

# Life imitates art?

The electoral campaign of Volodymyr Zelensky  
in the mediatized political environment

Marcell Machado Marchioro

Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul



# Introduction

- How Zelensky's campaign strategy benefited from the mediatized political environment?

## **Objectives:**

- Comprehend the strategies applied in Zelensky's campaign.
- Better understand celebrities power in the current political environment;

## **Methodology:**

- Case study (Yin, 2001)



# The celebrity-politician in mediatized times

## Why mediatization as the framework to answer the question?

- Mediatization in the path to become the pattern in the construction of reality (Braga, 2006);

## Celebrity-politics interplay

- Celebrity as a reference point for people's aspirations and expectations (França and Simões, 2014);
- The celebrity-politician should be comprehended through its performance (Street, 2019)



# Corpus

## **33 publications from the press:**

- Foreign and Ukrainian;
- Digital, print and video;
- From October 2018 to December 2019;
- Mostly between first and second round: March and April/2019.

## **Some of the outlets:**

- Reuters;
- Al Jazeera;
- BBC;
- The Guardian;
- Ukrainian Pravda;
- Deutsche Welle.



# Results

## The following trends were identified:

- Zelensky's character in *Servant of the People*;
- Zelensky's coverage by 1+1;
- The *Servant of the People* party;
- Oligarchs as the enemy;
- Comedy shows during the campaign;
- The debate;
- Contact through social media.



# Results

“The entire point of ‘Servant of the People’ is that Holoborodko is a humble man who, right away, admits to not understanding the policies that he needs to enact” - *The New Yorker*

“He [...] made no speeches, held no rallies, eschewed travel across the country, gave no press conferences, avoided in-depth interviews with independent journalists [...]” - *Politico Magazine*

“[...] a still shot of Zelenskiy in the character of Holoborodko, suited up and holding a briefcase, can be seen on Zelenskiy's campaign website” - *Deutsche Welle*

“[...] a day before Zelenskiy won the first round of the presidential contest [...], 1+1 filled its schedule with back-to-back shows by the comedian and actor.” - *Reuters*



# Conclusions

**Zelensky's campaign strategy benefited from the mediatized political environment in the following ways:**

- Zelensky's image as Holoborodko was useful;
- The presence of the candidate in social media and channel 1+1 provided sufficient exposure;
- His comedy shows as a substitute to the traditional campaign events allowed Zelensky to share his message in a different way.

**THANKS!**

