

Speech Mainz 30./31. Oktober 2003

Dr. Carlos Fara

I would like to thank the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Gutenberg University and especially a friend from Argentina, Frank Priess, who made it possible for me to come here and try to explain to you the complex country where I live – and in particular the last Presidential Elections, on April the 27th of this year. When I am asked about my country, I always say If you want to know the highlands of the tableland – go to Bolivia, if you want tropical rain forrests and waterfalls, go to Costa Rica, if you want the pleasure of a snowy canyon and its lakes – go to Chile, if you want to enjoy huge beaches, go to Brazil. But if you want all of this at once – you must come to Argentina. This speech will probably not at all be as varied and diversified as our country.

1. The last Presidential Elections in Argentina were not Americanized, nor professional, nor modernized. I am sorry if I disappoint you.
2. The reasons for this, I will try to explain briefly. The Presidential Elections in 1999 had an overdose of marketing, the consultants almost got more publicity than the candidates for President. This is why there was an exaggerated caution in using marketing. As my friend Carlos Fara says, if the trick is visible, the magic disappears. The Argentine politicians were afraid that their tricks would become visible.
3. The principal actors were Carlos Menem, President of the Republic during two terms, a man who transformed and modernized the country. Nestor Kirchner, Governor of the province of Santa Cruz, with precious petrol supply but poorly inhabited, with only 130 000 voters. Ricardo Lopez Murphy was the Minister of Economy in the De La Rúa administration, a liberally oriented economist who had never been into politics before.
4. Carlos Menem's campaign was roaming and confused. He used three teams in the campaign – One with his Candidate for Vice president, Doctor Romero, then there was Menem's personal team, and the third team were people who had made the campaign of the former President De La Rúa – which was like having a wasp in your living room. As you can imagine, nothing good came out of this explosive cocktail of teams, the lack of coherence was obvious.

His objective was to position himself as the only possible alternative in the chaos that Argentina was living- both on an economic and a social level.

5. His strategy, as I already mentioned, did not set a straight course, but went from one place to another. In the first part of the campaign, he referred to his past successes, with a creative poster campaign. Then, he tried a reconciliation with the society, but at this point the tricks were visible, and the magic never showed up. He also tried to loosen his ties with those of his former employees in the administration carrying a bad reputation, by showing new teams made up by young people. The last campaign was Me and the disaster.
6. As you can see, the large number of slogans that were used during the campaign contributed to the confusion. Menem-Romero Registered Trade Mark. With

Menem, we lived better. The Third Presidency – the Historic. We Argentines have got an Opportunity.

7. What was the campaign like for the elected President? I would say it was poor, very poor, maybe even a no-campaign. Lacking a clear strategy, no marketing, nothing creative.
8. Its objective was to differ from the rest of the candidates, by acting as a new generation of politicians, with no references to the past. The strategy consisted of transforming his anonymity into an advantage. Showing that he had got the right people for running a government, and strengthening the self-confidence of the Argentines, with a domestic agenda, marking the distance to the powerful, the army and the economic interests (IMF, World bank etc).
9. He did show coherence in something – His slogan was always the same one. A country, really.
10. The candidate Lopez Murphy was coherent and very creative, and he was helped by one of the most talented creative advertisers in Argentina, Ernesto Savaglio.
11. His objective was honesty, just like his character, but it was also important to give him a more human face, because he is known as the Bull dog, from his not always so adorable personality. The strategy underlined the difference of this candidate and it also pointed out that the adversaries were all the same.
12. He didn't use slogans, he just finished his spots by saying We will recreate Argentina, referring to his party named RECREAR (Recreate), and all of his publicity finished by Lopez Murphy for President.
13. We will look at some spots.
14. It is not easy to interpret the state of mind of a changing society, and here we have seen that the best strategy does not always lead to victory. There are times when the society sets a course and it becomes impossible to make it turn another way.
15. These are the results of the first round.
16. There was no second round. When the investigations indicated that he would loose the second round, Carlos Menem decided not to run again. So, Kirchner ends up winning the presidential elections, in spite of not having the quantity of votes needed to legitimate the victory.
17. AS the Spanish poet Antonio Machado said Wanderer, there is no road. The road is made while walking.
18. That is how Argentina is finding its way forward, with doubts and hope that this government will find the right course.