Nicole Malliotakis (NYC, 1980) is an Assemblywoman of the State of New York who was defined in her campaign website as a "no nonsense leader for New York", which means highlighting her logos. Born from Greek and Cuban immigrants, she embodies a prototype of success for the *dreamers*, to whom she addressed personally in Spanish during her Mayoral campaign. Her profile on Twitter was presided by an emotional message she sent on the election day

expressing her own fulfilment when she gave her parents, who had started from scratch in the United States, the opportunity to vote her for New York City Mayoress (Malliotakis, 2017). Her tweets have frequently focused on ethnic and religious minorities, and Bob Ryan, her spokesman for the campaign, pointed to disenchanted Italian de Blasio supporters as her target voters (Linge & Vincent, 2017). However, in a moment in which Republican immigration policies are dissuading Latino voters, a key sector for American national and local elections, she has been repeatedly questioned for her adhesion to Donald Trump, whom she supported as the Republican candidate for Presidency of the United States. Prior to the debate, de Blasio had summarized his rival's controverted position by stating to his supporters that she "is a pro-Trump Republican," and that "the people of this city reject Donald Trump, it's as simple as that" (Raugh, 2017), that means, via polarization. Aware of the need of defining her differences with the President so as to attract her possible target voters, she expressed to *The New York Daily News* her initial endorsement for Marco Rubio, her regret for having supported Trump and her disagreement with the latter on a few issues, including the building of the Mexican border wall, which at the same time compromises her future at the GOP (Sanders, 2017). Her political interests include, apart from immigration, her concern for sexual harassment –in which she also feels personally related as a woman– and her strong position against taxes to middle-to-low income citizens. She received the endorsement of *The New York Post*, *The Staten Island Advance*, *The Jewish Voice*, and *The Jewish Press* and a total amount of $1,211,928.89 among 7,585 donors. Malliotakis said she felt like the underdog, and she remarked the importance of challenging the Mayor to "hold him accountable for everyone in the city" (Ibarra, 2017).

5. Analysis

As previously stated, this section provides examples of persuasive language by means of Aristotle's artistic proofs of rhetoric (ethos, pathos, logos), which are built upon the strategies of Charteris-Black's revision, polarization, euphemism and dysphemism, and some examples of metaphor. This analysis will help deepen into the candidates' profiles and determine how their condition of incumbent or new candidates has an impact on their speech.

5.1. Bill de Blasio

The three candidates were on stage, facing both the audience and the anchor and with the Mayor in the middle position, and not seeming to make great efforts to *look right* due to height. "At nearly 6-foot-6, Mr. de Blasio naturally towers over his opponents on the debate stage" (Goldmacher, 2017). Dressing a blue suit, a white shirt and a red tie, the colors of the national flag, but wearing another one with the same colors on his lapel, the Cuban, as a hint of pathos expressed by a message of belonging addressed to that community, more likely in theory to vote for Malliotakis.

Ethos was displayed by his general attitude. He remained calm but firm, self-assured on the estimations of voting, never losing temper or appearing as too vehement. Also, by *having the right intentions*, for which he needed to connect his

programs with the perceived needs of the audience. De Blasio mentioned different measures to be taken after his re-election about housing, traffic, and class consciousness. See the following examples:

(1) a. The city government has to step in and address the situation aggressively. […] This is how we address gentrification.
   b. We're gonna do something that's never been done. If those delivery trucks are coming when they shouldn't, under our pilot program, we will tell them, we will move them.
   c. It's going to be in the age of citizens united, special interest money particularly going after the rights of the labor […] the […] Koch Brothers and others are going to come in and try and take away labor rights and the rights of so many of us.
   d. I'm not gonna have a blanket policy, but I am out there, talking to people all the time. And I know when you talk about things like affordable housing that's what they want to talk about. […] That's the number one issue in the city.

In (1a), he positively represents himself as the leader who has already taken care of gentrification, which he will address *aggressively*. This implies he clearly identifies it as negative and a major problem of the city which he has already taken care of with determination. Example (1b) reflects the uniqueness of his measures, which have not been taken before, and the use of his extraordinary qualities for the government of the city. In (1c), he goes further when he even points to the enemies he is going to defend the city from, namely the Koch brothers, the reason he is against Constitutional conventions on the ballot in New York. Notice that this use of polarization makes himself be portrayed as a victim, in the same category as his voters. Finally, in example (1d), he shows himself as a considerate Mayor who will make informed and individual decisions for each one of the city's challenges always considering the street's needs and opinions.

In respect to pathos or the appeal of emotions by *sounding right*, he becomes particularly moved when he refers to his personal team:

(2) a. We have a 5/32 force, the finest police force in the world, the strongest anti-terror capacity of any police force in this nation. […] I think they've done a great job of protecting [us].
   b. And let me be clear. The people I've hired across the board I'm proud of. […] The leaders we've had, particularly in the area of Public Safety, are the very finest in this nation. I'm proud to have chosen them.
   c. He's a man of integrity and he's telling us the truth about school safety and every other part of the city.
   d. I've said very clearly… what we now know about and we didn't know then, he is a liar, he's a felon. You don't believe anything he says.

Examples (2a), (2b), and (2c) show de Blasio taking pride on his own team and forces, according to him, the finest in the nation. He builds their ethos by means of the emotional appeal of being proud of having them in his team. (2d) negatively

represents Jona Rechnitz, who allegedly bribed him in order to influence the city's decisions, a fact which becomes the main difficulty he is going to find in the debate. De Blasio portrays him dysphemistically –"he's a liar, he's a felon"– and asks not to consider his words.

Regarding logos, throughout his intervention, he took advantage of being on the position in order to highlight action which is already happening. He builds a positive representation by showing himself as a proactive leader who is taking highly qualified professional advice to handle terrorism (3a), or taking measures that ease everyday life for the not-so-wealthy (3b), and even assuming that others would support his words –"ask those…"– in order to reinforce that image:

(3) a. [O]ur police leadership working with the FBI and working with our offices around the world determine what trends we have to address and we make the physical changes, we add the personnel as needed to address each and everything we see all over the world.
    b. Ask those who have done very well to pay a little more so the rest of us can get around; and include in it the fair, fair half-price Metro cards for low-income New Yorkers so they can have opportunities, too.

However, his condition of Mayor in service, determines as well that great part of the debate is devoted to questioning his actions. De Blasio firmly defends his position by delegitimation of his opponents' logos, such as neglecting Malliotakis' data source (4a), or remarking that she ignores that the problem she is mentioning has already been solved (4b), or stating that Dietl is proposing measures that have already been discussed and discarded as they turned out to be illegal (4c), which also undermines his rival's ethos:

(4) a. [W]e should not be listening to statistics made up by union leaders. We should be listening to the NYPD, which runs School Safety for five years. School crime and violence has gone down […] 35% compared to five years ago.
     b. This might be interesting if it hadn't been covered already over the last year and clearly answered.
     c. A lot of what he said is actually not legally allowable to create high-rises for the homeless.

Moreover, his own experience in the city hall places him in a position to defend first-hand successful experiences. He legitimizes his decision of destroying backup records of immigrants, which Malliotakis tried to prevent (5a), as that was the advice of security experts, so he is able to restore his face in terms of logos by turning a delegitimation strategy into positive self-legitimation. He also reminds the audience that he is not less concerned about the issue, as his own mother was an immigrant and, resorting to pathos and emotion again, adds that he could not be prouder of his own heritage by siding with the immigrants when Dietl remembers his original last name was Wilhelm (5b):

(5) a. The NYPD is comfortable with the New York City law that says those backup documents can and should be destroyed. I listened to the NYPD, I trust their judgement.
b. I know my grandparents would not have been allowed into this country from Southern Italy if this type of "merit-based systems" were allowed. My grandparents didn't speak English, my grandparents didn't have college degrees, my mother didn't speak English until she went to school.

He addresses Dietl's accusations on corruption by explaining how the police already handled and filed the case:

(6) This matter's been fully investigated by the federal authorities; they took no further action. This has been covered and covered and covered again. We hold ourselves to a high standard of integrity.

This constitutes an appeal to ethos and restores his face by which not only does he elude responsibility but increases the credibility of his decisions by holding specialists accountable for them.

Nevertheless, when the person that is questioning his office is anchor Maurice DuBois, de Blasio changes his attitude and either recognizes his errors (7a) in order to reinforce his ethos or tries to avoid the question (7b) so as to oppose him:

(7) a. Maurice, I didn't ignore it, we put a huge amount of resources into addressing homelessness from the beginning. What we failed to do and I've been very open about, I take full responsibility, I should have put forward a holistic plan from the beginning.
b. Maurice, look, we have so many better things to talk about this city. To begin with, affordable housing…

Therefore, he is applying different strategies: while he is trying to delegitimize his opponents, he treats the anchor as a representative of the voters and tries to listen carefully and responsibly, assuming mistakes so as not to damage his image. So he shows he is aware of the importance of face; that is, his public image.

In his final request for votes, he balances his achievements and presents himself as an effective knight against everyone who is hurting the citizens, so he portrays politics as a polarized battle between those who attack, such as Donald Trump, and those like himself, who fight to defend the citizens, and gives the responsibility to the audience to decide which side to join. When comparing all of his rhetoric strategies with those of his first Mayoral campaign (Sánchez Ruiz, 2019), the most repeated resources revolve around positive self-representation and polarization by locating on the *right* side, the talented team of his administration and the electorate.

5.2. Bo Dietl

In order to *look right*, the independent candidate Bo Dietl was wearing a pin supporting his own candidacy and another one with the American flag. He is said to have another one valued in $850 with diamonds, rubies, sapphires and white

gold in it (Goodman, 2017a), but he decided not to use it for the occasion. He was using a much more informal register and talked in a much more passionate tone than his opponents, sometimes red faced (Goldmacher, 2017), addressing de Blasio as *Mr. Mate* or *May*. According to Allan and Burridge, uttering a dysphemistic word in public made up of young and old and men and women is detrimental to one's "public self-image" (2006, p. 32). However, this also constitutes a resource to achieve the friendly involvement of his audience, also by calling himself Mayor Bo or the Bo man.

In regard to his own ethos, he proved his *having the right intentions* by announcing his guidelines referring to the fight against terrorism, and immigration. In his case, he would not let demagogic considerations prevent him from taking the action needed, as has already been done on occasion (8a), which implies following the steps of Israel (8b):

(8) a. Political correctness cannot be there all the time. We have to have proper information and if you have a lead, you get a warrant like they took a warrant on that mosque.
     b. Proper security, vet everyone, make sure they're secure coming into our country, take it from Israel. It's a great country. They do a great vetting and talk to people, find out what they're all about.

In order to strengthen his ethos, he also tried to stay apart from his stereotypical image of a millionaire, and appear as an average citizen. For that, he addressed the subject of gentrification, by explaining it in simplified, informal terms –"jack the price up"–. He used polarization by making two groups and remaining together with the audience among those "that cannot afford to live there". He also claimed that the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) leaves behind people they should be supporting, which implies de Blasio's inefficient management (10a). Dietl also proposed to raise taxes for the highest incomes, identified through polarization with the Mayor's personal friends. He proposed to increase their contribution by using the dysphemistic expression "to put a tax on their butts". So, using synecdoche he equalled them to their supposedly least honorable part of their bodies. New York's wealth is described by the metaphor "gold mine", which is "sitting" and left at the expense of the corrupt ones with the active involvement of the Mayor, whose ethos is openly confronted (10b). He insisted on the idea of being an everyman by describing himself as a true subway user learning first-hand about social needs and thinking of security measures for his fellow citizens. This again demerits the Mayor as it speaks of his supposed inefficacy and lack of concern (10c). With this same aim of delegitimation, he uses stories from the news, or collected from his own family, but very especially those gathered by talking to people in the campaign, in order to justify his own candidacy. De Blasio's image of the *Tale of Two Cities* is used against him in delegitimation, as something he has not fought but fostered. Then, the comment about Harlem being "so Harlem" puts Dietl again in a delicate position regarding racism (10d):

(10) a. [T]hey're not building the affordable housing that they should be building. […] I could get homeless people into NYCHA. [T]hey want to change the neighborhood so they can jack the price up and then you and me cannot afford to live there.

     b. I'm against that there's money sitting here, it's a gold mine in New York, this Mayor knows. He's got a lot of friends that are very rich. […] Let's put a big tax on their butts, so we can get that money out of them and that's that money we can use for other things.

     c. What worries me is I'm a person that actually takes the subway, not for photo opportunities. I get stuck on… eh… I see the crowds. I see what's there. There's a lot of opportunities for terrorists to come and hit us in different places all over New York City.

     d. Since I've been running for Mayor for the last year and three… three months, I've gone all over the New York City. When I've gone up to Harlem and people come up to me and… and they said 'Bo, please become Mayor', they wanted to make Harlem… so Harlem; this is for all these developers, so they could charge the people more. This may have started out four years ago. He started out like the progressive Mayor that he is about *The Tale of Two Cities*…

Due to his professional trajectory, one of Dietl's favorite strategies seems to be *telling the right story*. He repeatedly alludes to his past as a policeman, in terms that highlight his professional success, and therefore, competence –"some of the biggest cases in New York"–and his personal implication in his job –"Security's been my life"– (11a). In (11b), Dietl is trying to positively represent himself as someone who overcame difficulties and managed to stand out from the crowd despite his lack of academic opportunities, adding that they were less favorable than those of his opponents. Indeed, the use of the expression "these two" implies an objectionable, dysphemistic vision that might be quite damaging for his own image. In his condolences for the victims of the attack on the previous day, he made use of this preferred strategy so as to remind his role in the 9/11 events in (11c). It also implies *sounding right* and appealing to positive emotions for his own person:

(11) a. My career, everyone knows about being a New York City policeman, a detective, some of the biggest cases in New York. Security's been my life. For the last 32 years, I've been running a private security and investigation Company.

     b. I came from nothing. I'm a high school graduate. I couldn't afford to go to college like these two. And I made something on myself and I want that opportunity for every kid in New York City to become successful and that's what I'm all about. A success.

     c. When this thing happened yesterday, my thoughts went back to 9/11. I was there on 9/11[…] I rescued a kid out of Istanbul, Turkey, and an American young boy, seven years old, who was taken out by terrorists about 20 years ago. This is my life.

Felony sex crimes had been in the spotlight of the campaign, and could be easily associated with pathos provided their strong emotional implications. Dietl had to make use again of *sounding right* strategies with the aim to wash his image as a detective and restore his own damaged face, which he did by stating he was chosen for his good reputation and that he simply did his job *in the right way* (12):

(12)   My point is: this is a business as a private investigator; and there's no kind of conflict. […] They hired me for the two cases, and I did the investigation and *told the truth* [three last words uttered slowly].

Finally, example (13) best summarizes Bo Dietl's plans and tone for the electoral debate: trying to appeal through direct delegitimation of the incumbent candidate, with the help of humor, informal language with a wrong use of time tenses –"I get"– and the creation of an informal buddy relationship with the electorate:

(13)   What will I do? I get rid of this Mayor; very simple.

5.3. Nicole Malliotakis

In order to *look right*, Nicole Malliotakis dressed in a red corporate suit, evoking both professionalism and the Republican Party. On her lapel, she was wearing a Betsy Ross flag, as a hint to indicate her fondness of traditional values. Although she tried to stay firm, and self-assured, some evidence of nervousness could be spotted, such as her forced smile when she was being introduced to the audience followed by a sudden return to a straight face when she thought she was not on camera anymore. She also raises her voice on occasion, or shows visibly tired when she suffers a face affront regarding her connection with Trump –"Here we go again"–.

Malliotakis set her plan of action on two main points: *appear as the right candidate* and *discredit her main rival*, Bill de Blasio, which she combines throughout her discourse by contrasting their actions in a polarizing strategy. For the first goal, she uses pathos to *sound right* by taking her victory for granted, as a scheme to persuade those swing voters who might be discouraged by their doubts about her capability to eventually win. With the following examples, she pictures herself as willing and able to hold the office of Mayoress. In sentence (16a), she makes use of polarization by opposing her own honesty, to de Blasio's alleged corruption in a face affront. In example (16b), she culminates her strongest exhibition of power by stating it is only a matter of time to realize she has already defeated the incumbent Mayor. The metaphor "dead on arrival" makes reference to de Blasio's lack of competence in terms of logos to fight her:

(16) a. I'm ready to change the course of this city and ready to restore integrity back at City Hall.
     b. But I'll be Mayor in January. […] He keeps to put forward to understand he's dead on arrival.

This strategy on assertiveness also implies the elicitation of her program in the form of future measures:

(17) a. My administration will be proactive, not reactive.
     b. We need to restore discipline back into the classroom.
     c. The basic quality of life issues, the basic services that the people deserve. That's what my focus will be on as Mayor, not statues.

All of these examples imply *having the right intentions*, which is what a new candidate can offer for the post, and again as opposed to de Blasio's bad practices as she accuses him of respectively, (17a) preventing terrorism after attacks have

been produced, (17b) silencing teachers and principals' authority to control schools, where now "students feel they can bring weapons in the classroom, drugs to school, that they could bully other students, that they could disrespect their teachers", and (17c) ignoring the essential needs of the citizens. That sentence makes reference to the commission studying the possibility of removing the statue of Christopher Columbus. By indicating more poignant needs, she avoids the uneasy question of positioning herself about this crucial figure of American history at this point, though she had previously shown her opposition to its elimination.

A possible perceived weakness of the candidate could be her lack of experience for the post. She fought it with different resources, as in (18) where, as her competitors, used a *sounding right* strategy included to proudly remind the audience her past records:

(18) I'm very proud of my record serving the people of Brooklyn and Staten Island in the New York State Assembly for the last seven years.

Another way to compensate for her inexperience is to reveal her knowledge of NYC affairs, supported by statistics, as she does in example (19a). This is a resource to make her points appear as objective and unquestionable (see van Dijk, 2005), and is aimed at building her own logos –*thinking right*– while attacking the Major's face by pointing to a mistake –"that is not correct"–. She is confronted by de Blasio for her statistics on sexual harassment and in one of her suggested measures for improvement she proposes, which had been already accomplished by his team. She also shows her familiarity with good practices in other parts of the world, as in (19b), unlike the Major, as long as he has not applied them. Thus, this technique is also helpful for her second goal, that is, to point to the idea that de Blasio's policies are inefficient and leaving the city behind others. Her background involvement is also qualifying for the post, which she explains by *telling the right story* (19c). Her references to the hurricane Sandy constitute an example of kairos or use of timing and opportunity, as the mere fact of mentioning them is a way to let the audience know she volunteered to help the victims. In her final request for votes, she combines this strategy with that of *sounding right* again by showing how much she has used her candidacy to connect with the electors, reflect how harmful de Blasio's policies are, and appealing to the emotions caused by the stories, as can be seen in (19d):

(19) a. That is not a correct, 4% is rape as the increase. Over the last three years, felony sex crimes in our city have increased 25% and that is straight from CompStat.
    b. We have to move our subway signals to a communication-based signal system, like the cities of Paris and London and Copenhagen and Vancouver and San Francisco have […] because [our] signals are pre-World War II conditioned.
    c. I was on the frontlines following Hurricane Sandy to make sure that thousands of my constituents that were displaced had the resources that they need in the immediate aftermath when the federal government wasn't there for us.
    d. I've met amazing people throughout the course of this campaign and they

really want someone is going to fight for them. The senior citizen, who can't afford to stay in their home 'cause of rapidly increasing property taxes; the veteran, who is recently homeless 'cause they were evicted from their apartment; the teacher, who feels they can't control their classroom 'cause this administration has thrown discipline out the window; the schoolkids cafeteria worker, who earns $35,000 and doesn't qualify for Bill de Blasio's affordable housing; and then, there's a Sandy victim, who five years later is still waiting for the city to come in and finish reconstructing their home.

Regarding her own defense, every time she is openly confronted, she is often out of face as she finds herself without a suitable answer to maintain her positive value in public. Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness indicates that in such situation the others should help the person by trying to repair the damage done. Even if this situation is highly unlikely on the ground of an electoral debate, de Blasio and Dietl share occasional moments of humorous comradery from which Malliotakis is excluded.

On different occasions, she adopts a more cautious attitude in her speech content, trying to keep a balance between the two sides of the argument; that is, *thinking right* and without expanding on them as they might be problematic for her public image. That is her reaction when she is censured because of her support for Donald Trump and asked about her own opinion on his migration policy. She distances herself from him in (20a), and finally explains she is not for a merit-based visa system. Like her competitors, when she speaks about this topic, she makes use of the story of her family, with the consequent implication of pathos, and *sounding right*. But, unlike de Blasio, she leaves a margin for error –"I'm not sure"– as can be seen in (20b). As for her opinion on gentrification, she adopts the same ambivalent approach in (20c), with a metaphor –"double-edged sword"– that takes into consideration both sides of the argument while trying not to get hurt with its blades. When Maurice DuBois insistently wants to know if she can find any advantage, she recovers face by pointing to the revitalization of some areas in Brooklyn.

(20) a. I think it needs further examination.
b. I'm not sure that my parents, who were immigrants, would be allowed to come in.
c. [Gentrification] is a double-edged sword.

Regarding her defensive strategy, she accused de Blasio of compliance with politicians alleged with federal corruption charges, such as Assembly Speaker Shelly Silver, suggesting that he did so as a payment for his favors (26a). She delegitimizes de Blasio by matching his name with juvenile offending and crime (26b), and attacks him in (26c), (26d), and (26e) because of the way he had dealt with political corruption; that is, his main weakness facing the elections. Once again, de Blasio is accused of connivance with bribery and corruption. The last example, fully ironic, shows an example of quasidysphemism, as the neutral term "millionaire" is used with insulting intentions.

(26) a. [W]hen it was found [Shelly Silver] was using tax dollars to silence victims of sexual harassment; […] Bill de Blasio called him "a man of integrity".

    b. You have taken away the discretion from the teachers and the principals to be able to control their classrooms and now you have an environment where students feel they can bring weapons in the classroom, drugs to school, that they could bully other students, that they could disrespect their teachers, and, especially, corruption, sometimes in a not-so-polite attitude.

    c. A Mayor who looks for that little loophole, the way to skirt the law to get an intended outcome for himself and his friends.

    d. [A] health care facility […] will also be turned into luxury condos, because his lobbyist friend […] uh… pressed him to do so.

    e. I support you, millionaire Bill, paying more property tax; that's what I support.

That leads to a more serious accusation by means of a metaphor in de Blasio has a "for-sale sign" in the City Hall so as to trade with speculators such as Jona Rechnitz, the founder of a real estate company who was found guilty of a scheme to bribe New York authorities (27):

(27)   We need to think the for-sale sign off of the City Hall and restore integrity once and for all.

She might have considered this sentence as the milestone of her speech, as that same week she actually made a performance through which she put for-sale signs with the names of different donors who allegedly paid-to-play in the City Hall, retaking, as Dietl, the *Tale of Two Cities* against him (Cald, 2017).

6. Conclusions

On November 7th, 2018, Bill de Blasio was re-elected as the Mayor of New York for four more years with 66% of the votes. Nicole Malliotakis was second with 28% and Bo Dietl fifth with 1%. Poll results were therefore confirmed. Thus, votes were conditioned by different circumstances, like different initial levels of popularity and funding for the campaign, a satisfactory level of acceptance, and particularly the massive support of New Yorkers for the Democratic Party.

However, when the analysis examines how the second and final debate of these three candidates affected the abovementioned result, Charteris-Black's theory of persuasion rooted in the rhetoric of Aristotles can shed some light about the candidates' strategies leading to success and failure. Even the outfits they were wearing were transmitting a clear image of their conception of the United States.

The terrorist attack of the previous day also created the right environment for the debate, a moment of kairos that marked the strategies the three of them would make use of. Even though all the candidates started their intervention with some words of sympathy for the victims and their families, the resources chosen were different. De Blasio, as the man in charge, expressed his pride for the New Yorkers and "the way they handled this attack, for the resiliency, the

strength" and praises the NYPD for "how they handled this crisis". Therefore, he showed himself as the leader who has successfully managed a critical situation. That is, he chooses ethos. As his contender, Malliotakis holds a different perspective on the final result by focusing on her condolences or her empathy (*sounding right*) in the midst of a dramatic situation, and consequently pointing to the fact that it was not handled successfully and continues by explaining the necessary improvements in Police procedures (*thinking right*) that are in fact being taken in other parts of the world, meaning that the Mayor is leading the city to fall behind. Thus, she relied on logos, which seems to be her preferred strategy of rhetoric. For his part, Dietl decides to *tell the right story* by reporting his personal experience on the 9/11 events so as to empathise with the audience through pathos.

As their ideas, departing positions and electoral objectives were not the same, they used these persuasive resources differently, in a way that was determined by their position of incumbent or not incumbent candidates. Thus, the main goal of the incumbent candidate was to point to the strengths of his first term, and to remark how extraordinary they were; to renew his endorsement for his team and to show his differences with those collaborators who are accused of bribery or sexual felony crimes. In order to achieve that, he put special emphasis on his ethos as a leader, while pathos was addressed by explicitly acknowledging his esteem and the worth of his team and their decisions. He is skillful enough to manage legitimation and delegitimation strategies and respond to criticism without losing face and turning accusations to their opponents while listening respectfully when it is the anchor the one that formulates them. His delegitimation strategies are based on his rivals' support for Trump.

The other candidates had to discredit the Mayor –even as they were competing against each other because they were more likely to share target voters– and show their possibilities as candidates. Bo Dietl's campaign relied on a more extravagant approach. The very name of his independent party, Dump the Mayor, expressed his main objective: to denigrate de Blasio's persona and policies. He made use of the difference in their respective height, something that might be felt as unfavorable for Dietl into a joke by which it is him the one that makes fun of de Blasio. His techniques included humor, his proud memories of a New York policeman and a businessman, and the creation of a friendly atmosphere with the audience that too often includes impoliteness and dysphemism.

Malliotakis, for her part, seemed tense, and finally was more tentative than her rivals. While she was self-confident when she attacked de Blasio, she hesitated to take part in several key questions for the city, such as gentrification or her past as a supporter of Donald Trump, which apparently was a heavy burden for the contender. All the candidates made use of *sounding right* or appeal to emotions and *telling the right* story to convince the audience. She is not as self-confident as her opponents at facework, so de Blasio knows he only has to mention her support for Trump to delegitimize her.

However, there were some common points in all their speeches. All three used pathos and its emotional implication recalling the stories of their parents

who came from elsewhere to start a new life in the city, a story which many New Yorkers could relate to. In fact, all the candidates employed polarization so as to try to create an ingroup including their voters as opposed to the millionaires who surround the Mayor –in the case of Dietl and Malliotakis– or Trump's supporters –in the case of de Blasio.

The campaign served to set de Blasio's Dickensian image of the *Tale of Two Cities* to talk about inequality in New York, as both his opponents used it at some point, which also lead to acknowledge his initial *right intentions* and his rhetoric skills. All things considered, it seems that a positive sense of representation, based not as much in self-image but on the team of experts, together with a good control of facework served to the initial goal of transmitting an image of good ethics, right emotions and wise decisions, the Aristotelian elements of persuasion needed to gain the trust of the voters.

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