

RAFAEL CORREA AND ECUADOR'S PRESENT

POWER RELATIONS THROUGH HISTORICISM, ACTUAL VS. VIRTUAL, AND THE MANIFESTATION OF THE PERMANENT CAMPAIGN

Noah Gallagher Shannon*

INTRODUCTION: THE CREATION OF ROLES OF POWER AND THEIR HISTORICAL PERCEPTIONS

THE PRESIDENCY OF Rafael Correa in Ecuador, attained in November 2006, presents a synthesis of power in its raw form. In a country that has experienced multiple Military Juntas and no term finishing presidents within the last decade and a half, the area is ripe for a study of the synthesis of power and how it is actualised.

DOMINATION BY NUMEROUS Military Juntas, economic collapse, and the suppression of indigenous rights in the last few decades leading up to 2006, as well as the immergence of Rafael Correa as a political figureⁱ created an unstable structure in the power relationship between the public and those holding positions of power with ramifications and consequences affecting the most crucial, cohesive fibres of Ecuadorian society.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF the revolving-door domination by Military Juntas and of the brief presidencies were cleavages in the Ecuadorian society, and political organisations and citizens began to fight what Michel Foucault in *The Subject and the Power* deems "immediate struggles or enemies": political parties, politicians, faces of ideology, activist groups, nuisances of policy, institutions, etc. (Foucault 1982: 780). A 'chief enemy or struggles' are those conditions which provide for the arising of the immediate struggle and the subsequent focus on those immediate enemies by the

** Noah Gallagher Shannon is an undergraduate student of English Literature and Political Science at the University of Colorado-Boulder byway of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He attended the University of Amsterdam for the spring semester of 2009. He has no previous publications.*

ⁱ Correa held the position of Economic Minister under President Alfredo Palacio until his

public skepticism of a free-trade deal with the USA, among other disagreements, lead to his resignation from the administration – earning him sizable credibility with the population.

society (1982: 780). To use a metaphor, Ecuador was fighting the symptoms and not the disease, and - while being fought against - those symptoms worsened and others developed, while allowing the disease to progress. To use another metaphor, it took on the form of everyone within a cohesive organic unit fighting one another for, paradoxically, the health of the unit. This in-fighting formed a gap in the political landscape that Rafael Correa's campaign came to occupy: someone or some party which could move its name away from the fight for power and instead toward a nationalistic unification. Rafael Correa's campaign moved into this gap, focusing on an erasure of the past and a movement toward a reconciliation with the national promise.

CORREA CREATED AN abstract yet emotionally charged campaign of 'social change', rarely using his name, credentials, or the potential effect of various policy stances to perpetuate his image. His campaign instead focused on Ecuador's latent national promise, a vagueness in image and policy that enabled his gained power to be identified as a means to an end (reform and the culmination of national promise—whatever that may be). This idea of power being a means to an end is important to consider in the case of Ecuador in that it implies that a desired end justifies the means that bring its fruition.

NUMEROUS POLITICAL UPHEAVALS and insurrections identified the instability in the country for the last two decades leading up to the election of Rafael Correa. To the citizens, historically, the power gained through governmental elections was synonymous (especially to the indigenous populations) with the policy position of politicians and their parties: this is a creation/creator of the 'immediate enemy' society. In order to negotiate the ultimate form and contributory conditions that define 'immediate enemy' society, as well as provide a relative contrast to properly view Correa's campaign, it is necessary to mark the definitive cases of its existence before the 2006 election.

IN 2000, VICE President Gustavo Noboa assumed power from acting President Jamil Mahaud with the help of the military, who had initially established a 'triumvirate' of government, military, and indigenous leaders that by the following morning had dissolved into a singular presidency for Noboa (Rohter 2000: 1). This transference marked the sixth chief of state in four years. Mr. Noboa, and initial allied critics including Indian leader Antonio Vargas, had in the preceding months publicly accused Mr. Mahaud's administration of inflicting "massive impoverishment" on the people of Ecuador (Rohter 2000: 1). Yet, Mr. Noboa in his first public speech

as acting president remarked that he had the support of “the armed forces and the national police”, saying nothing about the voting citizens or any responsibility to them. In this way, his comment implied that the military’s will was all that was necessary to legitimise power and thus sustain it (Rohter 2000: 1). In the initial steps of this power relationship Noboa provides an impactful sense to the populace’s vision of their role in governmental determinism (i.e. asserting the condition of mass poverty as a political stance against the incumbent), but is quick to expunge any mention of it once power is secured by the military. Mr. Vargas’ aide Salvador Quishpe stated that Mr. Noboa was “one of the politicians responsible for this debacle”, and that Ecuador was in need of an era of “purification”. So where Noboa once seemed in line with Mr. Vargas and the populace, they split decisively after Noboa’s objectification of the populace gave way to his assertion of military support. The populace’s agency was projected as an unified effigy in order to dislocate Mahaud’s relation to power, while its nature is disseminated and silenced by the threat of violence in Noboa’s later assimilation of power. This rhetoric and its political effect is an example of Ecuadorian power relations prior to Correa’s campaign: people’s condition is used as an abstract pathos in order to fragment the acting president’s power relationship with the people, and then an open threat, or at least a direct assertion of power through violence, is used in order to place the image of the populace into a relational paralysis.

THE OBJECTIFICATION OF the populace and of their condition is an action worth mentioning and contrasting with Correa’s objectification of history. Where Noboa manipulates the populace into an object in order to fight an ‘immediate enemy’ (i.e. Mahaud’s presidency), Correa instead manipulates history and the populace’s sense of it in order to bypass the role of the ‘immediate enemy’ and establish instead a ‘chief enemy’ (namely, anything that stands in the way of Ecuador’s latent promise), which stabilises his power relationship. Noboa’s set of actions, as further demonstrated by the sheer number of similar actions in the years preceding 2006 (e.g. Noboa was succeeded in two years by Lucio Gutierrez who was then removed by the Ecuadorian equivalent of the Joints Chiefs of Staff), synthesises power in a dramatic and conciliated manner, which is therefore unstable because it’s developed gestalt is too impulsively made up of the rhetorically vacillating motivations to expunge and re-create power anew (Rohter 2000: 1). These actions are symptomatic of ‘immediate enemy’ culture, a culture that Correa re-directs toward ‘chief enemies’.

ECUADOR'S INSTABILITY EFFECTIVELY erased any before held social cohesion or trust in the government and its institutions. As this transformation took place political issues dissolved into issues of power to implement them; all the while creating more instability in an attempt to ease it.

“Citizen’s Revolution” constructs Correa as an equal part of the community that is struggling

CORREA, IN A movement fuelled by uncontentious advertisements evoking broad nationalism, identified himself as the ‘tool’ to achieve the cultivation of Ecuador’s national promise, playing heavily on the indigenous and impoverished areas with the slogan: ‘Citizen’s Revolution’. ‘Citizen’s Revolution’ constructs Correa as an equal part of the community that is struggling; moving him to a level that is accessible by the people. This usage also creates cohesion through its movement away from political enemies and instead toward the development of ‘chief’ enemies out of commonly held problems—poverty, political corruption, dwindling national pride, etc. Words such as ‘tool’ turn Correa (and his power) into a device wielded by *all* citizens, providing them a sense of power and self-determination previously unfathomed. The connecting function of these words effectively removes the distance and ubiquitous historical suspicion of the desire for governmental power. The domination by Military Junta’s and the removal of three presidents due to street protests coupled with the economic collapse (2000’s devastating move to Dollarisation) and a rise of indigenous activism in the ten years leading up to the 2006 election. All this established the grounds for Correa to legitimise the power he had gained through his image of being a means controlled by citizens to correct the common pains of Ecuador.

IN ECUADOR THE constant flux of resistant groups, the individuals comprising them, and the mercurial form of their ‘immediate enemy’ have never allowed a true power-to-subject relationship to synthesise and govern the state. Each group or interest remains within the role of the subject, even if they seize *power*, because the constant re-organisation of government re-directs the focus of the ‘immediate enemy’ in a sort of multi-dimensional ebb and flow that continually fails to designate distinct holders of power or distinct agendas. Thus the subject and power appear definitive in the present but elusive and ambiguous in the historical perspective (e.g. the myriad of acting interests in the removal of Mahaud—the military, the indigenous populations as represented by Mr. Vargas, Mr. Noboa, national police—that were then conflicted in purpose

and application of new power, and ambiguous in distinction).

“To that end, [Correa] assumed office with an agenda that depended on staging and winning a succession of high stakes electoral contest—referenda, constituent assembly elections, and a subsequent round of national elections. Assuming power in a context of crisis and intent on transforming politics, [Correa] sought to remake the political system through a series of rapid-fire electoral events aimed at the constitutional reconstruction, enhancing presidential powers, and resetting the party system in (his) favour”. (De La Torre and Conaghan 2008: 269)

De La Torre and Conaghan note in their work “The Permanent Campaign of Rafael Correa” that the history of the actualisation of presidential power in Ecuador was centred around Correa’s ability to sustain and legitimise that power (2008: 269). Thus the permanent campaign is born to constantly present power as the means to social reform and not vice versa. It constantly reminds the people that there is a movement away from history taking place and that they are not stuck in the same inward conditions that created the history that they lived yesterday, i.e. the objectification and subsequent dismissal under Noboa. This provided an arena where Correa could step in and create a power relationship between himself and the Ecuadorian people. As De la Torre and Conaghan remark:

“In these countries [Andean states], a new generation of presidents has sought to mobilize public opinion not just to win battles with congress, but to launch projects aimed at the ‘re-founding’ of their respective republics.” (De La Torre and Conaghan 2008: 269)

What I want to discuss is an example of this re-founding at the level of the individual - the unique individual makeup of Rafael Correa - and the process through which its actualisation has taken place.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: ACTUALISATION OF HISTORY AND THE ROLE OF THE PERMANENT CAMPAIGN

THE BASIC DISMISSAL and revolution of the last twenty years in Ecuador, a sort of acute crises of governability, provides for an examination of why Rafael Correa’s virtual attainment of power has been actualised and established. The situation of flux in Ecuador presents an example of the establishment of power (or its will to be) in a circumstance that has warranted the creation of ‘a man around the circumstances’, a plebiscitary president, if you will.

I WILL MANY times refer broadly to Correa's campaign for 'social reform'. By this I mean the virtual claims to "uphold the rule of the law and separation of powers, prepare a Constituent Assembly with full transparency and guarantees for the opposition in creation of the new constitution, advance institutionalization and democratization of political parties and movements, develop a viable Development Plan 2007-2011, close the US Manta military base, increase social spending, reduce value added tax, and give entrepreneurs cheap credit" (International Crisis Group 2009: 1,15).

MUCH OF RAFAEL Correa's stability relies on his acute ability to manipulate history in the face of the present condition, both negating it and keeping it firmly grounded, in order to be able to make a theoretical stand against the negation. Since I am addressing events and notions that existed in the past, I will develop a framework to judge what manipulation is in this case and how an analysis of history's role must be implemented to judge the present, which is shifting and changing states as these words are written. This is an effort to understand the application of history and how it contributes to the current transmission of present.

MY EXPLORATION OF this issue grew out of, and revolved around, questions of how to make sense of power as it is created and perpetuated by both the subject and the holder of power. Why do certain people and conditions arise in the state apparatus and not others? By what dependence(s) do they arise? What are the potential ramifications of these dependence(s) and their result(s)? And how is history's lens properly applied to decipher these aforementioned conditions and their formation? To this end, I focused in on Rafael Correa because of his recent synthesis of power and gained stability in an arena which had previously been without it; signifying a time ripe for observations of the creation of power. My acute interest within this exploration is transformation, be it the movement of history into the present, and vice versa, or the evolution of virtual ideals into actual conditionals, or how meaning is transformed through manipulation.

IN THE NEXT pages I will suggest a theoretical framework that offers an interpretation of the use of history to distort a balance in perspective of the present in order to perpetuate Correa's power relationship through manipulation. Finally, I will show how the relationship between history and its manipulation catalyses the creation and sustention of Rafael Correa's power in the form of a permanent campaign. Correa can ultimately serve as a pinpoint example (due to the ripe nature of his power in what was once a dying tree of political might) of how temporality, and

its rhetoric, affect power and its synthesis. My argument is formulated in order to make sense of the catalysts which bring about the bonds of power and how these processes and their results are sustained, managed, and viewed both by their involved parties and by the persons who later come to judge them as history.

HISTORICISM: HISTORY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH PERCEPTION

SOCIETIES ARE DEFINED by their history and are only understood in light of the events and people that create that human endeavour. Hegel presents a mould to view and interpret the events of a society that is judged by its history instead of vice versa. He writes: "The differences (in societies) is really to be found in the manner in which outward conditions have taken shape after the building up of the inward world" (Hegel 1911 cited in Grumley 1989: 28). Rafael Correa is only viewed and judged as and after the synthesis of his power. The inward rationalisation of his power provides the social construction to later judge his manoeuvres to consolidate it. Rafael Correa is here not regarded as a man, but rather as the outward projection of the inward creation of conditions. There is no ability to relate directly to the man and conceive of his relation to power in terms of his individuality, since the research and discussion is based on the condition of the recent history he has created and changed. So the discussion is based on his outward projection of earlier inward manoeuvres within the Ecuadorian society. So we do not discuss Rafael Correa but only the projection of his historical moves, which currently constitute the will of his people as much as they are still allowing the power relation to take place.

IN HEGEL'S UNDERSTANDING of history he notes:

"Historical progress is tied to the idea of diremption. Each historically significant society is fated to reproduce the basic pattern of spiritual self-realization—actualisation of essential dispositions, unity and immanent self-dissolution... each society in the period of maturation manifests a united will. Citizens perceive their own identity, and interests as so closely interwoven with those of the city-state as to be virtually identical. In this early phase, the discrepancy between national potential and its actualisation is bridged by a flowering of national creativity that realizes the natural spirit as a set of institutions, a vital shared consciousness, and a appropriate configuration of freedom." (Hegel 1911 cited in Grumley 1989: 28)

ECUADOR FINDS ITSELF in the abstract pattern Hegel comments about: a society in a period of continual maturation which interprets the will of the city-state (in this case Rafael Correa as the creator of social policy and cohesion in the last few years) as its own, forging trust in the creation of a power relation that is seemingly originated from their own national creativity and actualised by their will for change. According to The International Crisis Group (2009), an independent, non-profit group working in 130 countries to prevent conflict, “Ecuador had been Latin America’s most unstable democracy for a decade”. This statement makes clear the role outwardly created for Correa to step into; one ripe with the historical perspective of corruption and instability but also one that wanted desperately to overhaul and change that image as is made clear by the record approval rating Correa enjoyed during his first few months in power (2009: 1). This trend reflects a trust in the administration, but also a dismissal of the inward creation of their recent history.

“Since 1996, (Ecuador) has had eight presidents, three of whom were ousted by Congress and street protest. The rule of law has been progressively weakened and despite extensive reform efforts, such as a new constitution in 1998, the political system had become largely dysfunctional.” (International Crisis Group 2009: 1)

Immediately what we see in hindsight from this quote is Ecuador’s ability to trust a man (Correa) and erase all that has plagued the country. Correa became to his people that very flowering bridge that Hegel speaks of, one that realises the natural spirit and creates his image side-by-side with the city-state. His accomplishments thus far are truly amazing considering the historical perspective many Ecuadorians have concerning ‘reform’ and a new president. This aspect of historical reference is directly related to Correa’s need for a continual campaign—to constantly remind the constituents that he is not of the past, but of the perpetual present—and the manipulative reinforcement of his character as someone avoiding power, only using it for the ends of ‘social reform.’

WHAT I MEAN to contend with the word manipulation is neither a dysphemism nor a specific assertion of an ideological construct. I will leave such to those of our future who will inevitably view the past with a lens or set of guidelines that defines the moral imperatives of our current time according to theirs. Manipulation is, most broadly, a power-to-subject action that emphasises and is ultimately defined by the complimentary role of the subject in the perpetuation of that action and its goals. In this case, a rhetorical action aimed at the cultivation of a mass consensus concerning the union of the state and the promise of the present condition.

Paradoxically, this mass consensus, centred on the erasure of individual perspective for the unison of a movement—establishment of a national identity and cultivation of the latent promise of the nation—is created and sustained by an individual perspective (Rafael Correa's). Most problematically, manipulation in this case is the formation of consensus in a subject—politics, national identity, local identity, trust, leadership—that, in theory, warrants none. Manipulation is the rhetorical erasure of individually cleaved perspectives and their merge into a unison, for the sake of a movement. The movement is toward the consolidation of a vision of the current condition, the state of politics, the state of governance, the state of public institutions, and the lines of indigenous racial tensions, which are all fastened by one guiding hand. More exactly, it is a maintained and established field of vision for the public that does not generate from the individual memory combined and negotiated with the mass.

CORREA CREATED, THROUGH rhetorical appeals, a basic perspective made up of a few key elements—namely, 'Social Reform', the present tense, national promise, etc.—and directed that creed toward the masses to lead them away from individual memory or perspective which could lead to crippling dissent and endless argumentation, and lead them toward the creation of a 'form'. His movement was so simple and uncontroversial—social reform, promise of the nation—that he easily created a consensus that is most essentially the erasure of individual reflection. The mass, constituted most prevalently by formlessness and chaos, is a grouping of individuals whom are acted upon by the leader of the state apparatus in such a way as to give an element of cohesion and control. Thus, manipulation in this case can be understood as a power-to-subject action that contributes to the formation of a mass. The leader provides the individual with a ideology aimed at cohesion of the public, which gives the individual identity, safety in reason, collectivised responsibility, and brotherhood; and effectively erases splintering dissent and individual resistance, thus further perpetuating the leader's action or goal (in this case the perpetuation of that cohesion is paramount as Ecuador presents an intensely chaotic and leaderless study.) In Carl Jung's book *The Undiscovered Self* the famed psychiatrist writes: "the mass crushes out the reflection and insight that are still possible with the individual, and this necessarily leads to doctrinaire and authoritarian tyranny" (1959: 13). Through Jung's lens, manipulation is simply the negation

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of individually constituted reflection and insight for the dogma of the masses, whatever that may be. Most ironic in this case, the dogma is a sort of identity found in the masses, and need not be defined or questioned. It perpetuates itself as long as it stays current and unitary.

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MANIPULATION IS ALSO understood as a set of actions by those in power that limits and contains the actions of other subjects by way of unison of individual perspective to a vague, yet overwhelmingly optimistic view of the current or past condition of the mass. Correa's action is a rhetorical appeal centred on the "flowering of national creativity that realizes the natural spirit as a set of institutions, a vital shared consciousness, and an appropriate configuration of freedom" (Hegel 1911 cited in Grumley 1989: 28). These ideologies at their base need unification of image to be actualised. Thus, he manipulates the people into a mass in order to properly (in theory) actualise their individual promise and freedoms, which in turn are negated by the formation of the mass itself—paradox notwithstanding. The creation of a mass or united ideal in this case is a created and sustained image of actualisation, an image of Rafael Correa as a creator of social reform and actualiser of national promise. Here Correa is not a man, but an image, a conglomeration of carefully selected rhetorical appeals. He moves his person away from individual perspective and toward a narrow spectrum of ideals, such as reform, present tense, national promise, all of which are positioned in the midst of his permanent campaign. This is a vague, yet triumphant, declaration of a national promise, centred on the unison of personal ideals by way of concessions to the formation of a mass body.

MANIPULATION, IN ACCORDANCE with my argument, is an action, which virtualises the individual's role for the sake of actualisation of the masses, which is in itself the actualisation of one man's individualism.

THIS IS A rhetorical appeal away from history that readily identifies the continual campaign and the image of power as a means. With an unstable history and perspective of it, the Ecuadorians become desperately eager to believe in something and so they look to the present: Rafael Correa accomplished a trustful erasure of the past and a vision that extended his power as the means to reach an end that was closely connected to the

“vital consciousness of the people” (Hegel 1911 cited in Grumley 1989: 28). Instead of viewing their history with shame or disgust, they can look to the history of turbulent times through a new lens, forging ahead into calmer water. People essentially want to believe that the pains they have been through provide the answers for the path ahead. Correa reinforces that view and allows people to trust and view history again.

ONE CAN ONLY negate and move beyond the past if one views it and knows the proper path not to take. Correa implemented what the International Crisis Group deems “shock therapy”, which in the field of psychiatry bluntly refers to the mechanical rebooting of the human brain, or an erasure of the cumulative condition (which is plagued by the past and the preceding manifestations of the brain) by jump-starting the system to a new present condition (2009: 17). This is essentially an erasure of the recent history for an outlook onto the perpetual present. To explain, the present is made up of the preceding moments of history that contribute to the creation and establishment of the present moment: however, with ‘shock therapy’ one creates a present which becomes the beginning of history, the fresh creation of history with an eye on the current felt condition that then becomes the preceding moments that make up the present. What is negated is the history preceding the ‘shock therapy’: the present becomes a virtual state, something completely new and attainable by the conditions of the past and an actualisation of both the history needed to negate the past and the conditions necessary to bring the present into fruition.

CORREA CAMPAIGNED ON the virtual promise that Ecuador was lost in a lingering notion of the past’s instability and in-fighting (“immediate struggles”). He set up reforms as the end goal of the new present. Rafael Correa’s rhetoric and policy depended on the public’s knowledge of an emotion of the past but did not in itself rely on the preservation of the past, or an actual component. He had to virtualise the past (“Shock Therapy”) to move the latent promise of the present to the actual. In this manner he avoids a focus on campaign credentials or questions of his establishment of power. Ecuador was the most unstable democracy in Latin America during the last ten years; Correa synthesised a power relationship by continually (still today, I will argue further down) having the actualisation of power being the necessary condition for the creation of reforms. He campaigned for an erasure of the preceding tumultuous years, or in other words, a virtualisation of the preceding moments to actualise a new glittering, virtual idea of the present.

HE PRESENTED POWER as the means to the end goal of mass social reform: far-reaching social reform cannot take place without a stable power . Thus he keeps people and his power in the perpetual present tense by continually erasing the past in favour of a latent promise enacted through his power. He is the proverbial forward looker, never accountable to his history because his campaign has made its very nature the enemy. Therefore, the present becomes not a condition of temporality, but the very erasure of history, while nothing much is done in the temporal sense to ensure the future of reform. Reform can only take place once we are away from the past, Correa says, but that begs a question about the power needed for that reform and when the reform will manifest. His campaign slogan of “Give Them the Belt” is a reference to past political woes that can be extended to any historical moment preceding the awakening of Ecuador’s latent national promise. History has a nasty tendency of moving power relationships forward into the present, perpetually extinguishing the past. It is a vicious cycle that perpetuates power. But to what end? Does the preservation of power end with reform or does reform end with the preservation of power? Moving away from the theoretical framework, I will now move into a concrete discussion of the manifestation of these actual and virtual cycles in the form of a permanent campaign.

PERMANENT CAMPAIGN: CORREA AS THE CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESENT, MANIFESTATION OF THE ORIGIN, AND THE BASIC NATURE OF HIS IMAGE

THE CREATION OF stability is inherent in all of this; Correa has done what others have not by creating a stable power relationship and its sustained presence in history and its ability to create new history, i.e. trust or reference in the publics’ and our mind as the perceivers of history and events. With the synthesis of a campaign moving away from history (but with a sharp eye on its presence and how it dictates the peculiarities of the current condition) and toward an actualisation of something deemed already actualised in the promise of the nation, Correa has created a *Permanent Campaign* aimed at the continual actualisation of the latent promise of national potential. In this we find a history that is constantly repeating and giving birth to itself in the present.

CORREA HAS FORMED a type of plebiscitary presidency aimed at the cultivation of the present. By plebiscitary presidency I mean to contend that in the Andean state Correa has synthesised a power relationship

around increased assertions of presidential independence, an emphasis on direct rhetoric with the public in an effort to manipulate, and an amplified concern to the importance of personality in creating an intimate relationship with the constituents (Shogan 2003: 1). These qualities point to constantly fluctuating adjustments on the part of the president in order to stay in the present and in the constituent's trust: a perpetual quest to mobilise public support. De La Torre and Conaghan remark:

“Correa disposed of the legal obstacles that lay in the way of (his) plans for leftist transformation, yet (he) did so in a fashion that ensured a fair share of domestic and international legitimacy for the process. Rather than disband congress and suspend the constitution in the style of President Alberto Fujimori’s 1992 coup in Peru, (he) mobilized public opinion and electoral support in advance of (his) moves to dismantle and re-make institutions.” (De La Torre and Conaghan 2008: 270)

Continual public support is a linchpin process for transformation in Ecuador. Public support is gained by both an emphasis on the progression of re-construction (e.g. public works, reparations to indigenous populations, etc.) and fervent campaign rhetoric, reminding the people of the achievements in process. This continual cultivation of public support is garnered most efficiently through the mechanism De La Torre and Conaghan refer to as *The Permanent Campaign*.

CORREA FIRST EMERGED on the Ecuadorian political sphere after a short-lived stint as The Minister of Economics under President Alfredo Palacio in 2005—the successor of Lucio Gutierrez (International Crisis Group 2009: 15). He spent little over one hundred days in office but it was sufficient time for him to establish himself as a “maverick and a virulent critic of neoliberal economic policy”, which helped his image to disseminate within the nexus of the new forming political sphere (Conaghan and De La Torre 2008: 271). His nexus is the historically vehement upheavals and unstable power relations in the recent mind of the citizens. In this manner, his image begins to revolve around an almost assured victory by running against the system itself, not around the cultivation of power to actualise wide sweeping reform. Therefore, power’s proposed actualisation takes place in a contrasting way to that of his predecessors (e.g. power as the means to create reform), Correa actualises the latent promise of Ecuador into the zeitgeist with himself in the middle as the most available tool for further application. His movement is one away from the shadows of the past toward a present that is infallible and inevitable, by virtue of the national promise. He did this by initially shying away from other augmented roles of power.

“In August, 2006 Correa announced that PAIS (Political party Alianza Pais) would not run a slate of congressional candidates. It was a bold move, one that unequivocally identified his candidacy with the prevailing anti-political mood of the electorate.” (Conaghan and De La Torre 2008: 272)

This move, though perhaps initially perceived to be limiting in its scope of power, actually reinforces and strengthens the power relations of Rafael Correa by its rhetorical negation of power. Correa actualises power more effectively by playing against the usual norm of actualisation. Instead of focusing on power’s necessary role in creating reform Correa orchestrates himself as a by-product of the recent deficient accountability in governance, which forms his image as a dependently arisen tool that actualises the latent promise of Ecuador. Correa in this way actualises his power as an inherent part of the erasure of the past governmental accountability and the subsequent rise of the latent promise of Ecuador. Therefore, he centres himself in his created zeitgeist and moves freely within it. This active manipulation of public opinion leads to his perpetual need for the actualisation of the present.

CORREA’S CAMPAIGN REVOLVED around evocation of the youth, good times ahead, and an almost cocky rejection of the past (Conaghan and De La Torre 2008: 272). After the election Correa continued his active manipulation of the citizens through the constant communication of the new governments accomplishments, keeping the present perpetually evident in the voter’s mind. This was put in effect by weekly government radio shows depicting new battles won by the PAIS in their run up to the creation of a new constitution, labelling the critical media as incompetent, mediocre, and corrupt, and a projection of the opposing political parties not as adversaries but as rich affluent enemies that were wrong-headed, misinformed, and “immoral dinosaurs” (Conaghan and De La Torre 2008: 278). The establishment of the opposition as an enemy is intrinsically different from the establishment of an adversary because of an inherent need to defeat an enemy, versus the desire to overcome an adversary, which relies on the contention of a subject. With the cultivation of public opinion and an establishment of an ‘enemy’ Correa further consolidates and perpetuates his power. An enemy is dangerous to the public’s new found present and stability and can be associated with anything that is not stability and progress, mainly: the past. Noting the opposition to be dinosaurs is a clear evocation of a fear or anger toward history and a need to move away from elements concerning or pertaining to it. Through rhetoric, Correa establishes his administration as the embodiment of the age and the people, collapsing any distinction

between the president, the government proper, and the political process (Conaghan and De La Torre 2008: 277). Correa's executive office spends half of the governmental media budget, an amount exceeding 16 million dollars, for the saturation of Correa's figure in the public sphere (Conaghan and De La Torre 2008: 276).

IN CORREA'S MEDIA ads he is depicted not as the president or as a leader but as a 'motivator' promising to travel to every corner of the nation; in this process Correa moves himself away from hegemony to the level of the constituent and becomes a trusted inspiration or friend, a simple man helping Ecuador to actualise its potential. This enforces and sustains his power by establishing trust and desire for the present condition to continue in its evolving distinction as the changing present, a negation of the past and an actualisation of latent promise associated not with the power or excellence of the leader but with the citizens themselves. Correa empowers and inspires the Ecuadorian citizens as the benefactors and controllers of their own infallible destiny, a distinct departure from the public identity in the recent past. As Hegel notes:

"...Citizens perceive their own identity, and interests as so closely interwoven with those of the city-state as to be virtually identical. In this early phase (of history), the discrepancy between national potential and its actualization is bridged by a flowering of national creativity that realizes the natural spirit as a set of institutions, a vital shared consciousness, and a appropriate configuration of freedom." (Hegel cited in Grumley 1989: 12)

History is created by the continual passage of the present throughout time. Although Correa establishes the zeitgeist as a negation of the past, he nonetheless creates a history as he aims toward the present. As he actualises the present condition, he creates a past and a temporal distinction that goes along with it. Hegel's words on history give an even more sonorous ring as the present tense campaign of Correa falls into the past continually and is judged thereafter.

I WOULD LIKE to note that what I have discussed thus far is lacking attention to the Ecuadorian people in their individual responses and reactions to the actions of Correa. I have stated them to be more of an absorbing entity than as a separate fluctuating set of actions. It is nevertheless important to note that power can produce as much acceptance as may be wished for it, as "power is a set of actions upon other actions" (Foucault 1982: 789).

CONCLUSION: THE SUM OF THE PERMANENT CAMPAIGN AND THE FUTURE OF ECUADOR

THE IDEAS THAT I have presented here neither rationalise nor sum up the complex relationship existing between Ecuador and its president. It is only through the rationalisation of a small process that we can begin to make sense of fundamental experiences of society and analyse them, spe-

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cifically without invoking notions of the progress of rationalisation on the whole (Foucault 1982: 780). The 'Shock Therapy' of Ecuador has provided a rationalisation of history and of its role in the actualisation of Rafael Correa's power. It nonetheless maintains a narrow window to view Ecuador through the passage of time and the perpetual creation of a present in an effort to create and sustain power relations.

THE CAMPAIGN THAT Correa synthesised focused around the virtualisation of the past in an effort to actualise the potential of the present along with the pressing actualisation of his power as a means to reach the end goal of 'social reform'.

This set of processes rationalises a notion of social life centred around the perpetuation of the campaign itself. This campaign is essentially a thesis concerning the passing of one state into another to create a condition unlike the previous, yet moulded around the fallacies of the first. Yet with such a focus the campaign must continue to pledge itself in the direction of a non definite end, depriving itself of any degree of policy elasticity. The campaign absorbs the government and it becomes more and more difficult to forge inter-party relationships and discourse, which ensures the proper application of democracy, or more importantly, stability and freedom. A campaign such as this must continue to create a present, which then ultimately becomes interlocked in an infallible definition of social life.

THE VIRTUALISATION OF enemies, such as the past and its conditions, could spread to other enemies such as peoples, parties, or civil liberties. This is a sort of slippery-slope fallacy pointing to the irrational nature of the democratic creation of a permanent campaign centred on the now: it eliminates the accountability of government to the people. The government and the campaign become interlocked and the people are subjugated to a campaign that manipulates the people into submission, continually reminding them of progress and of a negation of the

past. The government is then only responsible for the campaign and not for the fluctuating circumstance of the people and of democracy; the people are subjugated to the larger goal of the campaign, which moves above their needs. Therefore, no one is responsible for the misdeeds of the moment because such misdeeds become the virtual past or the rhetorical building blocks for a present that is continually manifesting itself without definite guidelines. The campaign and its present become intertwined with the goal of social reforms, towards a totalising notion of the campaign and the perpetuation of the current condition. De La Torre and Conaghan's remarks point to the eschewing of checks and balances in the role of the permanent campaign. They write:

"[The permanent campaign] is exacerbating a broader problem affecting the quality of democracy in Latin America: the relative absence of functioning mechanism of accountability." (Conaghan and De La Torre 2008: 282)

Correa's administration emphasises the perpetual needs for the campaign, which unbalances the proper processes of accountability by eliminating the limits to power usually enforced by competing institutions and political parties. Rafael Correa's creation of a new present and the actualisation of the national promise have synthesised stability in a notoriously unstable state, but its potential excesses manifest a quandary for the *future* political climate in Ecuador.

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