Facebook, digital campaign and Italian general election 2018.

A focus on the disintermediation process activated by the web

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Toward a *disintermediation* process

- Why the web?

  - **Press** and **television** have contributed to create distances between electors and candidates, increasing the level of distrust in the political class;

  - The "old" *media-system* has not fulfilled the function of *watchdog*, instead, it contributed to a phenomenon known as the **spectacularization of politics**, in which the media are co-authors of the definition of the *agenda-setting.*

Toward a *disintermediation* process

- Why the web?
  - The **Internet** has abandoned the rigidity of a *top-down* communication to enable new *bottom-up* communication flows of *peer-to-peer* interaction, also in the political sphere and in civic engagement;
  - Social networks are a precious reservoir of *big data*, from which drawing to set up the digital campaign. **Profiling tools** prove extremely useful, not only in commercial campaigns but also in electoral campaigns

Toward a *disintermediation* process

- Why Facebook?
  - **Facebook** is the social network that, most of all, has been the preferred platform for the dissemination of targeted messages (top-down), for their circulation and for the active user response (bottom-up), as "consumers of the political offer".

Some exemplary practices

- **2008**: «Obama for America», the first and biggest digital campaign organization ever. It has proved its effectiveness through the wider mobilization network in history;
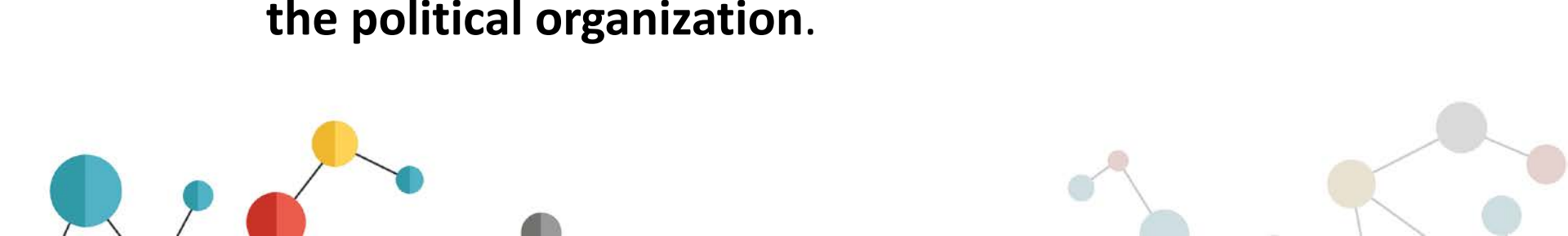
- **2015** *Ciudadanos* and **2016** *Podemos* (Spain),

- **2017**: *En Marche!* (France, Macron),

- ITALY: (**2013**) *Movimento 5 Stelle* (*Five Star Movement*), was the (national) forerunner of this **new way of meaning the political organization**.

Research Methodology

We gathered all the **textual**, **graphic** and **audiovisual** material (it was almost always a mixed material) produced by the official Facebook pages of the main parties that make up the current **tripolar political scenario**: *M5S*, *PD* and *Lega*. The time frames in which data has been collected concern the first and last weeks of the electoral campaign (exactly from 5th to 11th February and from 26th February to 3rd March).
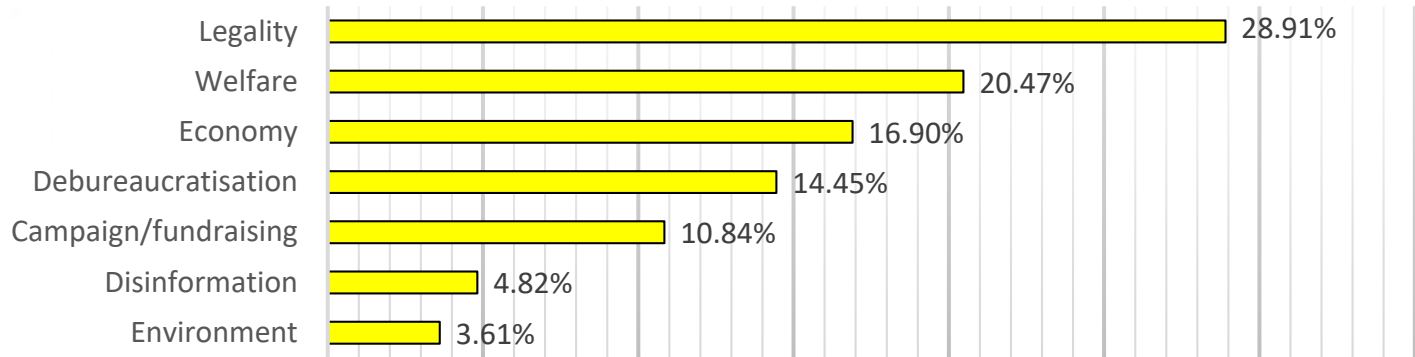
1,397 Facebook posts
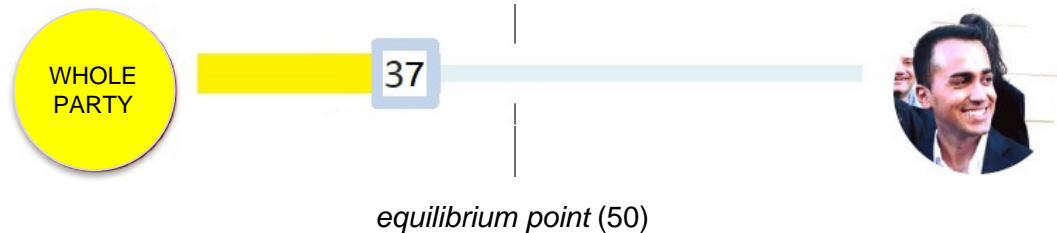
Match between offer and demand

Main topics in the speeches of M5S

Topic	Percentage
Legality	28.91%
Welfare	20.47%
Economy	16.90%
Debureaucratisation	14.45%
Campaign/fundraising	10.84%
Disinformation	4.82%
Environment	3.61%

Posts: 277

Facebook pages/profiles	Subscribers
Movimento 5 Stelle	1,284,671
Luigi Di Maio	1,560,451

Continuum *party/leader (leaderization process)*

WHOLE PARTY — 37

equilibrium point (50)

Match between offer and demand

Main topics in the speeches of PD

- Identity/Values 27.66%
- Welfare 19.16%
- Economy 19.15%
- Campaign 17.03%
- Rights 6.39%
- Europeanisation 6.35%
- Environment 4.26%
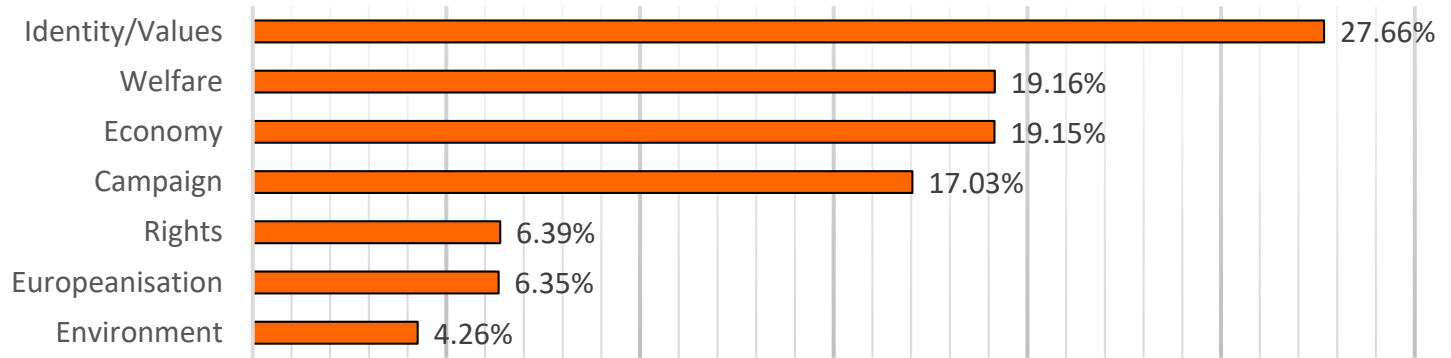
Posts: 98

Facebook pages/profiles	Subscribers
Partito Democratico	259,069
Matteo Renzi	1,125,786

Continuum *party/leader (leaderization process)*

WHOLE PARTY — 48

equilibrium point (50)

Match between offer and demand

Main topics in the speeches of Lega

Topic	%
Security	45.58%
Economy	16.58%%
Campaign	11.4%
Justice	9.33%
Identity/values	8.82%
Welfare	8.29%
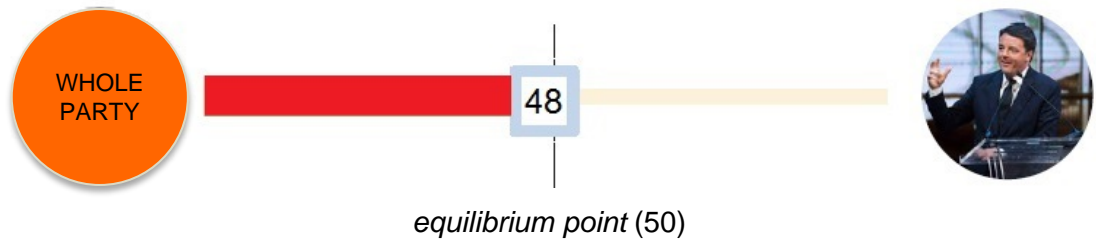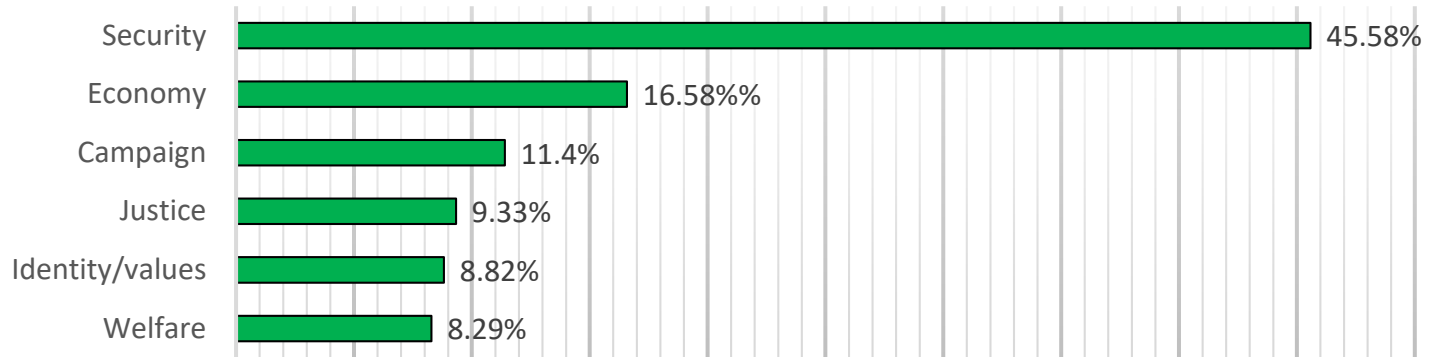
Posts: 1,022

Facebook pages/profiles	Subscribers
Lega	395,541
Matteo Salvini	2,162,960

Continuum *party/leader* (leaderization process)

WHOLE PARTY — 86

equilibrium point (50)
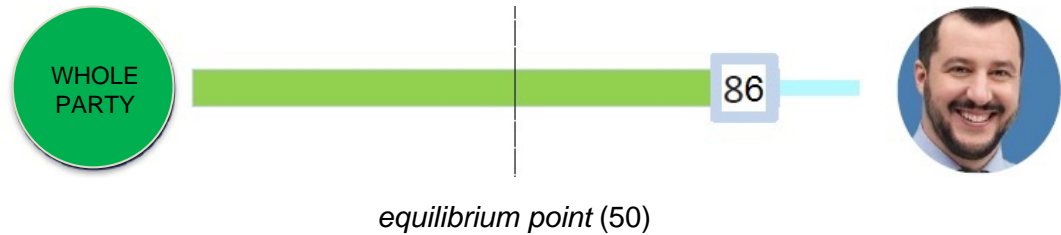
Internet as a mainstream media...

The exponential spread of web messages has amplified the echo of communications. This effect was directly observable by the level of engagement expressed by users and by their sensitivity to the priority themes treated by the different parties.

Thank you for your attention!

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