

The video game in political campaigns and as a sociocultural text. Case study Ecuador

PROBLEM

The video game contributes to the construction of critical thinking in its users, as occurs with all audiovisual media. In this sense, the video game is a text that is a product of the expressiveness of civil groups. Also, it is a text that conditions the criteria of another group of users, generally younger. From this perspective, it is important to analyze the audiovisual narrative and the cultural elements that are exposed in it because these elements contribute to messages aimed at digital natives.

Main Goal

Analyze the audiovisual narrative of the video game as a tool of political propaganda, but also as a cultural text, in which the political message of citizens is positioned, as well as candidates for public office.



Method

It is research with a qualitative approach and is a type of descriptive research based on the interpretivism paradigm. It was developed according to the method of Fernández-Vara (2015), which was also merged with visual discourse analysis. In this sense, the first method is based on the general description of the game. Therefore, the detailed mechanics, that is, the narrative and modus operandi of the video, are explained, and finally the cultural context of the video game.

Then, the narrative is analyzed to determine how the visual signs interact and how this contributes to the construction of the political message and its interaction with the cultural context of the city where the video game takes place. A netnography was conducted on Twitch to collect data on the virtual community. This social network was chosen because it is the mobile application in which the video game was presented.



Results and Discussion

In the last week of the campaign, Viteri strategists announced an event with gamers on a collaborative platform in which they were the protagonists of an event that was part of GuayakilRP, which is part of the Grand Theft Auto (GTA) universe. Said World is a very controversial video game saga produced by RockStar Games. The event was created so that the character of the then-mayor of Guayaquil could interact in the video game that took place for only one day. The video game in which politics participates lacks an Aristotelian narrative structure. The character does not resolve a climax, nor does he register great dramatic turns that allow us to see his reactions. Which does not allow storytelling to capture the attention of Internet users.

- Bossetta (2019) points out that the objective of the video game as a political tool is fulfilled when it generates rhetoric about politicians, the protagonist of the electoral campaign, and the game. In Viteri's case, it was fulfilled.
- Cultural elements (Bossetta, 2019) that are included in the video game are perfectly recognizable for participants who have lived in Guayaquil.



Conclusions

- In the case study of this research, we detected that there was a deficient narrative that did cause rhetoric to be formed around what could be seen at the gamer event, but it managed to be liked only by that niche, which is very small. However, it did not have the same impact on the rest of the voters, the majority of whom are not on Twitch.
- As a tool for positioning political brands in electoral campaigns, video games have managed to transnationalize politics and integrated into the hybrid ecologies that political parties or citizens deploy to make their proposals or oppositions known, respectively.
- However, video games must be part of a communication strategy, not just isolated elements.