

Post-populism: A Comparative Analysis of Ecuadorian and Venezuelan Presidencies of Lenín Moreno and Nicolás Maduro

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Abstract

This article analyzes the most recognized literature about populism, and it proposes a comparative analysis of two Latin-American regimes based on the concept of “post-populism.” Post-populism refers to the cases in which a populist leader is forced (by different conditions) to leave the political scene, and in order to ensure the continuity of his government, he/she indicates to the electorate a successor who wins the following elections. Even though it is supposed that a populist leader nominates a populist successor, the latter must change his political style to face the negative consequences produced by the previous government, thus generating the post-populist phenomenon. By using a qualitative approach based on a comparison between the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian post-populist cases, namely the regimes of Lenín Moreno and Nicolás Maduro, this paper confirms the existence of the analyzed phenomenon and shows the conditions that provoke a post-populist outcome.

Keywords: populism, post-populism, Venezuela, Ecuador.

Introduction

During the last decade, Ecuador and Venezuela were the setting for scenarios of important cases of populism: Hugo Chávez (1998-2013) and Rafael

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Correa (2006-2017) set themselves as re-founders of their homelands, using populism both as an electoral strategy and as a component of their government and leadership style. The consequences of their politics were similar: they implemented constitutional systems that would have allowed them to preserve the power indefinitely. However, Chávez died in 2013. Correa desisted from running for the presidential elections in 2017, after being accused by public opinion of an evident conflict of interest when, through a questionable process, he reformed the Constitution in 2015 to have a chance to be reelected. Thus, Nicolás Maduro, indicated by Chávez as his successor in Venezuela, took the presidency *ad interim* until the elections of 2013, which he won, as so did Lenín Moreno in Ecuador in 2017, thanks to Correa, who indicated him as the only candidate who could ensure a continuity of his plans for Ecuador.

These situations occurred in comparable contexts, within similar political systems characterized by the presence of a populist leader, in nations with similar constitutions, based on the “Andean Neo-constitutional Theory,” and similar economic schemes that belong to the “Twenty-first Century Socialism” ideology, which mainly consists of redistributive political economics.¹ The similarities could lead us to think that Chávez and Correa’s successors should have shown similar political styles and actions, nonetheless the reality does not correspond to such an obvious deduction: as we will show, Maduro and Moreno’s cases present remarkable differences, as much when compared with their predecessors as between themselves. Particularly, Chávez’s leadership style seems to be continued in Maduro’s government, but the evidence indicates that he stiffens it, up to the point of being considered a dictator,² while Moreno, since the beginning of his term, has taken distance from his predecessor, thereby creating a pointbreak in his leadership style. Thus, using the “post-populist” concept as a starting point, we will show that the post-populism that occurred in Ecuador and Venezuela produced different outcomes as a result of the leadership style and actions adopted by the considered presidents when, as a consequence of the negative results produced by the previous administrations, a segment of the population started to demand a more democratic system. In this

¹ Lorenzo Sigaut, Juan Paladino, Mario Pachecho, José Hidalgo, Felipe Hurtado, Asdrubal Oliveros and Carlos Álvarez, *El socialismo del siglo XXI tras el boom de los commodities* [The Twenty-first Century Socialism after the Boom of the Commodities] (Quito: CORDES, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, SOPLA, 2017).

² Ramiro Ávila, *El Neoconstitucionalismo Andino* [The Andean Neo-constitutional Theory] (Quito: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, 2016), 26-32. Some theorists look at Chávez from the perspective of an authoritarian president [Rodrigues de Caires and Sánchez, *La supervivencia del autoritarismo en Venezuela: legados institucionales y estrategias mixtas* “The Survival of Authoritarianism in Venezuela: Institutional Legacies and Mixed Strategies” (Quito: FLACSO, 2020), 48-71], but he only really was a “potential” dictator, due to the fact that during his term, he could count on a strong popular support of the major part of Venezuelan.

regard, the article argues that a populist experience has consequences for democracy even after it has ceased to exist, and the more negative the results of previous administrations are, the more a given populist experience is protracted and stiffens over time.

A Qualitative Approach

This article aims to explain the difference between two similar presidential cases, based on the concept of “post-populism.” In this case, the prefix “post” has not only a temporal but also an ontological meaning: it indicates the evolution of a populist phenomenon, which, due to the existence of particular conditions, becomes something different; this article presents the theoretical model that illustrates this phenomenon. For this reason, it is guided by a qualitative approach based on the analysis of secondary sources, which is the best analytical method for this kind of study, considering that “it stresses the socially constructed nature of reality.”³

Therefore, through a comparison, the proposed theoretical model will constitute the basis of the analysis of the chosen cases. Each case was historically analyzed to describe the way in which a populist leadership, such as those of Chávez and Correa, evolves into a post-populist one, such as those of Maduro and Moreno. Regarding the “internal validity” of the study, each case was first studied individually, by using a “process tracing” method,⁴ a comparative analysis was conducted subsequently by verifying if the cases displayed “different necessary conditions” despite sharing “qualitative membership in all other conditions.”⁵

The small number of cases does not negatively affect the study, nor does it detract from its importance, as it describes a phenomenon which is frequent in Latin America (as evidenced by the cases of Argentina, Nicaragua and Brazil). Moreover, it allows applying a more intensive empirical approach.⁶

The questions that guided this study were: “What are the conditions that generate post-populism?”, “Is post-populism a univocal phenomenon?”, “Can post-populism constitute a way to explain how populism affects democracy?”.

³ Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2008), 4.

⁴ James Mahoney and Terrie Larkin, “Comparative-Historical Analysis in Contemporary Political Science,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, eds. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier et al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 410-542.

⁵ Carsten Schneider and Claudius Wagemann, *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 122.

⁶ Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

Finally, the article is divided into three parts: the first, which contains the theoretical framework, the second, where the application of the process tracing took place, finally, the discussion which answers to the research questions.

Populism and Post-populism

Latin-American populism is a peculiar topic. Indeed, the historical existence of a form of government based on a strong presidentialism distinguishes the different experiences around the world from Latin-American populism. This element creates the socio-political dynamics that transformed Latin America into a “natural habitat”⁷ for populism. Indeed, after the independence of the Latin-American colonies, the newborn states were characterized by the existence of a multilevel socio-economic and administrative structure that served the interests of the European crowns, according to the principle “*divide et impera*.”⁸ Accordingly, the *caudillos*, authoritarian figures legitimized by popular support,⁹ who ruled at the margin of law, started to take precedence, and to constitute modern states based on a strong central power, whereby the concentration of such, in the hands of a single leader, should have been the necessary condition to prevent the countries from suffering internal divisions, and from the maintenance of political power by the administrators chosen by the empires.¹⁰ In doing so, the *caudillo* paved the way by which many populist politicians have arisen. Indeed, in order to gain support from the people, they started to give a more personal touch to politics, creating the image of an existing analogical correspondence between the people, the homeland’s needs and the leader.¹¹ Hence, we can say that the existence of personalism in politics constitutes the common denominator between the Latin American presidential system and populism.¹²

⁷ Daniel File, “Post-populism: Explaining Neo-liberal Populism Through the Habitus,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 16, no. 2 (2014): 221-238.

⁸ Josep Colomer, “Elected Kings with the Name of Presidents,” *Revista Latinoamericana de Política Comparada* 7, (2013): 79-97.

⁹ Francisco Panizza, *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy* (London: Verso, 2005).

¹⁰ Juan Linz, “El régimen autoritario” [The Authoritarian Regime], in *Antologías para el estudio y la enseñanza de la ciencia política* [Anthologies for the Studying and Teaching of Political Science], ed. Herminio Sánchez (México D.F.: Herminio Sánchez De La Barquera y Arroyo, 2017), 87.

¹¹ Panizza, *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*.

¹² Juan Sarmiento, “Populismo constitucional y reelecciones, vicisitudes institucionales en la experiencia sudamericana” [Constitutional Populism and Reelections, Institutional Vicissitudes in the South American Experience], *Estudios Constitucionales* 1 (2013): 569-602.

Despite the common origin of all Latin-American populist experiences, it was difficult to define the populist phenomenon.¹³ We can say that, ontologically, populism constitutes a particular way to represent social and political reality based on a dichotomous vision that confronts the “good” with the “evil part” of society,¹⁴ in which the determination of what is “good” or “evil” constitutes the difference distinguishing the experiences. Thus, populism is not a univocal phenomenon: it covers different contextual dimensions. Indeed, many scholars proposed definitions that highlight various aspects of this phenomenon.

One of the first scholars to identify this phenomenon was Gino Germani.¹⁵ He observes that the political style adopted by Perón in Argentina postulates the existence of an intermediate political system between authoritarianism and liberal democracy, which redeems the lower social classes by allowing them to constitute a unique body in order to face an oppressor political system. Ernesto Laclau indicates that all experiences related to populism share a common initial process, by which the populist leaders succeed in homogenizing the malcontent of the population in a unique political base, “the people,” by projecting themselves as the only chance to assuage all of the unsatisfied political demands.¹⁶ Kurt Weyland, conversely, describes populism as a political strategy composed of different actions: the mobilization of the people excluded by the development process of an economic system, the use of the leader’s person as a direct link between the people and the power, and the deinstitutionalization of the state.¹⁷

By changing perspective, populism is also described as a “political communication style,”¹⁸ which refers to “the people,” and communicates a strong closeness to it; or as a radical communication style, by which things are divided in two strict moral categories: “good” and “evil.”¹⁹ Adding to this,

¹³ Ernesto Laclau, *Política e ideología en la teoría marxista: capitalismo, fascismo, populismo* [Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory. Capitalism, Fascism, Populism] (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1986).

¹⁴ Cas Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist,” *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (2004): 541-563.

¹⁵ Gino Germani, *Authoritarianism, Fascism, and National Populism* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1978), 237-242.

¹⁶ Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005), 69.

¹⁷ Kurt Weyland, “Neopopulism and Neoliberalism in Latin America: Unexpected Affinities,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 31, no. 3 (1996): 3-31.

¹⁸ Jan Jagers and Stefaan Walgrave, “Populism as Political Communication Style: An Empirical Study of Political Parties’ Discourse in Belgium,” *European Journal of Political Research* 46, no. 3: 319-345.

¹⁹ Michael Hamelers and Desirée Schmuck, “It’s Us Against Them: A Comparative Experiment on the Effects of Populist Messages Communicated via Social Media,” *Information, Communication and Society* 20, no. 9 (2017): 1425-1444.

Francisco Panizza²⁰ agrees with the foregoing opinion, but he reforms the idea by asserting that such dichotomist logic consists of a division between people in favor or against the established system, explaining an intrinsic feature of populist movements: their anti-establishment nature.

Accordingly, we can currently consider populism a phenomenon based on at least three important pillars: rhetoric, image, and action. The first two elements become visible during the electoral campaign of a populist leader, but when he is elected president, they are strengthened. The existence of a Manichean rhetorical element, which creates groups and sets them against each other, according to “good vs. evil” logic, is recognized as fundamental by many authors.²¹ Indeed, the normal antagonism among groups, typical of the political confrontation, is exacerbated in populism, through the identification of the opponents like enemies.²² Besides, in some cases, the “opponents” are not people or tangible situations, but abstract adversities (i.e., globalization, economic theories, etc.).²³ In order to persuade the people of the existence of such enemies, populist leaders transmit a particular image of their person to the people, showing themselves as revolutionary heroes,²⁴ who are imminent and irreplaceable and the only people capable of changing the system in favor of the people, like many past heroes (such as historical liberators).²⁵ Hence, they identify themselves as the “homeland re-founders” by proposing constitutional

²⁰ Francisco Panizza, “Fisuras entre populismo y democracia en América Latina” [“Fissures between Populism and Democracy in Latin America], in *El retorno del pueblo: Populismo y nuevas democracias* [The Return of the People: Populism and the New Democracies], eds. Carlos de la Torre and Enrique Peruzzotti (Quito: FLACSO, 2008), 81.

²¹ Margaret Canovan, “Trust the People! The Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy,” *Political Studies* 47 (1999): 2-16; Carlos de la Torre, “Populist Citizenship in the Bolivarian Revolutions,” *Middle Atlantic Review of Latin American Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017): 4-29; Benjamin De Cleen and Yannis Stavrakakis, “Distinctions and Articulations: A Discourse Theoretical Framework for the Study of Populism and Nationalism,” *Journal of the European Institute for Communication and Culture* 24, no. 4 (2017): 1-19; Luis Zanatta, “¿Populismos de izquierda? El caso de América Latina” [Left Populism? The Latin American Case], *Diálogos* 19 (2018): 74-91.

²² Carlos de la Torre, “Populism and Nationalism in Latin America,” *Javnost - The Public* 24, no. 4: 1-16.

²³ *Ibid.*; Susanne Gratius and Ángel Rivero, “Más allá de la izquierda y la derecha: populismo en Europa y América Latina” [Besides the Left and Right: Populism in Europe and Latin America], *Revista CIDOB d’Afers Internacionals* 119 (2018): 35-61.

²⁴ Francisco Panizza, “Populism and Democracy in Latin America,” *Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs* 23, no. 1 (2009): 39-46; Zanatta, “¿Populismos de izquierda?,” 74-91.

²⁵ Jorge Carpizo, “Características esenciales del sistema presidencial e influencias para su instauración en América Latina” [“Essential Features of Presidential System and Influences to Its Instauration in Latin America], *Boletín Mexicano de Derecho Comparado* 115 (2006): 57-91; Torre, “Populism and Nationalism in Latin America,” 1-16.

changes, as an instrument to recover the moral integrity for the political class.²⁶ They create an image, which puts the leader's person at the center of the political scene. Particularly, in presidential systems, the populist leader tries to control all of the state institutions:²⁷ they become a sort of emanation of his own person and, in doing so, he can concentrate power in his hands. Indeed, a populist leader always tries to avoid any form of intermediation, directly calling "the people" to show their support, as the only source of legitimacy, against the claims of his opponents.²⁸ This particular relationship also explains the frequent use of referendums which are not used as a tool to consult the population, but rather to affirm the correspondence between leader's and people's will.²⁹

This creates a reciprocal identification between leaders and the people that produce the "delegative democracy,"³⁰ which represents the best way to understand how populism affects the foundations of the liberal democracy, since it only gives to people the illusion of participating, and at the same time debilitates the opposition to the government.³¹ In this regard, we can say that populism changes the way in which democracy is perceived; indeed, it creates a political vision in which democracy is mainly understood in the perspective of popular support to the leader. Thus, the above-mentioned identification is the result of the use of continuous propaganda and symbolic actions: the first is based on lies, false accusations and fake news,³² and its purpose is to stimulate the mobilization of "the people,"³³ whilst the second is indeterminate and can be

²⁶ Carlos de la Torre, "Populism and the Politics of the Extraordinary in Latin America," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 21, no. 2 (2016): 121-139.

²⁷ Laura Tedesco and Rut Diamint, "Latin American Democracy. What to Do with the Leaders?," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 33, no. 1 (2014): 31-45.

²⁸ Kurt Weyland, "Neopopulism and Neoliberalism in Latin America: Unexpected Affinities," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 31, no. 3, (1996): 3-31; Antony Spanakos, "New Wine, Old Bottles, Flamboyant Sommelier: Chávez, Citizenship, and Populism," *New Political Science* 30, no. 4 (2008): 521-544; Jenny Jiménez and Alexandra Patarroyo, "El populismo en contextos democráticos en América Latina: revisión a los significantes vacíos en el discurso de tres líderes populistas, un estudio desde el análisis político del discurso" [Populism in Democratic Contexts in Latin America: Review of the Empty Signifiers in the Discourse of Three Populist Leaders. A Study from the Political Analysis of Discourse], *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* 64, no. 235 (2019): 255-288.

²⁹ Patricio Trujillo, "Consultas y referendums populares. ¿Búsqueda de legitimidad política en Ecuador?," [Popular Consultations and Referendums. A Search for Political Legitimacy in Ecuador?], *Apuntes Electorales* 18, no. 60, (2019): 101-125.

³⁰ Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5, no. 1 (1994): 55-69.

³¹ Torre, "Populism and the politics of the extraordinary in Latin America," 121-139.

³² Wolfgang Heuer, "The Temptations of Lying," *Russian Sociological Review* 17, no. 4 (2018): 25-36.

³³ Niksa Svilicic and Pero Maldini, "Visual Persuasion and Politics: Ideology and Symbols of the Totalitarian Regimes' – Case Study: Hammer and Sickle," *Collegium Antropologicum* 37, no. 2 (2013): 569-582.

improvised, in the sense that populist leaders can act outside the limits imposed by a political program or the law, taking advantage of contingent situations to increase their popularity. Therefore, populism is also considered as a “fictional ideology,”³⁴ or a “thin ideology,”³⁵ meaning that populist movements never achieve an ideological maturity: they take some ideological or programmatic elements from strong ideologies, with the only aim of identifying themselves with a more familiar political category. Now, before explaining what “post-populism” is, we have to add another element to understand populism, which is its controversial relationship with democracy.

In this regard, scholars present different perspectives: some agree with the fact that populism considers (or uses) “the people” as the very source of democracy,³⁶ even superior to the law itself,³⁷ whereby, according to the populist outlook, the leader, who is elected by the people, is the real and proper guarantee of the existence of democracy in a social system.³⁸ In this regard, between democracy and populism there is a common point: the purpose of empowering the masses.³⁹ Indeed, it is supposed that a populist leader needs the participation of the lower class to achieve power and, for this reason, somehow, it spurs the participation, through a limitation of the intermediation of the institutions, calling people to a more direct participation in politics.⁴⁰ In this sense, it would seem that populism strengthens democracy.⁴¹

Of course, the fact that democracy is frequently conceived as “liberal democracy” makes other scholars contradict the foregoing perspective: some, for instance, affirmed that populism can never be considered as democratic, due to its rejection of representative institutions,⁴² while others reaffirm this by stating that, in a democratic system, public institutions have the task to limit the

³⁴ Enric Ucelay, “Acerca del concepto ‘Populismo’” [On the ‘Populism’ Concept], *Historia Social* 2 (1988): 51-74.

³⁵ Ben Stanley, “The Thin Ideology of Populism,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13, no. 1 (2008): 95-110; Cas Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist,” *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (2004): 541-563.

³⁶ Panizza, *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*.

³⁷ Koen Abts and Stefan Rummens, “Populism versus Democracy,” *Political Studies* 47, no. 1 (2007): 405-424.

³⁸ Yunus Sozen, “Populist Peril to Democracy: The Sacralization and Singularization of Competitive Elections,” *Political Studies Review* 55, no. 2 (2009): 1-17.

³⁹ Diego von Vacano, “American Caudillo: Princely Performative Populism and Democracy in the Americas,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 45, no. 4 (2019): 1-16.

⁴⁰ Susanne Gratius and Ángel Rivero, “Más allá de la izquierda y la derecha: populismo en Europa y América Latina” [Besides the Left and Right: Populism in Europe and Latin America], *Revista CIDOB d’Afers Internacionals* 119 (2018): 35-61.

⁴¹ Margaret Canovan, “Trust the People! The Populism and the two Faces of Democracy.”

⁴² Torre, “Populism and the Politics of the Extraordinary in Latin America,” 121-139.

attributions of a political leader,⁴³ which definitively is a problem for a populist ruler. So, according to these last political scientists, the biggest risk represented by populism is its fall into an authoritarian regime.

Beyond this, we have to highlight that, as we have already said, there is a trend in populist phenomena occurring in presidential systems towards gaining power and maintaining it indefinitely.⁴⁴ This provokes the colonization of public institutions that particularly affects the electoral institutions, which, together with the electoral law, are almost always manipulated by populists to ensure the continuity of their governments.⁴⁵ This counteracts with democracy, which creates interruptions in the power cycle through the elections, as a form of guarantee of its maintenance.

Democracy frequently manifests its presence through popular claims for elections, even outside of the established election timeline, particularly in countries with weak democracies and political instability.⁴⁶ This also occurs because when a populist leader remains in power for a long time. Instead of strengthening his influence over the people, he corrodes it. There is a logical explanation: the *raison d'être* of populism is the existence of a mass, which, influenced by the populist propaganda, votes for a populist ruler, thinking that he could satisfy its demands. So, a populist leader has to transmit to the people the perception of being able to satisfy them, consistently maintaining high levels of popular support for his person. For this reason, populists use public funds for paternalistic policies and clientelism,⁴⁷ but this way of governing only functions with adequate economic resources. Consequently, when such resources start to lack, people's support declines, as populist tools show their limitations and inadequacy to respond to the people's needs. Thus, people could demand changes in the political system which could lead to new elections, whereby producing a challenge to maintain the populist leader's power.

When a situation like the aforementioned one occurs, the elements for the existence of post-populism appear, and the successor of a populist president can change his political style thus producing a discontinuity in the leadership model.

⁴³ Laura Tedesco and Rut Diamint, "Latin American Democracy. What to Do with the Leaders?" *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 33, no. 1 (2014): 31-45.

⁴⁴ Diego von Vacano, "American Caudillo."

⁴⁵ Irma Méndez de Hoyos, "La manipulación del marco legal de las elecciones en América Latina entre 2000 y 2012: una aproximación metodológica" [Manipulation of the Legal Framework of Elections in Latin America between 2000 and 2012: A Methodological Approach], *Foro Internacional* 57, no. 3 (2017): 640-685.

⁴⁶ María Ollier, "Liderazgos políticos y democracia en América latina" [Political Leadership and Democracy in Latin America], *Rivista Italiana di Sociologia* 9, no. 17 (2018): 87-106.

⁴⁷ Carlos de la Torre, "The Ambiguous Meanings of Latin American Populisms," *Social Research* 59, no. 2 (1992): 385-414.

In this regard, even if the term “post-populism” was coined⁴⁸ to indicate the case of the electoral victory of a neoliberal populist politician, in this paper we will use this category to indicate the case. Following a term of a populist president, the newly elected candidate (who has won the elections thanks to the support of his predecessor) is obliged to modify his political style to maintain power in order to face the negative consequences caused by the precedent administration and democratic popular claims. Thus, he generates a new leadership model, which presents an ontological connection with populism, but it is no longer properly such. Figure 1 summarizes the process that leads to a post-populist phenomenon.

In what follows, the post-populist category is based on the following assumptions: (1) in the absence of economic resources, a populist leader progressively loses popular consent due to his propensity to spend copious public resources in paternalistic and clientelist actions aimed at keeping public consent high, which harm the national economy; (2) populism’s nature and practice impel the leader to find a way to maintain power; (3) under negative social and economic conditions, people always demand changes, and, in democratic contexts, these changes should begin with new elections; (4) related to the two antecedent points, a populist leader can indicate a successor hoping to ensure a continuity for his government plans; (5) closely related to populism, post-populism can more easily occur in presidential systems, where politics are more easily personalized.

Through this comparative analysis, we aim to emphasize the existence of the described phenomenon and the elements that produced a difference between Venezuelan and Ecuadorian post-populisms in the regimes of Moreno and Maduro.

Chávez and Correa: Similar Populist Experiences

Based on the assumptions made in the theoretical section, we propose a comparison between Chávez’s and Correa’s populist experience, in order to highlight the similitudes of the contexts where the post-populist cases emerged. There were four categories by which the comparison was made, each of which was analyzed based on distinct elements: populist rhetoric (analyzed in the perspective of its function, that is, to create an electoral base, an identification between the people and the leader, and the representation of a dichotomous reality), populist image (analyzed in the perspective of the use of the personalism and the exaltation of the leader’s image), ideology (which had to be fictional) and populist actions (like the deinstitutionalization of the state, and

⁴⁸ Daniel Filc, “Post-populism: Explaining Neo-liberal Populism through the Habitus,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 16, no. 2 (2014): 221-238.

the design of methods to preserve the power, the use of continuous propaganda, of paternalistic and clientelist policies). Finally, the differences between the cases are emphasized.

First, we can observe that both the leaders succeeded in creating an electoral base using the rhetoric of needing new constitutions: on one hand, Chávez shaped his discourses on the current Venezuelan political culture (influenced by past negative democratic experiences), representing himself as the “homeland re-founder;”⁴⁹ on the other, Correa took advantage from recent economic and political crises to convince the population to vote for a referendum for a new fundamental law. Besides, they always refer to the people to create the image of an identification with the leader, whereby using expressions such as “collective leadership,”⁵⁰ “homeland’s brothers,”⁵¹ or using the incipit “the people said”⁵² in their speeches. Nonetheless, regardless of the representation of a dichotomous reality and the existence of socio-political enemies of “the people,” the similitudes between the leaders are even more evident: they both called other political leaders that supported their populist movements (as Fidel Castro, for instance) “mates” or “friends,” while they presented their adversaries as “the devil,” “betrayers,”⁵³ or “immoral,” also using terms with a pejorative connotation like “partocracy,” or “oligarchy,” or “yanqui imperialism”⁵⁴ (specifically, referring to the United States). Regarding the element of exaltation for the image of the leader, which is typical in a populist experience, we can observe that during Chávez’s government the whole state became a structure to support the president: from his party, where

⁴⁹ Emilia Bermúdez and Gildardo Martínez, “Hugo Chávez: La articulación de un sentido para la acción colectiva” [Hugo Chávez: The Articulation of a Sense of Collective Action], *Espacio Abierto* 9, no. 1 (2000): 53-77.

⁵⁰ Redacción de La Nación Costa Rica, “Últimas palabras de Hugo Chávez al frente de Venezuela” [Last Words of Hugo Chávez at the Head of Venezuela], accessed December 12, 2012, online https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Hugo+ch%C3%A1vez+.

⁵¹ Carlos de la Torre, “Populist Citizenship in the Bolivarian Revolutions,” *Middle Atlantic Review of Latin American Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017): 4-29.

⁵² “Discurso Econ. Rafael Correa Delgado”, Presidencia de la República del Ecuador, accessed March 23, 2021, www.presidencia.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014.

⁵³ Simón Bolívar is considered a Venezuelan national hero and the father of the homeland. He has an historical and symbolical meaning by representing the embodiment of the homeland’s positive values.

⁵⁴ Hugo Arias, “Auditoría ciudadana de la deuda ecuatoriana” [Citizen Audit of the Ecuadorian Debt], in *Primer Simposio Internacional Sobre Deuda Pública, Auditoría Popular Y Alternativas De Ahorro E Inversión Para Los Pueblos De América Latina* [First International Symposium on Public Debt, Popular Audit, Savings and Investment Alternatives for the Peoples of Latin America], *Caracas: Llacta!* (2006); Carlos de la Torre, “Rafael Correa un populista del Siglo XXI” [“Rafael Correa, A Populist of Twenty-first Century Socialism”], *Latin American Network Information Center* (Austin: Texas, 2010), <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/vrp/>.

he was expected to always have the last word about every decision, to civil society, which was organized to allow the diffusion of presidential messages and the execution of governmental programs.⁵⁵ Correa's government showed the same pattern: through the institutional colonization his image and political will were placed at the centre of the country's life. Even when the president's life was at risk, as in the case of the "30s,"⁵⁶ Correa faced his opponents personally, to exalt his image.⁵⁷ In their speeches, the two presidents also created a correspondence between themselves and important past leaders (e.g., Simón Bolívar).⁵⁸ Besides, both leaders created personalist parties: the "Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela" and "Alianza PAIS,"⁵⁹ which belonged to the same fictional ideology, the "XXI Century Socialism."⁶⁰ Then, to prove the conflictual relationship between their populisms and the democracy, by means of new constitutional arrangements, they sanctioned very strict laws meant to control the mass media, which allowed them to debilitate the capability of the opposition to contrast their governments.⁶¹ Also, they subdued the judicial and electoral institutions to their will,⁶² and designed a system where indefinite re-election of the president was allowed.⁶³ Finally, they managed to maintain a

⁵⁵ Steve Ellner, "Las estrategias «desde arriba» y «desde abajo» del movimiento de Hugo Chávez," [The strategies "from above" and "from below" of the Hugo Chavez's movement], *Cuadernos del CENDES* 23, no. 62 (2006): 73-93.

⁵⁶ "30s" was a supposed attempted of coup against Rafael Correa, made by policemen.

⁵⁷ Patrick Clark and Jacobo García, "Left Populism, State Building, Class Compromise," *Latin American Perspective* 46, no. 1 (2018): 1-17; Flavia Freidenberg, "Ecuador 2011: Revolución Ciudadana, estabilidad presidencial y personalismo político" [Ecuador 2011: Citizen Revolution, Presidential Stability and Political Personalism], *Revista de Ciencia Política* 32, no. 1 (2012): 129-150.

⁵⁸ Emilia Bermúdez and Gildardo Martínez, "Hugo Chávez: La articulación de un sentido para la acción colectiva" [Hugo Chávez: The Articulation of a Sense of Collective Action], *Espacio Abierto* 9, no. 1, (2000): 53-77.

⁵⁹ Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela, 2020, accessed December 12, 2020, psuv.org.ve: <http://www.psuv.org.ve/psuv>.

⁶⁰ Paula Vidal, Manuel Ansaldo and Juan Cea, "Hugo Chávez y los principios del Socialismo del Siglo XXI: una indagación discursiva (2005-2013)" [Hugo Chávez And the Origin of Twenty-first Century Socialism: A Discursive Research (2005-2013)], *Izquierdas* 42, (2018): 224-250; Bermúdez and Martínez, "Hugo Chávez: La articulación de un sentido para la acción colectiva," ["Hugo Chavez: The Articulation of a Meaning for Collective Action"], 53-77.

⁶¹ Rickard Lalander, "Venezuela 2010-2011: Polarización y radicalización del proyecto socialista" [Venezuela 2010-2011: Polarization and Radicalization of the Socialist Project], *Revista de Ciencia Política* 32, no. 1 (2012): 293-313.

⁶² Simón Pachano, "Ecuador: instituciones y prácticas políticas en la Revolución Ciudadana" [Ecuador: Institutions and Political Praxis in Citizen's Revolution], in *El momento político de América Latina* [The political moment in Latin America], eds. Enrique Iglesias et al (Madrid: Fundación Carolina, 2011).

⁶³ Jennifer Cyr, "Que veinte años no es nada: Hugo Chávez, las elecciones de 2012 y el continuismo político venezolano" [Twenty Years Is Just the Beginning: Hugo Chávez,

high popular support through continuous political propaganda, made in weekly communication spaces (transmitted on the television and the radio), called “Aló presidente” (“Hello President”) and “Enlace ciudadano” (“Citizens link”) (which were financed with public funds), and through institutionalized paternalist and clientelist politics, which took the form of social programs that lacked transparency and accountability.⁶⁴ The only differences that we can observe between the considered cases are that Chávez was always supported by the armed forces,⁶⁵ while the military were the only real opponents to Correa’s government.⁶⁶

Later, Chávez died when the economic conditions were still favourable to a populist government, therefore there was popular support for the president. Consequently, his successor (indicated by Chávez when he was diagnosed with cancer) could continue with Chávez’s leadership style.⁶⁷ In contrast, Correa indicated a successor for the elections of 2017, because his level of popular consent was significantly deteriorated after the constitutional reform of 2015 and, when he left the government, the Ecuadorian economic context could no longer support the populist costs. Accordingly, his successor had to make changes to the previous leadership style, thereby abandoning populism.

The 2012 Elections, and Political Continuity in Venezuela”], *Revista de Ciencia Política* 33, no. 1 (2013): 375-391; Richard Ortiz, “Los problemas estructurales de la Constitución ecuatoriana de 2008 y el hiperpresidencialismo autoritario” [Structural Problems of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution and the Authoritarian Hyper-presidentialism], *Estudios Constitucionales* 16, no. 2 (2018): 527-566.

⁶⁴ Leonardo Vera, “Políticas sociales y productivas en un Estado patrimonialista petrolero: Venezuela 1999-2007,” [“Social and Productive Policies in an Oil Patrimonialist State: Venezuela 1999-2007”], *Nueva Sociedad* 215 (2008): 111-128; Michael Penfold-Becerra, “Clientelism and Social Funds: Evidence from Chávez’s Misiones”, *Latin American Politics and Society* 49, no. 4 (2008): 1-42; Laura Tartakoff, “Ecuador, Argentina, and Paraguay: At Last Immunity,” *Society* 56, no. 1 (2019): 15-22.

⁶⁵ Nelly Arenas, “El gobierno de Hugo Chávez: populismo de otrora y de ahora” [Hugo Chavez’s Government: The Past and the Current Populism], *Nueva Sociedad* 200 (2004): 38-50.

⁶⁶ Rafael Bonifaz and Andrés Delgado-Ron, “Casos verificados de uso ilegítimo de software de vigilancia por parte de gobiernos de América Latina, 2015-2016” [Verified Cases of Unlawful Use of Surveillance Software by Latin American Governments 2015-2016], *Revista de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador* 106 (2018): 315-333.

⁶⁷ Carlos Rodríguez and Jesús Sánchez, “La supervivencia del autoritarismo en Venezuela: legados institucionales y estrategias mixtas (2013-2017)” [The survival of Authoritarianism in Venezuela: Institutional Legacies and Mixed Strategies (2013-2017)], *Revista Andina de Estudios Políticos* 8, no. 2 (2018): 48-71.

Maduro and Moreno: Different Post-populist Outcomes

Before showing the results of the comparison between Maduro and Moreno, we want to point out the economic context, the decline in popular support, and the number of social protests (that occurred after the election of the considered presidents), which led Venezuelans and Ecuadorians to claim for political change, thereby creating the prerequisite conditions for a post-populism phenomenon.

In the following sub-sections, the evidence showcasing the existence of the assumptions both of the populist and post-populist phenomena in Venezuela and Ecuador are shown.

The Venezuelan Context

As we can observe, during Chávez's second term, the GDP progressively increased, from 2003 to 2008 and from 2010 to 2012, mostly sustained by oil revenues. This, together with an increasing external debt, allowed increasing the public expenditure in social programs. The oil revenues had sustained Venezuelan economy until 2013. Starting from that year, the GDP and the oil revenues have progressively and roughly decreased, and not in a proportional way to the external debt. The conditions that sustained the public expenditure disappeared, and it decreased significantly. In 2017 (we do not find data for 2018), public expenditure was the same as during the third quarter of 2012 (see figure 2). During Chávez's government, the popular support was mostly constant, but since Maduro's election, the level of popular support decreased. The data referring to the results of the 2018 presidential elections can be explained by the low level of participation, and by the control that Maduro had on the Venezuelan electoral institution. Indeed, it is refuted by the data offered by the available opinion polls (see figure 3). As we can observe, all of Maduro's terms were characterized by a high level of social instability. Indeed, the indicated sources show the presence of several deaths (more than a thousand) caused by the armed forces, supporting Maduro, during the popular protests (see table 1).

The Ecuadorian Context

During Correa's first term, the Ecuadorian GDP and public expenditures progressively increased, while the external debt decreased. Nonetheless, after the positive peak in oil revenues in 2012, the GDP began to stabilize, whilst public expenditure and external debt grew. Then, starting from 2014, when oil revenues roughly declined, the relation between external debt and public expenditure became closer. Data show that after 2017 the state of the

Ecuadorian economy got worse: the GDP did not grow, public expenditure decreased, and external debt increased (see figure 4).

As we can observe, Correa's level of popular support was mostly irregular. His positive peaks match with the presidential elections, but during Moreno's electoral campaign, Correa's popular support is at its historical minimum. In what regards Moreno, he had never achieved the level of support of his predecessor in electoral terms. Nevertheless, when he started taking distance from the previous president (two months after his election), the level of popular support increased. In 2019, the negative economic situation and the popular protest of October caused a new fall (see figure 5). Finally, during Moreno's term, there were only two meaningful popular protests: the first was directed against Correa and Moreno, caused by a supposed electoral fraud; the second due to economic reasons. The low number of protests can be explained by the conciliatory tone that Moreno maintained with the opponents (see table 2).

Maduro and Moreno's Post-populist Experiences

In this section, we propose a comparison between Nicolás Maduro's and Lenín Moreno's leadership style, based on the same populist categories and elements used in the preceding section. This aims to observe if in each of the considered cases there was a continuity or a discontinuity toward the previous populist experiences.

First, we can observe that after Chávez's death, Venezuelans were ideologically divided by Maduro into *chavistas* and opponents. This also provoked violent clashes between the two groups during many popular protests.⁶⁸ Moreover, in Moreno's case, Correa's supporters were excluded from the category of "the people," and there was a calling for "more honest and pacific people," which could have come from different parties or movements previously excluded from Correa's administration.⁶⁹ Regarding the use of rhetorical means to create identification between the leader and "the people," we can mention the speech that Maduro delivered after Chávez died, in which he created a parallel between Chávez's experience and his by configuring himself as Chávez's rightful heir. This was made clear by the frequent use, in the considered speech, of the slogan "they couldn't defeat you (referring to

⁶⁸ Redacción de T13, "Colectivos chavistas disparan a opositores a Maduro" [Chavez's Collectives Shoot Maduro's Opponents], July 16, 2019, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBDV-mGsWvw>.

⁶⁹ Sunniva Labarthe and Marc Saint-Upéry, "Leninismo versus correísmo: la «tercera vuelta» en Ecuador" [Leninism versus Correism: The "Third Round" in Ecuador], *Nueva Sociedad* 272 (2017): 29-42.

Chávez), they couldn't defeat us (the people)."⁷⁰ Through these words, it is also evident that Maduro wanted to give continuity to Chávez's populist experience, although it meant that he had to keep subjected to the figure of his predecessor. About Moreno, we could not find a similar attitude present in his official speeches.

Then, as Chávez did, Maduro referred to political adversaries as the enemy. For example, he used very hard and polemic tones against the president of the United States, which provoked an escalation of verbal attacks and counterattacks between the two presidents, followed by an embargo from the United States. The same attitude was also used against other Latin American leaders, which started to demand for new elections in Venezuela.⁷¹ Conversely, Moreno propagated a counter-rhetoric in which his predecessor and political supporters became the "new enemy" of Ecuadorians. He reversed the type of relationships that the precedent government kept with different partners, such as the International Monetary Fund, which was convened to provide economic assistance for Ecuador, or the United States to whom the permission to realize military actions in Ecuador was allowed; meanwhile, ex-allies, such as Venezuela or Cuba, were presented as cases of political failure.⁷² About the use of personalism and the exaltation of the leader's figure, Maduro made it clear on different occasions that his image would always have been the reflection of Chávez's.⁷³ Despite, after using Correa's image to win the elections in 2017, Moreno started to associate his predecessor's image to many cases of internal

⁷⁰ Redacción de NTN24, "Nicolás Maduro realiza discurso frente al féretro de Hugo Chávez" [Nicolás Maduro Made a Speech in Front of the Coffin of Hugo Chávez], March 3, 2013, online, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-oqPAq78ZU&t=311s>.

⁷¹ Redacción de BBC Mundo, "Nicolás Maduro pide a Estados Unidos que se retracte de la acusación al vicepresidente de Venezuela" [Nicolás Maduro Asks to United States to Recant from Accusations to the Venezuelan Vice-president], February 15, 2017, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-38977463>; Redacción de El Comercio, "Maduro amenaza con 'crudas medidas' a los países del Grupo de Lima" [Maduro Threatens with 'Raw Measures' for Lima's Group Countries], January 9, 2019, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/maduro-amenaza-paises-grupo-lima.html>.

⁷² Redacción de NTN24, "Lenín Moreno: Correa 'está avergonzando a los partidarios que le quedan'" [Lenín Moreno: Correa 'Is Ashaming his Remaining Supporters'], June 8, 2018, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8ZQ0fcit8E>; Redacción de CNN Español, "Lenín Moreno acusa financiamiento de Maduro a Rafael Correa y a "otro país de América Latina" [Lenín Moreno Denounces Fundings from Maduro to Correa and to "Other Latin American Countries], March 22, 2019, accessed on December 12, 2020, https://www.cnnchile.com/lodijeronencnn/entrevista-matilde-burgos-lenin-moreno-pago-maduro-rafael-correa-otro-pais-america-latina_20190322.

⁷³ Redacción de NTN24, "Nicolás Maduro realiza discurso frente al féretro de Hugo Chávez" [Nicolás Maduro Made a Speech in Front of the Coffin of Hugo Chávez], March 3, 2013, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-oqPAq78ZU&t=311s>.

corruption, thereby creating a distance from Correa.⁷⁴ Furthermore, with regards to the use of a fictional ideology, we can observe that Maduro maintained Chávez's political vision,⁷⁵ while Moreno showed a less ideological, more practical way of doing politics, also by opening a dialogue with the opposition⁷⁶ to his government. Moreover, Maduro kept all the typical populist actions during his government, for example, when in 2015 the opposition achieved the absolute majority in the Venezuelan National Assembly, the president started to repress all democratic processes and institutions by convening a Constitutional Assembly that gave to him the legal control of all other branches of the State. Maduro also chose to take advantage of the support of military bodies to control and suppress all the popular protests, causing many deaths and a massive migration of Venezuelans.⁷⁷ He employed continuous propaganda through a television program called "Diálogo Bolivariano,"⁷⁸ and kept all the social programs established during Chávez's government. He also enlarged the public sector, while keeping a good and functional relation with the armed forces, whose officials occupy more than thirty percent of the major public offices.⁷⁹ Conversely, Moreno "restored" democracy through a referendum, which eliminated the indefinite presidential re-election. Then, there was a proposal to re-establish the independence of the public institutions by changing their

⁷⁴ Simón Pachano, "Elecciones y fin de ciclo en Ecuador. 9º Congreso Latinoamericano de Ciencia" [Elections and End Cycle in Ecuador. 9th Latin American Congress of Science], 2017, FLACSO, Montevideo, accessed December 12, 2020, <http://www.congresoalacip-2017.org/archivo/downloadpublic2?q=YToyOntzOjY6InBhcmFtcyl7czozNToiYTToxOntzOjEwOiJRf9BUlFVSZPljtzOjQ6IjZlNDYiO30iO3M6MT0iaCI7czozMjoiYzYzM1M2I1NTg2MmNmZDNlZGY1YzI0ZWlzMmNmNmNjhhMmQiO30%3D>; Redacción de CNN Español, "Lenín Moreno acusa financiamiento de Maduro a Rafael Correa y a 'otro país de América Latina'" [Lenín Moreno Denounces Fundings from Maduro to Correa and to "Other Latin American Countries"], March 22, 2019, accessed December 12 2020, https://www.cnnchile.com/lodijeronencnn/entrevista-matilde-burgos-lenin-moreno-pago-maduro-rafael-correa-otro-pais-america-latina_20190322/.

⁷⁵ Rickard Lalander, "Venezuela 2010-2011: Polarización y radicalización del proyecto socialista" [Venezuela 2010-2011: Polarization and Radicalization of the Socialist Project"], *Revista de Ciencia Política* 32, no. 1 (2012): 293-313.

⁷⁶ Marc Becker and Thea Riofrancos, "A Souring Friendship, a Left Divided," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 50, no. 2 (2018): 124-127.

⁷⁷ María García-Guadilla and Ana Mallen, "Polarization, Participatory Democracy, and Democratic Erosions in Venezuela's Twenty First Century Socialism," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 681, no. 1 (2019): 62-77.

⁷⁸ Carmen Arteaga, "Amor y chavismo: espacio público y propaganda en el Socialismo del Siglo XXI" [Love and Chavism: Public Space and Propaganda in Twenty-first Century Socialism], *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* 64, no. 237 (2019): 211-243.

⁷⁹ Vicepresidencia de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, 2020, accessed December 12, 2020, <http://www.vicpresidencia.gob.ve/category/noticias/page/7/>; Francine Jácome, "Los militares en la política y economía de Venezuela" [The military in the Politics and Economy of Venezuela], *Nueva Sociedad* 274 (2018): 119-128.

directors. Despite this, all the judicial institutions have engaged in a fight against the corrupted past establishment which have absorbed almost all the work of the state institutions, as a reflection of the president's plans.⁸⁰ In the meantime, Moreno's economic and social program proved empty of political contents, and they were rhetorically centred on the maintenance of the past social assistance model, even though the Ecuadorian economic context could no longer sustain it. Indeed, he gave way to the International Monetary Fund reforms to be applied in Ecuador, in order to grant the economic support promised by the international organization.⁸¹ Finally, Moreno suppressed the "Enlace ciudadano" (Correa's television program for propaganda).⁸²

Discussion

Regarding the first research question, the data shows that a post-populist president has something in common with his predecessor, which is the use of the specific rhetoric in almost all its elements. Nonetheless, all the other populist categories and elements suffer a partial or substantial transformation. Indeed, we can observe that a post-populist leader, who wants to give continuity to a populist government, maintains all the rhetoric elements used by his predecessor, while a leader who wants to mark discontinuity uses the same rhetoric elements against his predecessor.

In regard to the use of the leader's personal image, we can say that in both the post-populist presented cases, it constitutes a transcendental element; indeed, it strongly influences a successor who wants to give continuity to a populist experience, while it is functionally and negatively used to strengthen his level of popular legitimacy by a successor who does not want (or cannot) maintain this kind of leadership style. Regarding the element of ideology and the level of state deinstitutionalization, they also represent distinguishing factors, whose importance depends on the nature of the relation between the post-populist leader, his predecessor, and the people. Therefore, a post-populist leader wanting to maintain a populist political leadership stiffens the ideological discourse, and

⁸⁰ Presidencia de la República del Ecuador, "Presidente Lenin Moreno conforma Comisión Internacional de Expertos Contra la Corrupción" [President Lenin Moreno conforms an Experts International Commission against the Corruption], 2017, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.presidencia.gob.ec/presidente-lenin-moreno-conforma-comision-internacional-de-expertos-contra-la-corrupcion/>.

⁸¹ Marc Becker and Thea Riofrancos, "A Souring Friendship, a Left Divided," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 50, no. 2 (2018): 124-127.

⁸² Carlos Andrade and Carlos Pazmiño, "Transición no significa continuidad. Apuntes para discutir la coyuntura ecuatoriana" [Transition Does not Mean Continuity. Notes to Discuss the Ecuadorian Conjuncture], *Religación* 3, no. 12 (2018): 135-144.

keeps the state deinstitutionalized (which represents a negative condition for democracy), while a leader intending to mark a difference from a previous populist experience abandons ideology and creates the conditions for an increased institutional independence, as a fundamental pillar of his political action.

About the second question, we can say that we are not in front of a univocal phenomenon, and different post-populist outcomes exist. With regards to the considered post-populist cases, the distinct outcomes are produced by the existence of few different conditions between the two cases: (1) In the Venezuelan case, the high international oil price supported the entire second part of Chávez's term, and he died before the fall of such prices. Conversely, in the Ecuadorean case, the oil prices started to fall during the final part of Correa's last term. This fact had an influence on the level of popular support of each president, depending on the availability of resources to sustain their policies. (2) Just before he died, Chávez had won the elections of 2012, which demonstrates an existing popular support, meanwhile in Correa's case there was not a direct democratic act that can prove "the people's" opinion on his person. (3) For this reason, Maduro did not have the chance or pretext to go against his predecessor, who was a factor of legitimacy, whereas in Moreno's case, he could take advantage of the decline of consent experimented during Correa's last term, to blame and make him become the new enemy of the people. (4) While in Venezuela, Chávez could subject all public institutions, including the armed forces, in Ecuador, Correa could not achieve this. Thus, Maduro reacted to protests by using coercion to maintain power, whereas Moreno had to use a conciliatory tone with his opponents to guarantee to the people his desire to respect the interests of all. (5) Maduro still concentrated power in his person, thus becoming an authoritarian president, while Moreno tried to re-institutionalize the state, thereby becoming a more democratic president.

Regarding to the last question, we can conclude that the need for populists to maintain a high level of popular support, through the use of paternalistic and clientelist policies, makes the political scenario depend frequently on the economic condition of a country. So, when the economy cannot sustain a populist political program, a populist government reveals its inefficiency and provokes popular discontent. To fight this situation, a populist leader has to change his political style by creating a post-populist phenomenon.

Finally, we can also conclude that, first of all, democratic claims and the existence of negative socio-economic conditions produced by the previous administration constitute sufficient conditions for the existence of a post-populist phenomenon; then, the possibility for the president (in presidential system) to dispose discretionally of coercion, and the fact that the degree of legitimacy of a president depends mostly on his relation with the figure of the predecessor are necessary conditions to make a post-populist phenomenon express itself in the form of authoritarianism or, vice versa, making it degrade from its past experience.

Conclusion

The analysis of the post-populist phenomenon enhances the level of knowledge about populism, and the most interesting topic highlighted by the study is, the factors which allow populism to arise are the same economic and social conditions that generate post-populism. It substantially means that populism cannot really solve economic and social problems.

Through this study, it is also explained that when talking about populism, it is strongly necessary to focus on the existence of important nuances, which can explain differences among populist experiences. In the considered cases, the different use of populist features indicates that Maduro and Moreno cannot be considered just as populist leaders, but, as we have said, as post-populist presidents.

We can also observe how post-populism can shed light on the relation between populism and democracy: indeed, this does not consist in a univocal relation, but socio-economic conditions can influence the way in which the first impacts on the latter. Indeed, in Maduro's case, we can observe that post-populism represents a negative evolution in the considered relation, while, in Moreno's case, post-populism corresponds to a manner of partially restoring democracy in Ecuador. Moreover, if we accept the idea that the peculiar political culture that characterizes the considered national contexts considers democracy mainly in the perspective of the popular support for the government, we can also say that the post-populist phenomenon, in the light of Venezuelan experience, shows that populism can only be potentially dangerous for democracy. Furthermore, the conditions that cause a degeneration of democracy, and the use of a more authoritarian leadership style have an economic nature. Indeed, democracy decays when a populist leader wants to maintain a populist leadership style, although the national economic conditions no longer allow the populist politician to ensure popular support for the president through the use of a welfare assistance economic scheme.

Annexes

Table 1. Occurred popular protests

Year	Reason
2013	The supporters of Capriles, Maduro's principal opponent, denounced an election fraud and demanded a recount of votes, which was denied by the National Electoral Council. ⁸³
2014	There were several marches in favor and against Maduro. ⁸⁴
2015	Maduro's opponents protested for the arrest of the opposition's exponent Leopoldo López. ⁸⁵
2016	People protested to support the opposition's impeachment requirement. ⁸⁶
2017	People protested against Maduro's government for more than three months. ⁸⁷
2018	In 2018, more than 5000 protest were realized against Maduro's government. ⁸⁸

Source: authors' own elaboration.

⁸³ Redacción de El Mundo, "Siete muertos en los incidentes de Venezuela" [Seven Dead in the Venezuelan Incidents], April 17, 2013, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.elmundo.es/america/2013/04/15/venezuela/1366062632.html>.

⁸⁴ Redacción CNN Español, "Disturbios en Venezuela durante las marchas dejan 3 muertos y 66 heridos" [Disturbances in Venezuela during the Marches leave 3 Dead and 66 Injured], December 2, 2014, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://cnnspanol.cnn.com/2014/02/12/tension-en-venezuela-en-medio-de-marcha-nacional-y-ola-de-protestas/>.

⁸⁵ Redacción de El País, "La oposición venezolana protesta por la condena a Leopoldo López" [The Venezuelan Opposition Protests the Conviction of Leopoldo López], September 19, 2015, accessed December 12, 2020, https://elpais.com/internacional/2015/09/19/actualidad/1442673477_528954.html.

⁸⁶ Redacción de El País, "Más de 100 manifestantes heridos en las protestas contra Maduro en Venezuela" [More than 100 Protesters Injured in Protests against Maduro in Venezuela], October 27, 2016, accessed December 12, 2020, https://elpais.com/internacional/2016/10/26/america/1477495011_576179.html.

⁸⁷ Redacción de CNN Español, "100 datos en 100 días de protestas en Venezuela" [100 Data in 100 Days of Protests in Venezuela], July 9, 2017, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://cnnspanol.cnn.com/2017/07/09/80-datos-en-80-dias-de-protestas-en-venezuela/>.

⁸⁸ Redacción de El País, "Venezuela, 30 protestas diarias" [Venezuela, 30 Daily Protests], July 18, 2018, accessed December 12, 2020, https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/07/18/america/1531871427_802344.html.

Table 2. Occurred popular protests

Year	Reason
2017	People's protests began before the election of Moreno. They were mainly directed against Correa and the prevision of a tax increase to face the economic decline. When Moreno was elected, the supporters of his opponents started to claim for a recount of votes, thereby denouncing an election fraud. ⁸⁹
2019	People protested in the October of 2019, due to the reforms proposed by the International Monetary Fund to Ecuador and approved by the President Moreno. In this case, indigenous people demanded a ministerial change, while members of the opposition required an early election. ⁹⁰

Source: authors' own elaboration.

⁸⁹ Redacción de El Comercio, "Manifestaciones en contra y a favor del Régimen en Quito" [Demonstrations against and in favor of the Regime in Quito], August 25, 2016, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/quito-manifestaciones-oposicion-rafaelcorrea-centrohistorico.html>; Redacción de El Universo, "Asambleístas correístas protestan en la Asamblea y piden adelanto de elecciones" [Correístas Assemblymen Protest in the Assembly and Ask for the Advancement of Elections], October 13, 2019, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/2019/10/03/nota/7545766/asambleistas-correistas-protestan-asamblea-piden-adelanto>.

⁹⁰ Redacción de El Tiempo, "Indígenas de Ecuador piden 'inmediata' destitución de dos ministros" [Indigenous people of Ecuador demand 'immediate' removal of two ministers], October 13, 2019, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.eltiempo.com/mundo/-latinoamerica/indigenas-de-ecuador-piden-destitucion-de-dos-ministros-422896>.

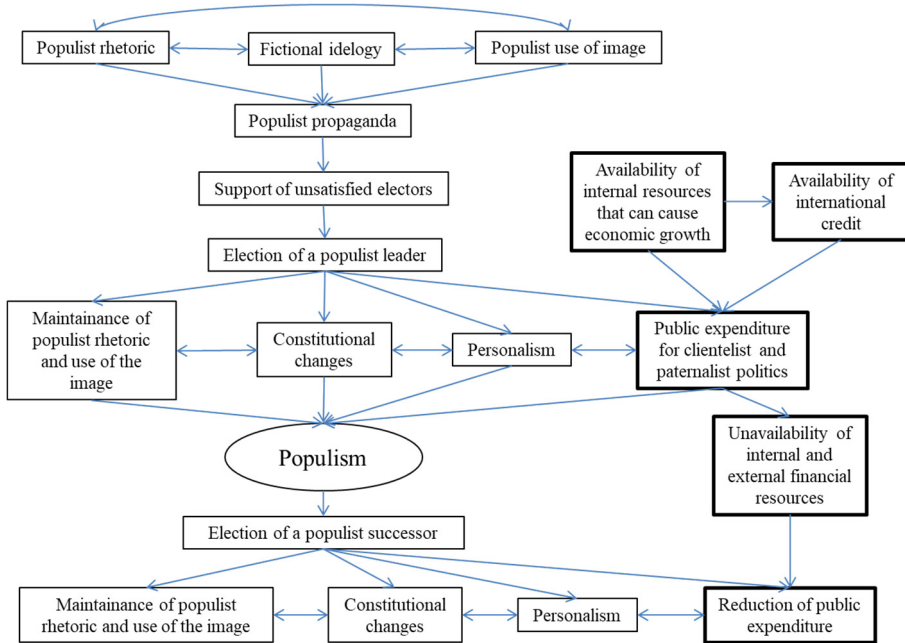


Figure 1. Flowchart of the post-populist process

Source: authors' own elaboration.

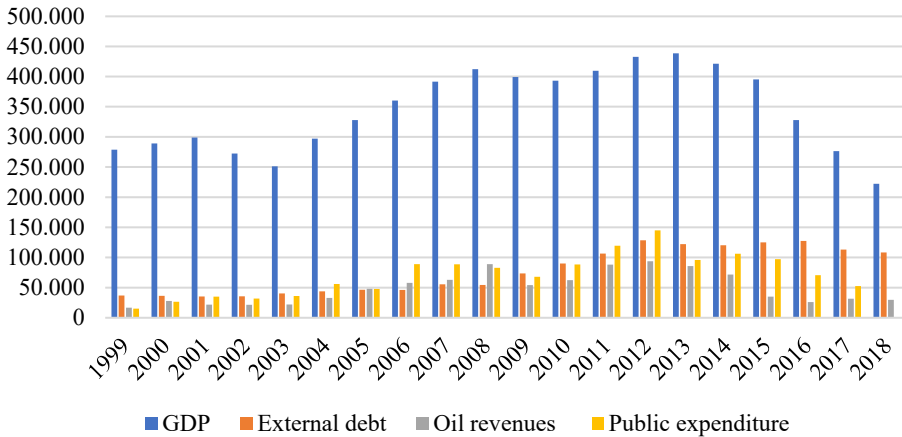


Figure 2. Main Venezuelan economic indicators (2007-2018)

Source: Banco Central de Venezuela, 1999-2020, <http://www.bcv.org.ve/estadisticas/balanza-de-pagos>; World Bank, 1999-2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/venezuela-rb>; Datosmacro, 1999-2020, <https://datos.macro.expansion.com/paises/venezuela>.

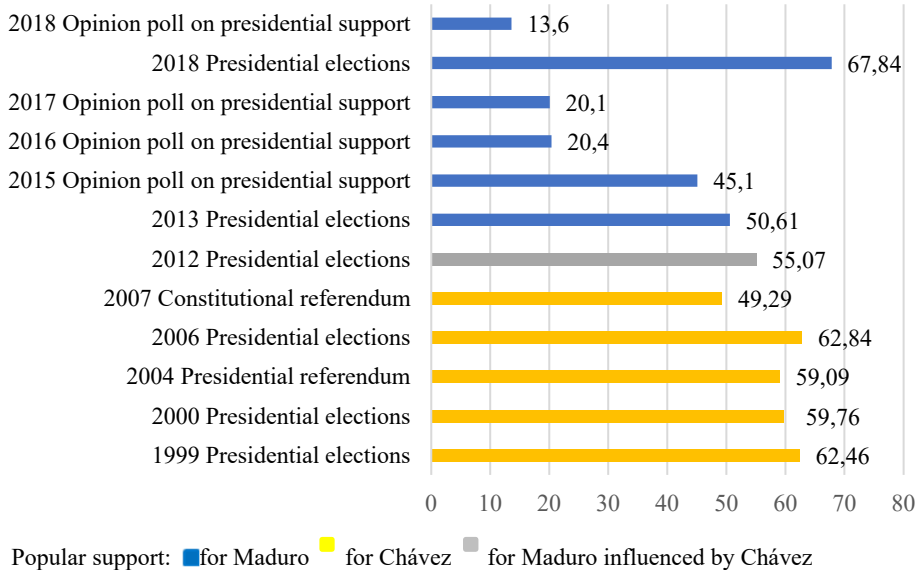


Figure 3. Public support for Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro (1999-2018)

Source: Consejo Nacional Electoral, 1999-2020, http://www.cne.gob.ve/web/estadisticas/index_resultados_elecciones.php; Encuestadora Meganalisis, 2019, <http://www.encuestadorameganalisis.com/2-de-diciembre-20191.html>.

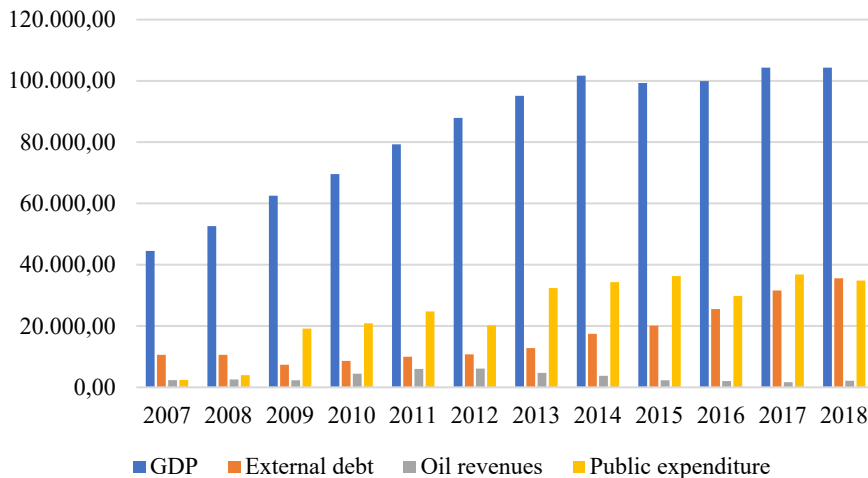


Figure 4. Main Ecuadorian economic indicators (2007-2018)

Source: Banco Central, 2007-2018, <https://contenido.bce.fin.ec/documentos/Estadisticas/Sector-Real/Previsiones/IndCoyuntura/EstMacroEstruc2018.pdf>.

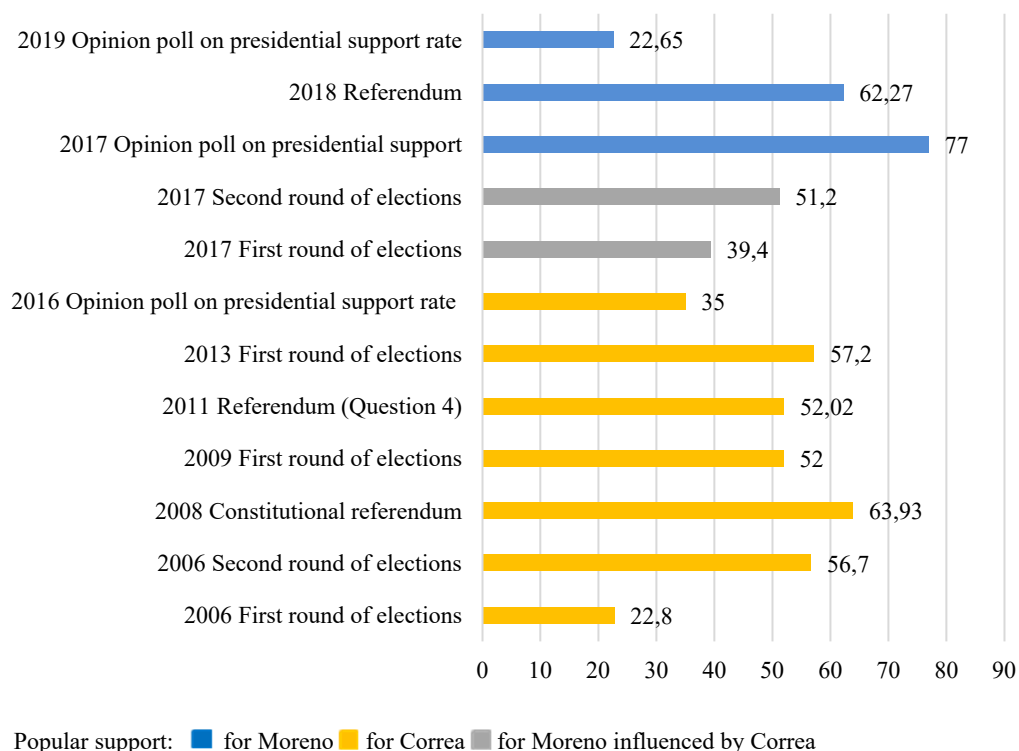


Figure 5. Public support for Rafael Correa and Lenín Moreno (2006-2018)

Source: CEDATOS, 2016, <https://cedatos.com.ec/2016/07/18/rueda-de-prensa-cedatos-evaluacion-9-anos-de-gobierno-del-presidente-rafael-correa-23-mayo-2016/>; Consejo Nacional Electoral, 2017, <https://cne.gob.ec/documents/estadisticas/publicaciones/resultados%20electorales%2008052017.pdf>; Consejo Nacional Electoral, 2018, <https://portal.cne.gob.ec/es/institucion/procesos-electorales/-referendum-y-consulta-popular-2018>; Perfiles de opinión, 2019, <https://notimundo.com.ec/endos-anos-la-confianza-hacia-lenin-moreno-ha-bajado-del-85-al-24-segun-perfiles-de-opinion/>; CEDATOS, 2020, <https://cedatos.com.ec/2020/05/23/la-poblacion-evalua-la-gestion-de-los-tres-anos-de-gobierno-del-presidente-lenin-moreno/>.