

## **La Importancia De La "Inteligencia Contextual" En La Construcción De La Imagen Del Líder Político**

### **The Importance Of "Contextual Intelligence" Construction Of The Image Of Political Leader**

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#### **Resumen**

Los estudios centrados en la construcción del liderazgo de los candidatos políticos han puesto tradicionalmente su atención en los factores propios del personaje público, tanto los personales como los profesionales, pero apenas han llevado el foco hacia todas aquellas variables exógenas al político que pudieran tener una influencia directa en la percepción de su liderazgo social. Por este motivo, con el presente artículo tratamos de aplicar uno de estos factores externos, en este caso la “inteligencia contextual” (Nye, 2008), como factor clave del liderazgo político efectivo aplicándolo, en este caso, al estudio de la evolución de la imagen del presidente de la Región de Murcia. El trabajo se sustenta en los resultados de tres encuestas realizadas en un periodo de 8 años (2003, 2007 y 2011) a la población de la Región, en las que se analiza la importancia de la inteligencia contextual en la percepción del liderazgo de los candidatos políticos a partir de la asociación con temas prioritarios y con atributos que sintonizan con las expectativas ciudadanas, todo ello de un modo que pueda ser extrapolable como modelo de análisis a cualquier otro ámbito territorial y político.

**Palabras clave:** Liderazgo político, inteligencia contextual, activación, percepciones públicas, atributos electorales.

#### **Abstract**

The studies of leadership have given little attention to the exogenous variables of the leader as an individual linked with the social political context. The article applies the role of "contextual intelligence" (Nye, 2008), as the key factor of an effective political leadership, to the study of the president of Murcia image evolution. This work is sustained by three surveys conducted in 2003, 2007 and 2011 that analyzes the importance of the contextual intelligence of leadership perception, from the association of priority issues and with attributes that tune with civil expectations. The importance of constructing a leadership increasingly "situational" and less ideological is underlined.

**Key words:** Political leadership, contextual intelligence, priming, public perceptions, electoral attributes

### **1. Construction and Perception of the Political Leadership: external/contextual attributes versus internal/personal attributes**

The contemporary political context, characterized by the undisguised preponderance of its personnel set against the organization or the ideological in a public speech in favour of a permanent effort by building strong leaderships inside the parties. This fact consolidates the tendency to a personification of the politics to which are referred to by a good number of authors in Spain (Losada, 2003; Canel, 2007; Zamora, 2009). It's not been until now that the personalization in politics has been so undeniable. The candidates have managed to marginalize the remainder of present actors in the political setting, especially ideology and in good measure, their own political parties.

In this way, the leader is finished becoming the unique internal reference for the militants and supporters of the political organization and in the prominent only element for the citizens, that is to say, for the potential voters. The leader is confirmed, thus, as one of the fundamental axes around which he adapts to the modern political organization, embodying the vision that is capable of mobilizing the militants of achieving followers and in the end, of obtaining votes. That is to say that one is a leader only in the measure in which others value them (Rico, 2005).

It is not possible to separate (more than an artificial form) the construction of the leadership of its assimilation in the shape of perceptions on the part of the citizens. They are both parts of the same process and it is not possible to understand them individually. The perception that the citizens have of a political leader depends on factors (controlled or not) that guides that leader (and it's party) but, is certain in the contrary sense, that same leader tries to handle elements within its reach to bring back the situation towards the most beneficial land for its image from the opinions made by the citizens.

There has been many authors, from concrete empirical studies, that have tried to create a series of categories that have helped to recognize the attributes citizens value in a political leader, from the premise that a group closed of categories exists or attributes that function like settings that can be utilized to project a determined visibility

of the candidate on the part of the citizens responsibility for evaluating it (Canel 2006; Miller, Wattenberg and Malanchuck 1986).

In this sense, the connection between construction and reception around these attributes is fundamental, since it would make no sense to undertake a voluntary strategy to try to be positioned in qualities created and not appreciated by the citizens. Because of this, the main step is recognizing which can be the fundamental dimensions for the receivers of the political information, because only from the knowledge of its demands and sensibilities, it's possible to build an image of prominent and clear leadership.

By this way, the citizens should be the only heads of the creation of a catalogue more or less closed by associations with the ones that characterize the political leaders. That is to say that the same citizens are responsible for determining exactly which are the human, professional, rational or emotional categories on which they identify and show their predilection by their determined leaders. Finding these prominent attributes is to find the useful springs that activate the identification and preference of the citizens by these determined leaders and towards the strategy which should be structured of communication. Any other approach to the political leaders, without these prior considerations, will not turn out to be efficient.

The investigation carried out to date on the nature and the number of the attributes that characterize the political image of the leaders, nevertheless has omitted the lack of existing tuning in this type of work. Rico (2005:6) claims that, "inevitable utilization of labels with different possible readings to define the factors supposes an additional bond at the precise moment of general conclusions from the works published". At any rate, a good consolidated empirical reference number exists that summarize the approach of the political leader figure through the proposal of a system of categories, this is to understand the way in which the citizens classify and value their politicians. Some of the most important points could be the following:

Table 1. Dimensions in the perception of the personality of the political leaders

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
Miller & Miller (1976)	1. Competence 2. Confidence 3. Responsibility 4. Leadership 5. Appearance and sociodemographics characteristics
Kinder et al. (1979)	1. Competence 2. Integrity 3. Idiosyncratic

Markus (1982)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competence</li> <li>2. Integrity</li> </ol>
Kinder (1986)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competence</li> <li>2. Leadership</li> <li>3. Integrity</li> <li>4. Empathy</li> </ol>
Miller et al. (1986)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competence</li> <li>2. Integrity</li> <li>3. Reliability</li> <li>4. Charisma</li> <li>5. Appearance and sociodemographic characteristics</li> </ol>
Lodge et al. (1989)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competence</li> <li>2. Integrity</li> </ol>
Stewart & Clarke (1992)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competence</li> <li>2. Responsiveness</li> </ol>
Caprara et al. (1997)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Energy/ Responsiveness</li> <li>2. Honesty/Trustworthy</li> </ol>
Funk (1999)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership</li> <li>2. Integrity</li> <li>3. Empathy</li> </ol>
Pancer et al. (1999)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Charisma</li> <li>2. Competence</li> <li>3. Integrity</li> </ol>
Brettschneider & Gabriel (2002)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competence to resolve problems (issues)</li> <li>2. Leadership</li> <li>3. Personal attraction</li> <li>4. Integrity</li> </ol>
Caprara et al. (2002)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Energy</li> <li>2. Friendliness</li> </ol>
Newman (2003)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competence</li> <li>2. Integrity</li> </ol>
Ohr & Pscarsson (2003)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competence</li> <li>2. Leadership</li> <li>3. Trustworthy</li> <li>4. Empathy</li> </ol>
Clarke et al. (2004)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competence</li> <li>2. Responsiveness</li> </ol>

Nye (2008)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotional intelligence</li> <li>2. Capacity of communication</li> <li>3. Capacity of vision</li> <li>4. Organizing ability</li> <li>5. Machiavellian Political ability</li> <li>6. Contextual intelligence</li> </ol>
Zamora et al (2009)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ambition, Ability to fight</li> <li>2. Physical Aspect</li> <li>3. Capacity to reach goals</li> <li>4. Coherence</li> <li>5. Competence</li> <li>6. Credibility y trustworthy</li> <li>7. Oratory</li> <li>8. Efficacy</li> <li>9. Good team</li> <li>10. Political experience</li> <li>11. Ideology</li> <li>12. Friendliness</li> <li>13. Territorialism</li> </ol>

Source: Rico (2005) and self elaboration

From the assembly of these classifications we can deduce two general ideas. On one hand, a good part of the authors do not distinguish among the professional aspects (capacities) and the personal aspects (values) of the leader, as well as among rational (arguments) and emotional (feelings) in the appraisal of the political leaders. Besides, it's notable, the scarce reference to variables contextualise and environmental in the appraisal of the leader. We undertake both aspects in brief form:

In the systems of categories shown, scarce references to the consideration of external variables exist, like essential elements in the appraisal of the political leader. We are referring to the non personal variables, that is to say, contextual or environmental, that can finish influencing the public judgment that make the citizens care for their leaders, so that the public perceptions that occur by the political or economic environment, as well as the prominence of a concrete subject matter, they will become key elements from which an appraisal of a political leader will be emitted, especially when this has been responsible for its management.

In part, the idea is aimed to include this contextual aspect among the qualities that value a political leader, this was to be observed, in what Iyengar and Kinder (1987) proposed in speaking of the hypothesis of the activation or priming. Both authors were also set in the importance of the perception of the context or political environment when they indicated that the measure in which the mass media offered greater attention and media coverage to a concrete matter that defines the socio-political context, the citizens will finish valuing the political leader from their actions with regard to say priority fear. Without doubt, these authors gave the first trails to recognize the importance of the contextual factors, in this case the obsession of the media attention

determined priorities, at the moment of explaining the civic environmental judgments by the political leadership.

Among all the classifications aimed in board 1, only Nye (2008) speaks clearly of this factor, to which he calls "contextual intelligence". Although this term originates from the International Relations discipline, its identification with the intuitive capacity of diagnosis that helps a leader to fit in tactics with intelligent objectives, to produce strategies in different situations which allow us to also apply it to the theory of the political leadership. Thus, any leader that wants to be recognized as such should be capable of making a good judgment of the moment or political situation in which he finds himself and to adapt his strategies to public problems and also his corresponding expectations of solution expected by the citizens. In words of Nye (2008: 102):

(..) Leaders with contextual intelligence have the capacity to offer a meaning or to set a route defining the problem to which is faced the group. They understand the tension among the different values that impact in a question and they know to find the equilibrium between the desirable thing and the feasible thing.

Some authors such as Kinder (1986), Funk (1999) or Ohr and Pscarsson (2003), have aimed a term that has a lot to do with this idea, like the characteristic of the political empathy that every leader should have. The empathy in a leader can serve as indication that worries about people and by extension, of who will be the beneficiaries of their politics (Page, 1978).

## **2. Contextual intelligence as quality to establish a situational leadership**

The existence of "contextual intelligence" as an "exigent leader" factor causes us to rethink different perspectives since the ones that interpret this phenomenon. Thus, an approximation exists to understand it as an intrinsic, personal way. That is to say that the leader is capable of being associated inside some of the personal aspects that the citizens value more positively of a politician. To this definition of the leadership, they add the contributions of all the theoreticians that have been centred so much "in the focus of the personal characteristics" (based on the idea that an individual will only become the leader from their personal attributes and not for any other reasons) (Kindergarten, 1986) as in it called "grid of the leadership" (Blaque and Mouton, 1964), centred in that the leaders do with the Useful conduct bosses to find objective.

But there is a second way to contemplate the leadership: since an external point of view. It is what Rich (2008) calls "situational Leadership", and defines that as "the perspective that denies the existence of innate qualities or specific behaviours that assure the success of leadership (conductible perspective) and that will advance these changes according to the situation". To what he adds (...) "these situational factors are related, mostly, with current aspects of the social, political, and economic setting in which the leader unfolds his actions". Authors such as Nye (2008) consider this as

one of the fundamental elements to understand the way in which the political leaders are valued by the citizens.

This way, the context or social milieu, economic or political – or the perception of the environment finds the citizens having a direct influence on the opinion of the citizens and the appraisal of its leaders. By two forms: on the one hand, Nye recalls (2008) like part of an ability of the leader since which it identifies the social tendencies and to adjust their tactics and its style of leadership (so much to the social context as to the needs and demands of the followers) – what he calls "contextual intelligence" - and, on the other hand, the context or environment can influence in the way in which its associated attributes to the leader can be perceived differently in function by the changing social tendencies. That is to say citizens modify their perception on which they are the prominent attributes of the leader by the function of the changes in the social milieu.

From these two appreciations, we would be identifying two dimensions in the exercise of the political leadership that turn out to be exclusive and they're complemented. On the one hand, the subjective dimension of the leadership, that has a lot that to do with the capacities of the individual or leader; by another, the objective dimension of this phenomenon, that refers to its linking with the reality that surrounds them, with its specific and concrete problems or needs. Thus respected, the consistency among both dimensions

-capacities of the leader and conditions of the environment in which acts-determinant will result to be able to consecrate a permanent leadership in the time.

In each case, and to the effects on the construction of the leadership proposed in this text, turns out to be indispensable to consider this second way to be defined, that itself is not limited to the personal or behavioural leader aspects, but to its direct relation with the social events in which is found inevitably immersed and in the repercussion of that linking on the civic perceptions.

### **3. Hypothesis, Objectives, and Methodology**

#### **3.1. Hypothesis**

The hypothesis that supports this work is that the contextual factors or situational own of each electoral moment has a direct influence in the formation of the political leader, beyond the own personal or professional factors of the candidate. Thus is indispensable to value the associations that the citizens carry out in every moment on the social milieu, political and economic, to understand the way in which they perceive the political leaders and therefore, the way in which they define their leadership

#### **3.2. Objectives**

- To distinguish the contextual factors of the endogenous factors in the definition of the political leader, framing it inside the theoretical development that's called "contextual intelligence".
- To understand the way in which the situational factors influence in the way to define to the political leader.

- To show the way in which it is possible to verify the influence between the contextual factors and the construction of the leadership through the popularity.
- To analyze the way in which it's possible to verify the influence between the contextual factors and the construction of the leadership through matter of the public interest subject.
- To know more about the way in which it's possible to verify the influence between the contextual factors and the construction of the leadership through the prominent attributes and valuables for the definition of the leader.
- To show empirical the hypothesis presented on the influence of the contextual factors on the definition of the political leader from the study of the figure of the president of the Region of Murcia during the last 8 years.

### **3.3. Methodology**

Leading from these objectives, an empirical investigation was designed taking as object of study the evolution of the political leadership of the president of the Region of Murcia, Ramón Luis Valcárcel, during the last eight years, covering thus the three last autonomous assemblies of 2003, 2007 and 2011. The analysis of this politician, with an in equable path in which refers to its continuance at the front of a Regional Government, permits us to establish some evolutionary and comparative results from which to verify the hypothesis presented.

In order to identify the public perceptions of the citizens, Ramón Luis Valcárcel has opted for utilizing the technique of the survey, since plant significant advantages as useful tool in public opinion measurement studies, especially, in political questions. In concrete, we proceeded to the execution of three surveys, that took place during the two official weeks of prior electoral campaign to the regional elections of 2003 (from the 12<sup>th</sup> May to the 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003), (from the 14<sup>th</sup> May to the 25<sup>th</sup> 2007) and (from the 15<sup>th</sup> May to the 20<sup>th</sup> 2011).

As for the human team responsible for the field work, it was formed by the investigators of the Group of Communication, Political and Image of the UCAM, supported by a group of students selected by the Faculty of Social Sciences and by the Communication that were properly coached to carry out the field work.

Once they purified the data they proceeded to the statistical processing of the same utilizing program SPSS Statistics 17,0. The analysis carried out included analysis of simple frequencies, as well as boards of contingency that permitted the knowledge of the relation among different variables of categorical nature, keeping in mind the test of the chi-square to verify its degree of meaning.

It agrees to clarify that it has opted for this type of methodological study aggregate, since our purpose has been to register the evaluations that the citizens make of the president of the Region of Murcia on repeated occasions, in order to verifying empirical, the evolution of the appraisals toward s this politician as well as to appreciate possible tendencies in the evolution of the public opinion.



When they work themselves with surveys to evaluate the popularity of a political leader, one of the key questions is to identify what variable type they intend to get explained (and therefore they become dependent variables) and which we believe that they can explain it (and therefore they become independent variables).

Thus, in this work, two basic questions have been differentiated and try to explain the public perception of the political image and that would constitute the two dependent variables of our study. On the one hand, we have set us in the popularity that obtains Valcárcel among the citizens, a question that measures quantitative the popular support that receives of the citizenship, formulated in the question "In a scale of 0-10 (0 being very low and 10 very high) tell me what scoring you would give Ramón Luis Valcárcel". In second place, we have measured the public image of this politician from the registration of the main attributes utilized by the citizenship to define or to identify this political leader upon being asked openly of the following form: "If he had a friend that does not know Ramón Luis Valcárcel, how would he be defined?"

In parallel, they have themselves identifying an explanatory or independent assembly of variables from which they would be able to observe and differentiate significance at the moment of explaining to the clerks, and in our case they are gender, age, level of studies finalized, professional situation, ideology and intention of vote.

The main results of the empirical study are carried out from three questions that are the objectives of our analysis: Valcárcel popularity, issue associated to the candidate and perceived political attribute.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Evolution of the public perceptions related issues that matters: From the Water problem as a priority to the Economic Crisis issue.

The evolution of the public image of Valcárcel and its consolidation as political leader they cannot be understood without lending attention to the specific circumstances that have defined each one of the five legislatures in which has been at the front of the regional government of Murcia.

Above the peculiarities that can characterize each one of its mandates in terms of thematic priorities, since president of the Community in the year 1995, so much the speech as the public image of this politician has been linked in a direct way to explanations, arguments and proposals around the problem of Water, to the extent of being able to affirm that the strategic association of its political figure with a priority theme –the problem of the Water- has managed to generate an effect priming or of pre-activation hypothesis (Iyengar and Kindergarten, 1987), that has fortified its identification with a man fighter, worried about the main problem of its Region (Zamora, 2010; Zamora and Ruiz, 2010). Thus, for many analysts, the position adopted by Ramón Luis Valcárcel on the Water has been without doubt the main motive of his electoral success.

Since his first Legislature and even the date in all the electoral campaigns, the subject of water has been present as a political priority, with a speech adapted to the socio-political context of the moment, but maintaining a common denominator: the bets

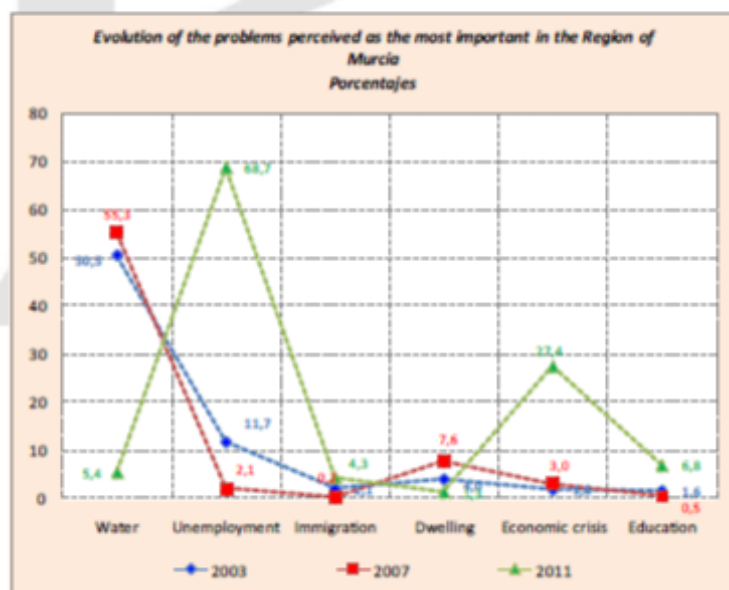
on the transfers and the interconnection of basins to put an end to the shortage of water in the driest regions of Spain, set against other measures alternatives to the transfers and centred Chiefly in the desalination. In the same way, for which refers to the configuration of the public agenda, is significant to stand out that the water politics has been a constant one in the imaginary collective regional and especially associated one to the "Valcarismo" or time during the one that occupies this politician the presidency of the Region of Murcia since the year 1995.

Thus, Ramón Luis Valcárcel, closed with simple majority his second legislature as the president of the Community of Murcia in 2003. After a comfortable government and without internal problems, the leader of the Popular Party in the Region of Murcia opted in 2003 by repeating candidacy and, against what announced in his day, he was presented to the regional elections with the firm purpose of maintaining and/or to expand the majority of votes. For him, he counted as main guarantees with the excellent economic results harvested during his two first legislatures at the front of the regional government –the figures of unemployment the lowest in the history in the Region of Murcia–, important projects of development like the international airport and the transfer of the Ebro, the explicit support of the presidents of the Chambers of Commerce and of the businessmen, and the endorsement of the national direction Of its party, that then was also the central government, then presided by the popular leader, José María Aznar. Without doubt, the shortage of water was for then the main problem for the of Murcia company and the National Hydrologic Plan, designed by the central government of the Popular Party, the most viable solution.

At that time, the transfer of the Ebro included the endorsement of the national government of the Popular Party, but still was alert for the well-being of the European Union, necessary to obtain finance. This was the main motive by the one that political representatives of the regions of the raise Spaniard and of the European institutions, headed by the autonomous presidents of Murcia and Valencia, Ramón Luis Valcárcel and Francisco Camps, both of the Popular Party, they carried out numerous meetings and encounters, at the same time that on the street, social mobilizations rallied themselves in favour and against the transfers.

With everything, the electoral campaign of 2003 in the Region of Murcia was sprinkled by the polemics of the transfer, in spite of the fact that consensus in favour of the water infrastructure between the two existed main political parties, being situated even the PSRM-Spanish Socialist Party contrary to the message of the Spanish Socialist Party national. Only the United Left in the Region of Murcia showed its refusal to the project. The prominence of the political speech on the Water, with the consequent media cover, penetrated also in the public agenda, just as shows the fact that the citizens, upon being asked by the main problem of the Region of Murcia in the prior days to the assemblies of 2003, they also recognized the problem of water as a priority. As it is appreciated in the first graph, for slightly more than the half of the subjects (50,5%), the Water was respected the main problem to which there was that to give a solution, leaving in the background other problems such as the employment or the unemployment (11,7%).

**Graph 1. Evolution of the main problem public perception in Murcia Region**



With everything, the electoral result gave again to the Popular Party, and to the valcarcismo the electoral victory in the Region of Murcia by third consecutive time, including the simple majority. The Popular Party expanded thus its advantage in almost four points being situated, with 56.3% of the votes, in the highest levels obtained by a party in some regional elections in the of Murcia community. The popular leader, Ramón Luis Valcárcel, was the second most voted autonomous president of the Spanish state, only behind José Bond who, in Castilla-La Mancha, obtained 57.86% of the votes.

At the beginning of this new Legislature was produced besides an electoral upset in Spain, caused by the victory of the Spanish Socialist Party in the general elections of March of 2004 and changing, therefore, the political colour in the Central Executive, with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero to the head. From this moment, the period of apparent calm in which governed the Murcia Popular Party, headed by Ramón Luis Valcárcel, began to be destabilized. In the Region of Murcia began a phase of change, uncertainty and worry before the fear that Rodríguez Zapatero to comply its electoral promise not to carry out the transfer of the Ebro. In fact, the revocation of the National Hydrologic Plan was considered by many of Murcia voters as an "external attack", causing an effect called rally round the flag on the leadership of Valcárcel, consistent in a national or regional species of patriotism, which implies generally an increase maintained in the indices of approval and popularity of the leaders of shift.

The change of external and internal strategy of the Murcia socialist party, induced by the new leader, Pedro Saura was, to erode the regional Government and to defeat the Popular Party, uncovering numerous cases of corruption. All of it caused a substantial change of attitude and autonomous president of Murcia positioning, that adopted a frontal position and of refusal, on the one hand, to the water politics of the government of Rodríguez Zapatero, based on the desalination in detriment of the transfers, and by another, the accusations of corruption poured by the Murcia socialists.

In this context, and at the same time, had to face the constant accusations of corruption of the PSRM-Spanish Socialist Party that fell on his person and on other members of the Popular Party, Ramón Luis Valcárcel was presented to the re-election in the assemblies of 2007, vouched for by a sounded defense of the Water, forceful refusal to the water politics of the socialist Government and with some economic indicators to his favour. Again, the speech of Valcárcel on the water penetrated again in the electorate, occupying a prominence that reduced importance to the intents carried out since the opposition by setting other public matters –as the urban development corruption- like priorities in the public agenda. So that, just as it's observed in the first graph, for a good majority (55,7%) the problem of the water continued occupying the maximum importance in the public agenda, followed to enough distance of the problem of dwelling (7,5%), for many a matter linked to the urban development corruption.

On May 27th 2007, the Popular Party of Murcia renewed the simple majority in the Region with 58.49% of the votes. During the new legislature, quarter legislature for Valcárcel, the parliamentary Camera tried to approve a Water pact that wasn't finally carried out by differences between the two main political groups. The inclusion inside the agreement of an espresso reference to the need of a transfer from the Ebro river would be the main point of failure to meet up among both parties.

During the second part of this quarter legislature, the economic crisis and its havoc on the unemployment, as well as the problems of the autonomous public deficit obliged the government of Valcárcel to make unpopular decisions that were expressed in the Law of Extraordinary Measures for the Sustainability of the Public Finances, approved in December of 2010, and that supposed drastic cuts for the civil servants.

Inevitably these would be the key matters of the ones that would be spoken during the electoral campaign on May 2011. Also the citizens perceived it who, for the first time during all the valcarcismo, they cited among the main problems of the Region of Murcia is the unemployment rate (68,7%) followed by economic problems (27,4%), leaving the question of the marginalized water to an almost anecdotal importance (5%), just as it's observed in the first graph.

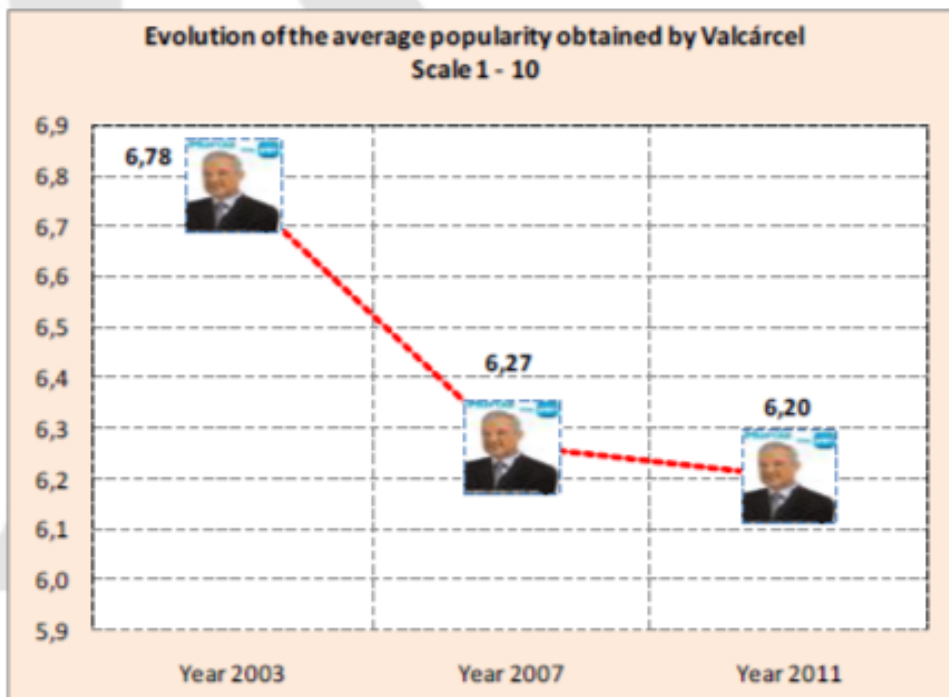
In spite of the hardness and intensity of this quarter legislature, with constant demonstrations on the street against the politics of cuts carried out by the government of the Popular Party, and that had its final clasp with the movement of citizens 'indignant' of 15M, in the assemblies of 2011, Valcárcel did not only win again the elections, but did it with a greater margin. Once more, the leader of the Popular Party in the Region of Murcia devastated for the fifth consecutive time in the ballot boxes with an overwhelming and historic victory (59% of the votes) what supposed the major percentage of votes harvested y a political party in the thirteen Spanish autonomous regions and that converted to Ramón Luis Valcárcel in the most voted autonomous president of Spain.

#### **4.2. Evolution of Valcárcel popularity: Decline of Power?**

With the intention of knowing the popularity of the president of the Region of Murcia, they were included in three questionnaires with the following questions: "In a scale of 0-10, what appraisal would you give to Ramón Luis Valcárcel?" A first analysis of the frequencies of this question for both surveys shows that this politician

obtains, in general, some quite acceptable scorings in spite of carrying on performing his charge of president of the Region of Murcia during a long political path. In fact, Valcárcel is a politician that counts on a high popularity, in comparison with the Spanish political establishment, to state of the average appraisal that receives or not dropped under points. In concrete, in 2003 Valcárcel he obtained an average scoring of 6.78 points on 10, while in 2007 this scoring he descended slightly to 6.27 points of average, and he arrived to the 6.20 points in the year 2011, just as it is appreciated in the following graph.

**Graph 2. Evolution of the average popularity obtained by Valcárcel**



Subsequently, an analysis of the variance was carried out (ANOVA of a factor) to show the differences of average popularity in each of the years included in the study, assuming the necessary respected restrictions for be able to apply this technique with reliability. Thus, once it carried out the test of homogeneity of variances through the statistician of Levene (2,412), (meaning = 0,090), applied the ANOVA of a single

**Table 2. ANOVA Analysis (one factor) of the appraisal on the average popularity obtained by Valcárcel in each electoral year**

Descriptivos								
(N: 2056) VALORACIÓN POPULARIDAD VALCÁRCEL								
	N	Media	Desviación típica	Error típico	Intervalo de confianza para la media al 95%		Mínimo	Máximo
					Límite inferior	Límite superior		
Año 2003	679	6,78	2,113	,081	6,62	6,94	1	10
Año 2007	728	6,27	2,220	,082	6,10	6,43	1	10
Año 2011	649	6,20	2,328	,091	6,02	6,38	1	10
Total	2056	6,42	2,234	,049	6,32	6,51	1	10

factor with the one that the null hypothesis was rejected (Today: the average appraisal for the different years is the same one).

Finally, this analysis allowed us to identify certain tendencies to recognize a light descent downward in its popularity, when we consider the three moments of measurement. The reason that could explain this light descent of half a point in its popularity had to be seen, logically, with their political wear during the eight years that elapsed among the first one and the last moment of measurement.

In order of qualifying the scoring that the citizens offered to Valcárcel, were carried out with different segmentation trees (Classification and Regression Trees or CRT), one for each moment analyzed, just as observed in the Annex 1-3. This type of analysis allows us to identify if sociological profile exists, and at the same time turns out to be statistically significant or conclusive, associate to the appraisals that are offered toward the figure of the president of the Region of Murcia. Of such way that the summary of the model included, on the one hand, as dependent variable, the degree of popularity of Ramón Luis Valcárcel (ordinal), and by another, independent variables have been considered: gender, age, education level finished and the professional situation.

In general lines, it was observed that the variables that discriminated in the model pertaining to the survey carried out during 2003 were, in this order of importance: professional situation, education and age. In turn, in 2007, they turned out to be statistically significant. First, the professional situation, followed by education level and gender. Finally, in the 2011 survey, the professional situation resulted again as the most significant factor discrimination, followed by age. In general terms, with this data, it seemed opportune to emphasize the importance of the professional situation, that turned out to be significant in the three moments analyzed.

Particularly, if we are set in the creation of the critical road associate to the social profile that is deduced of the noticeable appraisal to Valcárcel in 2003. We observe that the most significant variables statistically on the noticeable appraisal to Valcárcel correspond to the professional situation, education level and age, being the resultant profile of the generation of the positive appraisal: all the people that are not yet retired or retirees, with or without media studies, mainly young, that work for someone else (critical road of the profile 2003 are the nodes 1, 3, 6 and 7).

At the end of four years, when the water issue continues being the main problem of the Region of Murcia, the highest appraisals on Valcárcel are more heterogeneous in as much as they consist of employees, unemployed and students (leaving aside to them retired or retirees, the housewife and the self employed workers), with secondary or university studies and mainly men.

Finally, in the assemblies of 2011, when the economic crisis displaced the problem of the water as a priority issue and interest, the importance of the professional situation was reflected in a significant way in greater appraisals for the president of the Region of Murcia. This was on the part of practically all of the professional segments, leaving to one side the self employed workers and unemployed that they sought their first employment, as well as those retired or retirees that previously had worked.

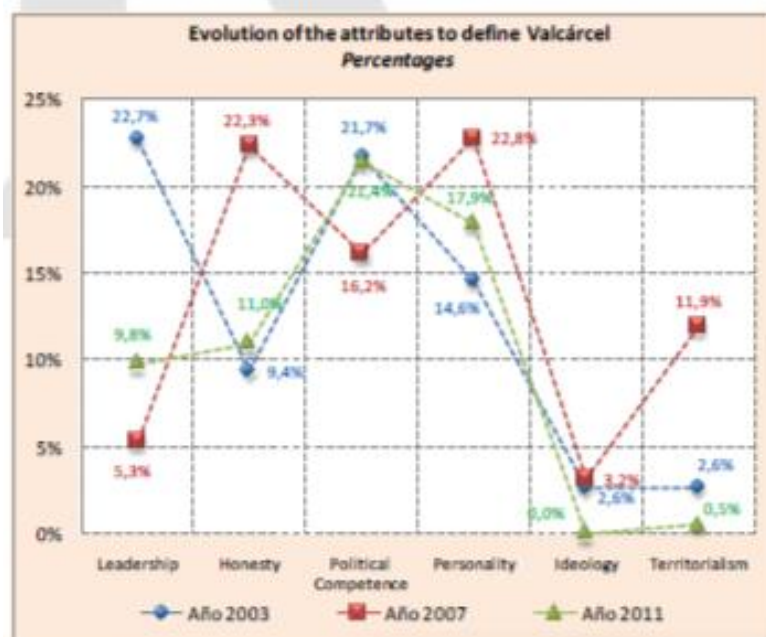
All of the previous things demonstrate, in the first place, that they didn't fix a sociological profile in the most noticeable appraisals maintained by Valcárcel through years. That indicates that contextual or environmental circumstances the origin in the support that this leader received through the years.

Nevertheless, if some social segments are appreciated, like the retired that have never worked or the self employed, who are among the ones that turn out to be more difficult to find higher appraisals on this politician, and this is a data that is repeated in more than one analyzed occasion.

### 4.3. Evolution of the public perceptions on the Valcárcel political image

The second pillar that intends to analyze in this work on the perception of the public image of Ramón Luis Valcárcel has to do with the attributes or associated characteristics of its person. For it we take as reference the listing of attributes that have been recognized in previous works like the most representative of the image of a politician (Zamora, Losada, 2011). To know the attributes that the citizens associate the president of the Region of Murcia has utilized the following question: "If you had a friend that doesn't know Ramón Luis Valcárcel, how would it be defined?" The answers obtained in this opening question were subsequently codified until completing a closed listing of six attributes or characteristics with the ones that is defined the current politician: leadership, honesty, competence, personality, ideology and territorialism. At the same time, in order to establish the direction in which the individuals in their judgment on the politician were pronounced, was registered a variable called 'tone' with the one that qualified in positive, negative or neuter terms the purpose of each one of the answers.

Graph 3. Evolution of the attributes to define Valcárcel



In 2003, shown in the graph 3, Valcárcel Leadership was more valued (22,7%), perceived mainly as positive (66.3% of the cases in which is cited), above all focused to the defence of the water problem as the regional priority. In second place, its political Competence (21,7%), also perceived as a positive characteristic in this political one (68,2%). In third place, the most noticeable attribute was its Personality (14.6% utilizes it to define it), which was considered attractive for the majority (89%)..

In turn, during the 2007 Campaign, when Valcárcel already had been consolidated as the regional leader after twelve years at the front of the regional Government, the attributes used by citizens to define the president of the Region of Murcia varied slightly. On this occasion, it more noticeable was their Personality (22,8%), followed very closely by his Honesty (22,3%). Both attributes are considered mainly in positive terms, although one agrees to notify that one in every four people that defines to Valcárcel in terms of Honesty does it in a negative sense. A fact that explains this data has to do with the multiple accusations of corruption that affected their person during the months prior to the campaign, Above all originating in the opposition, and that, although they failed to penetrate in the imaginary public as thematic priority, yes that they were very visible in the media cover during those assemblies. The third most cited attribute was their political Competence (16,2%), another attribute that began to be considered as negative in a somewhat greater percentage that in the previous elections.

Finally, during the elections of 2011, the most significant attribute with the one that was characterized to Valcárcel was its Competence (21,4%), framed in positive terms, although one in four individuals judged it in a negative way. The political context of this moment, clearly defined by the problem of unemployment and the economic crisis, demanded a capable leader to solve these problems, and therefore is understood that the political Competence it more noticeable. In second place, its Personality (17,9%) also understood mainly as attraction for almost six in every ten people. Finally, their Honesty (11%) considered shown for almost the 80% of the ones that cite it as the main characteristic linked to this politician.

The boards of contingency carried out among the dependent variable that in this case was utilized - the main associated attributes to Valcárcel- and the factors or independent variables of our study –gender, age, studies finished, professional situation, ideology and intentions to vote- also offered some interesting results, just as is observed in the Annex 4-

6. To begin, statistically significant relations were found in practically all the crossings carried out, in each one of the three moments. The only associations that were not significant were detected in the year 2007, and they affected the professional situation and the gender.



In 2003, men were seen as more suitable than women in the capacity of Leadership to this politician, while women were set more in their Competence. This changed in 2011 when, with independence of gender differences, Valcárcel's competence became more outstanding.

In relation to age, statistically significant differences were also observed at the moment of identifying the most characteristic of this leader. In fact, during the 2003 campaign, almost all of the age groups emphasized its Leadership, save the youths, to whom his Competence and his Personality were underlined. Neither Personality was the common characteristic for all the age groups in 2007, since the sector around 55 years old defined it more in terms of Honesty. Once more, Valcárcel Personality continued importing a lot among young people in 2011, but not thus to the remainder, who, in relation to the circumstances of the moment, they emphasized with greater frequency their Competence to resolve the problems.

This is referenced at the level of studies, in 2003 it is observed that not all valued the Leadership of Valcárcel as most important, since neither the subjects with low or no studies (that emphasized above all their Personality) or neither some individuals with media studies (that did the same thing with the Competence), they presented that boss. Also differences in 2007 among the people with little studies existed (that valued above all the Honesty of Valcárcel) and the remainder that noticed his Personality. These differences were projected also in 2011 when, those with fewer studies valued more the Personality of this politician, while the remainder noticed the Competence.

The professional situation of individuals differentiated significantly, considering that in 2003, in full battle of the Water problem, with exception of the workers in assets (well on its own or alien) that yes they emphasized the Leadership of Valcárcel, for the remainder (retired, stopped, students, housewife, etc.) was worthwhile to emphasize other things of this politician as its Competence or its Personality. In 2011, nevertheless, when the political circumstances changed, they all practically underlined the importance of the Competence as their more defining characteristic.

One of the most interesting variables to observe is the differences related Valcárcel characterization has to do with the political ideology, taking into account that while for the central sector the more noticeable of this politician in 2003 was his Leadership, for the most extreme positions the same thing did not occur (the sector clearly positioned to the right emphasized its Personality, while the sector clearly positioned to the left emphasized its Competence, in this case, framed in negative terms). In 2007, his honesty became in general one of the key characteristics. However, the most positioned sectors clearly on the left or the right mentioned more his Personality (in positive sense or negative according to ideological differences), except for the extreme positions, that oscillated among the Honesty for the far left (lack of honesty) and the Competence for the far right (highly considerate). Finally, in 2011,

greater coincidence were found among all the ideological sectors upon insisting on the Competence as his more relevant attribute, except for some central positions that underlined his Personality.

Finally, another key variable to interpret citizens differences, quite related to the previous factor, was the voting intention. Thus, similar behaviour between socialist party (PSOE) voters and Izquierda Unida (IU) voters was observed among the judgments linked to Valcárcel image. For both, his Competence were more noticeable in 2003, while the Personality was the most important characteristic in 2007. Only in 2011 a different behaviour was found among the opposition parties voters (the Personality was more noticeable for PSOE voters and Competence was more relevant for IU voters). Voters from the Popular Party, that in fact conform the majority of the individuals included in the study, underlined Valcárcel Leadership in 2003, his Honesty in 2007 and his Competence in 2011. It is worthy to pay special attention to those individuals that are recognized as undecided voters and for who Valcárcel leadership was more noticeable in 2003, while in 2007 and 2011, his Personality was even more relevant.

Of all the previous results point to, in reference to Valcárcel public perceptions during the eight years included in this study, significant differences, that affect so much to the sociodemographic variables (age, gender, professional situation, studies) as also to the ideological factors (intention of vote, ideological scale). Those differences, nevertheless, weren't repeated during time. Our results demonstrated that with the situation or context changed, also found differences related citizens assessments linked the Valcárcel public image. In other words, the specific circumstances or contexts, not only ideological or sociodemographic, marked the way in which citizens judged this politician.

## 5. Discussion

In times in which political personalization marks the strategy in any political action, it is necessary to deeply research in the way in which parties and politicians could recognize and identify guidelines in the construction of their leadership. In concrete, this text is created on interest by knowing the keys through which is possible to build the political leadership from the "exogenous factors" to the own leader, that is to say, with the variables that have to see so much with the associate-political context as with their linking with the public problems at each moment like spring since the one that mark differences, so much in the appraisals on popularity of the leader As to characterize their image around some characteristics or concrete attributes. That is to say, the way in which the alien factors of the leader finish it defining more than the own personal factors.

The necessary linking of the image perceived by a political leader with the priorities that the citizens more value in a determined moment recalls us, on one hand, and of form tangential, the hypothesis of the activation or priming noticeable by

Iyengar and Kinder (1987) that links the public judgment with a politician with thematic priorities expressed in the media coverage of determined matters, as well as, above all, the idea of "contextual intelligence" aimed more recently by Nye (2008) as one of the most important qualities that a political leader should have, and that themselves have the capacity to set a clear concrete route defining the problem which is facing the group, being conscious that will be good or bad management that recognise this problem as the citizens emit their own Judgments around their leadership. Since this perspective, the present work defends the idea to contemplate the leadership since an external point of view, from what we have called "situational Leadership", that denies the existence of innate qualities or specific behaviours that assure the success of the leadership (perspective conductible) and will advance this changes according to the situation or the context.

The analysis of the image perceived by the president of the Region of Murcia, Ramón Luis Valcárcel, of diachronic form in three different electoral moments (regional elections of 2003, 2007 and 2011) has permitted us to test empirically these ideas in a double way.

First, with the association of this political leader with the prominent public subject matter for the citizens in each historic moment. In this way, the popularity of Ramón Luis Valcárcel, is maintained almost by intact during more than 8 years, a fact that can be explained, in part, by its positive and significant capacity to be associated with the public priorities in each historical moment. In concrete, for many years this association noticed the problem and the management of the Water and, subsequently and even in the present time, with the Economic Crisis. In both cases, the leadership of the President of the Region of Murcia has not been seen affected by the historic evolution of the events because, in good measure, this politician has gone accompanying this evolution of progressive form.

On the other hand, the second way in which leadership comes conditioned by "contextual" factors comes defined by the way in which the citizens recognize and figure the attributes of the leader that consider prominent in each moment from the changing social circumstances. That way, at first the priority attributes were the associates to the Leadership for, subsequently, to be derived toward the Honesty and Personality and, finally, their Competence as the leader, an evolution that is explained perfectly with the social events that marked the political agenda –and the social worry- during each one of those legislatures.

With these explanations, extensively justified with empirical data, derived from three opinion polls conducted for this study, it is possible to demonstrate that situational factors end as having a direct influence in the construction of the political leader public perception in that way that this contextual dimension are more and more having a significantly greater weight in this sense rather than just the own personal factors from the leader profile.

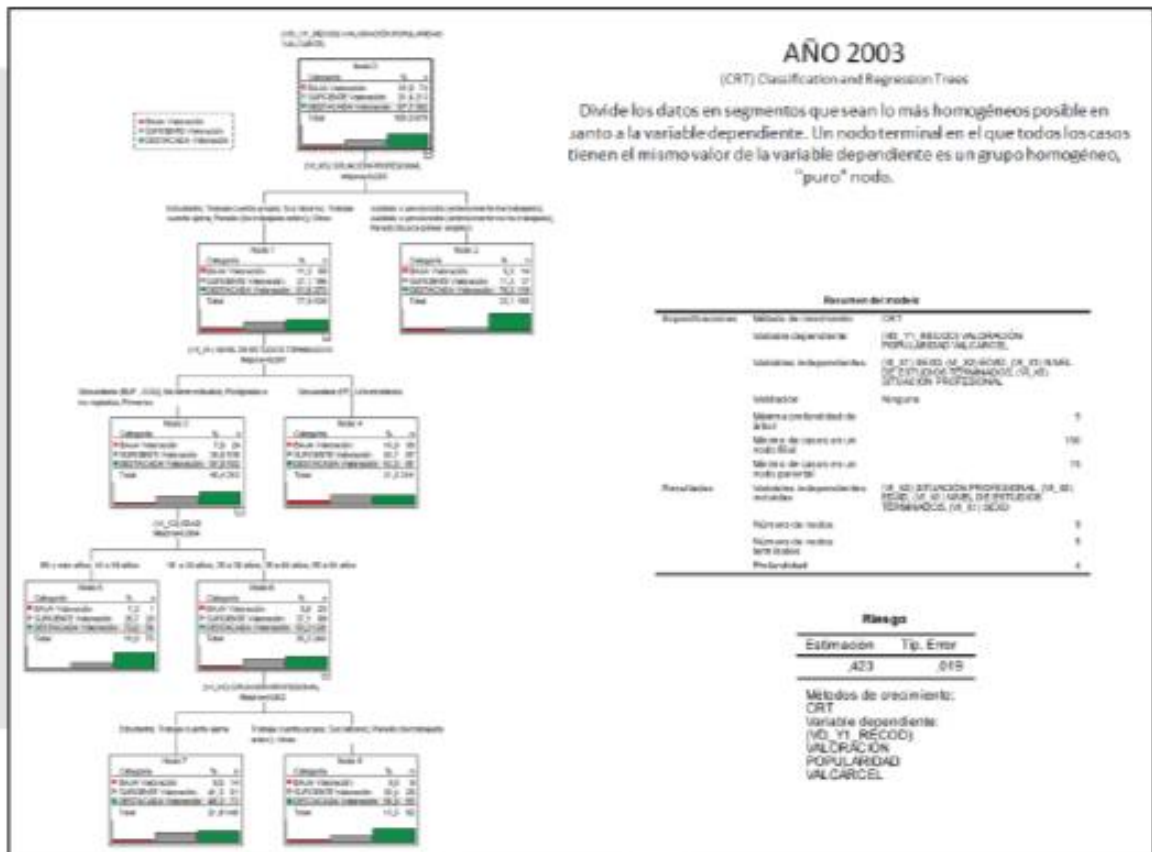
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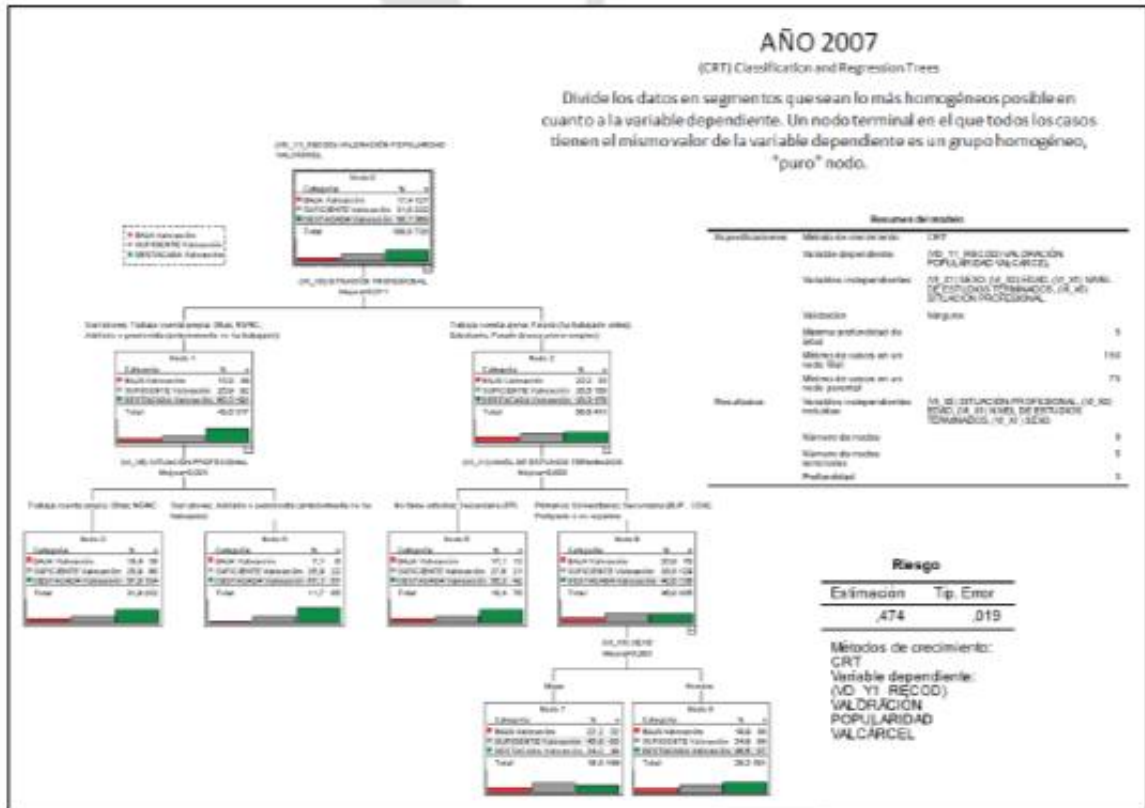
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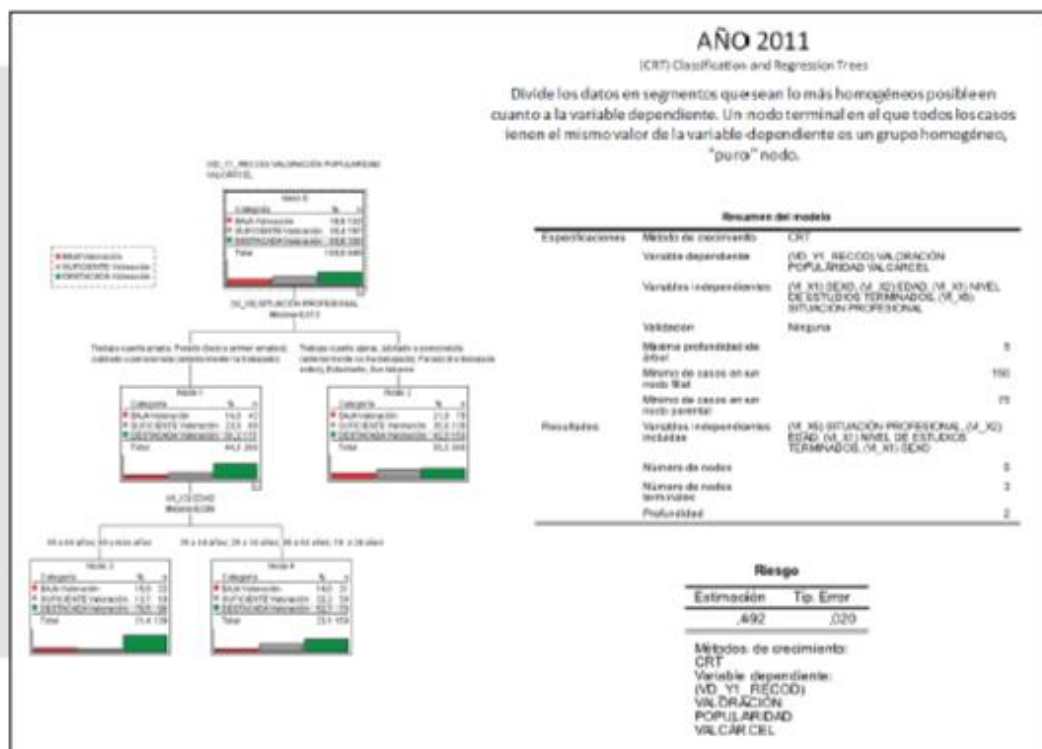
Anexo 1



Anexo 2



Anexo 3





**Anexo 4**

Tabla de contingencia

AÑO DE REALIZO EL ESTUDIO		(M. 86) IDEOLOGÍA POLÍTICA								
		Extrema derecha	Derecha	Centro derecha	Centro centro	Centro izquierda	Extrema izquierda	No contestó	Total	
Año 2003 (M. 92) ATRIBUTOS VOLCANICEL	Liderazgo	12,5%	18,1%	29,7%	29,2%	31,0%	23,3%		14,8%	22,7%
	Honestez		8,0%	13,3%	12,4%	4,6%	8,3%		8,8%	9,4%
	Competencia	12,5%	19,0%	26,5%	24,8%	25,3%	25,6%	100,0%	13,2%	21,7%
	Personalidad	62,5%	33,9%	12,4%	10,6%	13,8%	8,3%		14,6%	14,6%
	Metodología		1,4%	2,7%		5,7%	5,8%		2,2%	2,6%
	Tambralidad	12,5%	4,3%	4,4%	1,9%	4,6%	1,7%			2,6%
	NSNC		24,6%	15,0%	21,1%	14,9%	28,7%		46,2%	26,4%
<b>Total</b>		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
Año 2007 (M. 92) ATRIBUTOS VOLCANICEL	Liderazgo	14,3%	4,6%	7,4%	6,1%	6,7%	3,9%		4,2%	5,3%
	Honestez	28,6%	24,3%	28,2%	24,8%	12,2%	22,5%	33,3%	18,1%	22,3%
	Competencia	42,9%	15,0%	17,4%	14,8%	21,1%	15,3%	16,7%	13,8%	16,2%
	Personalidad	26,0%	15,4%	15,4%	22,8%	26,7%	29,7%	16,7%	20,5%	22,8%
	Metodología	1,7%	3,4%	3,5%		11,1%	1,8%	16,7%	6%	3,2%
	Tambralidad	16,6%	17,4%	12,3%		8,9%	7,2%		7,2%	11,8%
	NSNC	14,3%	12,1%	10,7%	15,6%	13,3%	19,6%	16,7%	35,5%	19,4%
<b>Total</b>	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
Año 2011 (M. 92) ATRIBUTOS VOLCANICEL	Liderazgo	10,3%	9,8%		11,1%		8,8%	11,4%	5,3%	9,8%
	Honestez	18,1%	12,6%		10,4%		8,8%	5,7%	4,3%	11,0%
	Competencia	31,6%	21,7%		18,6%		18,2%	24,3%	13,8%	21,4%
	Personalidad	18,1%	15,4%		19,4%		29,5%	17,1%	10,6%	17,9%
	Tambralidad				1,1%				1,1%	,5%
	NSNC	19,9%	40,6%		29,4%		38,6%	41,4%	64,9%	39,4%
	<b>Total</b>	100,0%	100,0%		100,0%		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Pruebas de chi-cuadrado

AÑO SE REALIZÓ EL ESTUDIO		Valor	gl	Sig. asimétrica (bilateral)
Año 2003	Chi-cuadrado de Pearson	126,470 <sup>a</sup>	42	,000
	Razón de verosimilitudes	125,840	42	,000
	Asociación lineal por lineal	19,153	1	,000
	N de casos válidos	810		
Año 2007	Chi-cuadrado de Pearson	106,368 <sup>a</sup>	42	,000
	Razón de verosimilitudes	99,599	42	,000
	Asociación lineal por lineal	14,097	1	,000
	N de casos válidos	816		
Año 2011	Chi-cuadrado de Pearson	68,749 <sup>a</sup>	25	,000
	Razón de verosimilitudes	70,751	25	,000
	Asociación lineal por lineal	32,904	1	,000
	N de casos válidos	766		

- a. 26 casillas (46,4%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es ,03.
- b. 19 casillas (33,8%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es ,19.
- c. 8 casillas (22,2%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es ,23.

Tabla de contingencia

% dentro de (M_X7) INTENCIÓN DE VOTO DIRECTO			(M_X7) INTENCIÓN DE VOTO DIRECTO								
AÑO SE REALIZÓ EL ESTUDIO			PP	PSOE	IU	Otros	En blanco	No votaría	No sabe	No contesta	Total
Año 2003	(M_Y2) ATRIBUTOS VALCARCEL	Liderazgo	23,8%	23,1%	26,7%	63,6%	24,0%	22,6%	16,5%	19,8%	22,7%
		Honradez	12,3%	9,2%	6,7%		8,0%	3,2%	6,8%	6,9%	9,4%
		Competencia	23,5%	26,9%	26,7%	27,3%	24,0%	16,1%	15,5%	16,0%	21,7%
		Personalidad	18,3%	7,7%	6,7%		8,0%	25,8%	7,8%	18,3%	14,8%
		Ideología	,9%	3,1%	16,7%	9,1%	8,0%	3,2%	1,0%	3,1%	2,6%
		Territorialidad	4,0%	3,1%			4,0%		1,9%		2,6%
		NSNC	17,2%	26,9%	16,7%		24,0%	29,0%	50,5%	35,9%	26,4%
Total			100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Año 2007	(M_Y2) ATRIBUTOS VALCARCEL	Liderazgo	4,4%	7,3%		9,1%	12,8%	10,3%	3,2%		5,3%
		Honradez	25,8%	22,8%	17,9%		12,8%	22,4%			22,3%
		Competencia	16,6%	13,8%	23,1%	27,3%	2,6%	12,1%	18,9%		16,2%
		Personalidad	20,2%	26,8%	28,2%	27,3%	30,8%	22,4%	22,2%		22,8%
		Ideología	3,0%	4,9%	2,6%	9,1%	5,1%		2,7%		3,2%
		Territorialidad	18,8%	4,9%	7,7%		5,1%	8,6%	7,0%		11,9%
		NSNC	11,1%	19,5%	20,5%	18,2%	30,8%	24,1%	27,0%		18,4%
Total			100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Año 2011	(M_Y2) ATRIBUTOS VALCARCEL	Liderazgo	6,6%	16,8%	15,2%	7,7%	3,8%	7,9%	9,1%		9,8%
		Honradez	15,6%	5,9%	12,1%	7,7%	3,8%	5,3%	7,9%		11,0%
		Competencia	26,1%	19,8%	15,2%	15,4%	15,4%	15,8%	17,6%		21,4%
		Personalidad	17,0%	26,7%	9,1%	23,1%	19,2%	11,8%	18,2%		17,9%
		Territorialidad	,6%				3,8%		,6%		,6%
		NSNC	32,1%	30,7%	48,5%	46,2%	53,8%	58,2%	46,7%		39,4%
		Total			100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Pruebas de chi-cuadrado

AÑO SE REALIZÓ EL ESTUDIO		Valor	gl	Sig. asintótica (bilateral)
Año 2003	Chi-cuadrado de Pearson	127,248 <sup>a</sup>	42	,000
	Razón de verosimilitudes	120,703	42	,000
	Asociación lineal por lineal	26,815	1	,000
	N de casos válidos	810		
Año 2007	Chi-cuadrado de Pearson	84,638 <sup>b</sup>	36	,000
	Razón de verosimilitudes	90,625	36	,000
	Asociación lineal por lineal	5,393	1	,020
	N de casos válidos	816		
Año 2011	Chi-cuadrado de Pearson	62,844 <sup>c</sup>	30	,000
	Razón de verosimilitudes	59,989	30	,001
	Asociación lineal por lineal	21,712	1	,000
	N de casos válidos	766		

a. 25 casillas (44,5%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es ,29.

b. 16 casillas (32,7%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es ,35.

c. 16 casillas (38,1%) tienen una frecuencia esperada inferior a 5. La frecuencia mínima esperada es ,07.

## Notas

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