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Measuring the ROI of communication strategies in a changing candidate-centered political environment: the 2.0 revolution from the USA to Europe

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Introduction

When Bill Clinton challenged G. Bush senior during the 1992 presidential elections campaign, the websites active in the USA were three. At the time the logics of political communication on the internet were basically *top-down,* it wasn't anything more than another way to inform the people of candidates' programs and to do propaganda. Since then everything has mutated. The constantly improving technologies have quickly shifted to the center of everyone's life, changing the way of conceiving interpersonal relations and communications and consequently the asset of the whole social environment. The effect this technological and social evolution had on politics was massive and probably unexpected. This is true especially for political communication, that saw its function move swiftly from being fundamentally accessory to absolutely vital.

Traditionally social communication and media studies tend to consider political communication and electoral communication separately. The first one studies the relation between political actors and citizens through an approach of *interlocution logics;* the second aims to reaching consensus on the basis of votes, following what can be defined as *logics of propaganda*. Today the line between the two forms of communication is blurred. The evolving concept of *permanent campaigning* represents a new type of relation between parties and citizens and between citizens and building of consensus.

Permanent campaigning is not a new concept. It was born in the USA, its first theorization goes back to the first half of the 1980's and was conceived by a journalist called Sidney Blumenthal, that noticed it in both Reagan's and Clinton's presidential mandates. In Europe this trend took place more slowly, but with the advent of television and the diminishing weight of the radio in influencing public opinion, with the phenomena of the spectacularization of politics, with the fragmentation

and crisis of the "great ideologies" in favor of the personalization of leaders and with the imposition of new social models (the *performing society*) based on spectacularization and self-representation logics, finally also european countries started changing their campaigning methods and embracing this new way of conceiving politics (Sorice, 2014).

The concept of permanent campaigning refers to the propensity of advanced societies to overcome the ordinary timing of communicative dynamics of electoral campaigning in political life: there is no distance between the electoral period and the political cycle any more. The political behavior has become subordinated to the relation with public opinion and to the "needs" of political communication strategies. Electoral campaigns do not have the only goal of creating consensus, but also of reaching an increasingly large cluster of electors, to incorporate those *floating voters* that now represent the real objective of a political communication that evolved in taking the distance from the 19th century ideologies. This kind of campaigning results more and more influenced by marketing and information management, an example of this is the phenomena of *infotainment*. In Europe an explicit interpretation of these new logics of permanent campaigning can be found in a speech held by Tony Blair back in 1997 to the deputies of the Labour party in occasion of his establishment at Downing street when he said: "*Today is day one of the campaign to win a second term - don't let one of you forget that*" (Sorice, 2014). Other very important phenomena that sign the evolution of the political context, and that are crucial in analyzing the different ways the maturation of this new way of conceptualizing politics are personalization, disintermediation and spectacularization. These three processes will be studied in the first chapter of this research, as they are the major elements that define the timing with which each country moves its first steps towards the brand new political environment of the 21st century.

The internet plays a fundamental role it this process. It allows a more horizontal relation between politics and the public and through the web, citizen participation to the decision making process becomes crucial for consensus. The evolution from a web 1.0 to a web 2.0 social, and consequently political, context was fleet in countries like the United States, whilst in Europe it is still processing. Experts speak about web 1.5, when referring to these countries, to underline the fact that the process has certainly started, but is still not complete. A very good example of web 1.5 country is Italy, the evolution of which will be analyzed in chapter 2, where the relationship between politics and the internet is still at the very beginning, but is giving some very interesting feedback (Lucchini, Matarrazzo, 2014). Likewise other European countries such as France have interesting examples of the encounter between the internet and politics (cfr chapter 2).

The new and very much more complex communication context inevitably requested the institution of a new central figure: the one of the spin-doctor. The spin-doctor is, broadly, a communication expert who works for a politician. His job is to build, through aimed strategies, an image and a reputation of the candidate, to feed to the media and to conceive public opinion in order to obtain consensus. The first time the term spin-doctor was associated to politics was in the first 1980's under president R. Reagan, referring to his closest advisors. It is, though, with the English Prime Minister Tony Blair that it really started to have a crucial role and started fulfilling political communication strategy and reputation management tasks. Blair's campaign, though, was still in a web 1.0 period, it was with Barack Obama's 2008 and 2012 campaigns that spin-doctoring became essential, changing forever the way of conducting a campaign. In 2008 social media were used in an organic and structured way for the first time, following the slogan *"Change we can believe in"* and the motto *"Yes we can!".* In 2012 spin-doctors decided to abandon the emotional strategy and base the whole communication plan on an intense and complex data-mining and microtargeting plan (Kreiss,2014) (cfr chapter 2). Such an

aimed and tailored political propaganda reaches the citizen through a perfectly packaged and targeted message. This is what is called microtargeting. Obama's campaigns changed the concept of political communication, approaching it as if it were business, not politics, and applying marketing principles to its strategies (cfr. Chapter 2) (Lucchini, Matarrazzo, 2014).

The effect of Obama's revolution in campaigning strategies is evident in the current 2016 presidential campaigns, in both Democratic and Republican political communication strategy choices.

The reason why this new 2.0 communication was born and flourished first of all in the USA is basically historical. This approach works in a de-idealized political context, where tangible facts, such as services, taxes and national security, count more than opposed and consolidated political paradigms. The political debate in the USA takes place in only one economic model: capitalism. Right and Left wing in the USA, Democrats and Republicans, are two expressions of the same system. In Europe the general political asset is historically more complicated as the capitalistic economic model has as opponent the marxist socialist one, dividing left and right wings across the continent in a much deeper and more ideological way. Europe has changed and is changing, but it is still very far away from the USA. The de-idealization process started with the fall of the Berlin Wall and today there are increasingly more and more liberal-social groups opposed to social-liberal ones that fight on tangible problems, not on economic models based on the political thought of the 20th century. As Roberto D'Alimonte said, Europe and USA "*travel at two different speeds*", also because it is not possible to discuss Europe as a block, every european country has its speed and requires different times to update its political system and its political communication uses.

The greatest flaw this nimble political communication evolution-revolution has is that it lacks of methods that measure in an exhaustive

way the actual feedback of these strategies. ROI (return on investments) analysis on the evolved political communication and political marketing plans cannot be considered as a marginal aspect anymore, both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency of resources employed. It is necessary to have fixed general indicators to evaluate spin-doctors' strategies and political communication plans. Academics discuss which is the best method to use in order to measure the results of communication and public relations activities by looking at the business and marketing world, searching for a theory that can be applied to politics, but no unanimously accepted theory has been agreed yet. In this fieldwork the most recent studies of the business marketing branch of ROI will be transposed to the newly born world of political marketing. Under this point of view outgrowths undertake a core role. Outputs are short term results that express either quantitative or qualitative data and outcomes are medium term ones. Outcomes are indicators that result from research and represent those cognitive, affective and behavioural changements in the people examined in surveys. Neither outputs, neither outcomes are enough; what has to be considered necessarily has to be the outgrowth.

This issue had been explored by the author in her bachelor thesis in which she proposed a ROI model to measure the outgrowth of a political communication strategy (cfr chapter 3). The model built by the author was, as will be explained more accurately later on, basically a re-elaboration of the model the Reputation Institute used to measure the reputation of CEO's in Spain in 2010. The model was never used, while the Reputation Institute built another model to measure the reputations of the 2016 American Presidential elections (cfr chapter 4). The two models are quite similar, but present some important differences that this thesis will try to outline. There is no doubt that these are probably the most complicated candidates that could occur for a a first-time analysis in terms of candidate reputation. By a matter of fact they have extremely low reputation scores according to the model. This issue too will be explored in chapter 4.

Chapter 1: How and why political communication has become essential to politics

1.1 The transformation of political communication

Communication and persuasion have since always been an important part of society and of politics, representing an important medium for information, necessary for building consensus.

In ancient Greece, both in Athens' democracy and in the Spartan oligarchy, and more generally in the *Agoràs* across the whole country, political competition for consensus came through various forms of communication: from murales' to public speeches. In ancient Rome the ancestor of public relation activities were "political dinners", where there would be speeches, slogans and rudimental forms of lobbying. It is not a case that Rome developed such a particular attention for rhetorical skills in politics, contriving the concept of "*candidate*" and of *political*, persuasive *speech*.

However, when speaking about political communication, we refer to those communication and information tools developed and used when national states took the place of absolutist monarchies, and consequently with the birth of political parties. The birth and evolution, in England, at the beginning of the 1800, of a liberal-democratic state represents the field on which political communication how it is intended today moved its first steps. It is starting from the need of the new democratic states to build consensus that the process developed touching the contemporary forms of political mediatization.

1.1.1 *The three stages of electoral campaigning*

Changes in election campaigning are, therefore, related to the modernization process rooted in political and technological developments typical of post-industrial societies. In this perspective, Pippa Norris, theorized the existence of three different stages of the evolution of election communications: a pre-modern type of campaign, a modern and finally a post-modern one (Table 1.1) (Norris, 2004).

Table 1.1 - The three phases of the evolution of modern campaigns (Norris,2004)

	Premodern	Modern	Post-Modern
Predominant era	Mid-19thC to 1950s	Early 1960s-late 1980s	1990s+
Campaign Organization	Local and decentralized party volunteers	Nationally coordinated with greater professionalization	Nationally coordinated but decentralized operations
Preparations	Short-term, ad hoc	Long campaign	Permanent campaign
Central coordination	Party leaders	Central party headquarters, more specialist advisors	Special party campaign units and more professional consultants
Feedback	Local canvassing and party meetings	Occasional opinion polls	Regular opinion polls plus focus groups and interactive web sites
Media	Partisan press, local posters and pamphlets, radio broadcasts	Television broadcasts through main evening news, targeted direct mail	TV narrowcasting, direct and mediated websites, email, online discussion groups, Intranets
Campaign events	Local public meetings, whistle-stop leadership tours	News management, daily press conferences, controlled photo-ops	Extension of news management to routine politics and government
Costs	Low budget	Moderate	Higher costs for professional consultants
Electorate	Stable social and partisan alignments	Social and partisan dealignment	Social and partisan dealignment

To explain these three different stages we will here quote her words. She defines *Pre-modern campaigns* as those that are "*understood to display three characteristics: the campaign organization is based upon direct forms of interpersonal communications between candidates and citizens at local level, with short-term, ad-hoc planning by the party leadership. In the news media, the partisan press acts as core intermediary between parties and the public. And the electorate is anchored by strong party loyalties. Typically in these campaigns local parties selected the candidates, rang the doorbells, posted the pamphlets, targeted the wards, planned the resources, and generally provided all the machinery linking voters and candidates. For citizens the model is one that is essentially local-active, meaning that most campaigning is concentrated within local communities, conducted*

through more demanding political activities like rallies, doorstep canvassing, and party meetings" (Norris, 2014).

Subsequently *"Modern campaigns are defined as those with a party organization coordinated more closely at central level by political leaders, advised by external professional consultants like opinion pollsters. In the news media, national television becomes the principal forum of campaign events, supplementing other media. And the electorate becomes increasingly decoupled from party and group loyalties. Politicians and professional advisors conduct polls, design advertisements, schedule the theme de jour, leadership tours, news conferences and photo opportunities, handle the press, and battle to dominate the nightly television news. For citizens, the typical experience of the election becomes more passive, in the sense that the main focus of the campaign is located within national television studios, so that most voters become more distant and disengaged spectators in the process" (Norris,2014).*

And finally Post-modern campaigns are *"understood as those where the coterie of professional consultants on advertising, public opinion, marketing, and strategic news management become more co-equal actors with politicians, assuming a more influential role within government in a 'permanent' campaign, as well as coordinating local activity more tightly at the grassroots. The news media fragments into a more complex and incoherent environment of multiple channels, outlets, and levels. And the electorate becomes more de-aligned in their voting choices. For some citizens, the election may represent a return to some of the forms of engagement found in the pre-modern stage, as the new channels of communication potentially allow greater interactivity between voters and politicians" (Norris,2014).*

1.1.2 "*It's the performance, stupid!*"

A very important step, still in the alveus of the postmodern era, was taken with the 2008 Obama campaign, that still is today a source of inspiration for european political communication consultants. From the socialist french party to Josè Luis Zapatero in Spain to Mario Monti in Italy after the success of the 2008 Obama campaign everyone started looking up to his revolutionary way of doing politics and political communication (Salomon,2014).

For a long time elections were won for structural, economic and demographic reasons. Proof of this is the 1992 slogan of Bill Clinton's campaign: *"It's the economy, stupid!"*. It had such a success that in those years it became sort of a mantra for political communication specialists. There is no doubt the economy plays a central role in the choices taken by electors but other campaigns as the one that got Ronald Reagan elected to his second mandate in 1984 and the one that brought to the defeat of Al Gore in 2000 are the demonstration that the economy is an important element but, by itself, it is not enough; there are other elements that must be taken in consideration and that are gaining more and more relevance as years pass by (Salomon,2014).

In June 2012, at an international conference on political communication held in Bilbao (Spain), Stanley Greenberg, who together with James Careville is the creator of the formula *"It's the economy, stupid!"*, proposed a new slogan on the print of it: "*It's the middle class, stupid!*". According to Christian Salomon, this new formulation of the slogan doesn't really mean much as the middle class itself is today a very fluid and not easily determinable concept. The middle class is what Salomon defines as a "*passepartout category*". It isn't the economy and it isn't the middle class that decides who wins an election; it's the performance: *"It's the performance, stupid!"*, to say it with Greenberg's and Carville's formulation.

By performance Salomon intends the way in which the candidate manages to bring the electorate to identify itself with his symbolisms and his metaphors.

1.1.3 *Storytelling and the "temporary suspension of disbelief"*

Today's performance is mainly about *storytelling.* It is about the "story" the candidate tells of himself through the campaign and about the broadcast of this "story" on the web and on social networks. From 2007 onwards storytelling in political communication has given birth to a new perception of the personal life of candidates with the goal of establishing a connection between the candidate and his electorate. The absolutely central role of social networks in this is evident. This means that today the scenario in which a campaign takes place changes constantly and everyone can participate. A "nice story" isn't enough, it is also necessary to take over control of the setting of the agenda, in order to impose a narrative line and to be able to make things go viral on the web (Salomon, 2014). The interactivity has become central too and it obliges political actors to adopt new strategies that make speeches and and actions appear trustworthy and spontaneous, and that seek for some sort of hyper-realistic transparency. (Salomon, 2014).

We are in front of what could be defined as a "*temporary suspension of disbelief* " using a concept taken from narrative studies. When referring to a *"suspension of disbelief"* we refer to the willingness of the reader (the public) to suspend his or her critical faculties and believe the unbelievable: he or her sacrifices temporarily a realistic and logical approach for the only sake of enjoyment. The term was coined in 1817 by the poet and aesthetic philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his work *Biographia Literaria*, who suggested that if a writer could tickle "human interest" and introduce "a semblance of truth" in a tale, the reader would temporarily suspend his or her judgement concerning the implausibility of the narrative. Following the

same logics what is called cognitive estrangement in fiction, involves using a person's (the public's) ignorance or lack of knowledge to promote suspension of disbelief.

The expression *"suspension of disbelief"* came to be used more loosely in the later 20th century, often used to imply that the burden was on the reader, rather than the writer, to achieve it. Form a political point of view it can refer to the willingness of the audience to overlook the limitations of a medium, so that these do not interfere with the acceptance of those premises (Welkos, 1993).

Kenneth Burke introduced in social sciences the concept of language as a "symbolic action" and Clifford Geertz made it famous: since then social sciences never stopped going into the cultural and dramatic aspects of social behavior. Erving Goffman described social life as a scene on stage, with it's actors and it's public. In the same years John Austin started talking about "*speech arts*", demonstrating that language does not only have a descriptive value, but it also has a performing function. All these studies gave birth to a vivid academic debate on the subject that progressively changed the mindset with which social behavior analysis should be approached. For many years this approach was perceived to be different and far from the world of political sciences, until Jeffery Alexander decided to blend a sociologic approach with a political communication one (Salomon,2014).

Campaigning today happens on the borderline between public and private, between politics and ethics, between political communication and marketing models. It is more about the socio-cultural *habitus* than about the ideology.

1.2 Candidate-centered politics. How the candidate became more important than the ideology

As the political environment has changed also the focus of public attention has shifted from political programs and ideals to who the

candidate actually is. Many academics today explore the phenomena of *candidate-centered* politics, in which the government or party leader has become more important than the ideology. Martin Wattenberg was the first to define this new era as candidate-centered in 1991. He followed and analyzed the USA presidential elections from 1952 to 1988 witnessing a major shift of the electorate's attention from political parties and issues, to specific candidates, giving their personal characteristics, as opposed to their political ones more relevance (Garzia, 2014).

The personalization of politics as a concept was born in this mutating political context and developed firstly in the USA, tailored on the American presidential political system, on the two party system and a majoritarian electoral system. Soon enough academics, started applying this perspective to the study of electoral behavior in European parliamentary systems. In general it is possible to state that in the last fifty years the figure of political leaders has gained relevance to both political communication and electoral campaigning in almost all Western democracies.

Rahat and Shaefer define the personalization of politics as "*a process in which the political weight of the individual actor in the political process increases over time, while the centrality of the political group declines".* Evidence of the trend is given, for instance, by the substitution of party symbolisms with the images of the candidates during election campaigning or by the propensity of the media to use the names of the leaders rather than the party they run for, as McAllister point's out (Garzia, 2011).

Looking at it from a wider perspective the personalization of politics is part of a larger process of social life individualization for which people perceive themselves more as individuals rather than as part of a group or collectivity (Grazia, 2011). However, more specifically, literature concentrates on two major causes of the personalization process:

a) the gradually changing structure of political communication with the advent of mass media and new media;

b) the constant and gradual erosion of traditional cleavage politics (Garzia, 2011).

Personalization has been defined as *"the more general, pervasive, and fundamental element in the process of change of electoral campaigns"* (Garzia, 2011). An indication of the profound interconnection and mutual dependence of the media and of political leadership headquarters comes from the evident increasing importance obtained by televised leaders' debates during national election campaigns. The best example of this is given by the presidential campaigns in the USA, an example of this is, the historical Kennedy vs. Nixon debates in 1960 (Garzia, 2011). This is not enough, though, to explain the relationship between the media, in general and political leadership.

When we refer to "the media" what we are actually referring to is the information industry that is and has always been the privileged sparring-partner of politics. On newspapers, televisions, radios and later on, on the internet and social networks is where building of consensus and political legitimation happens. With the new media leaders' obsession for public opinion polls and surveys is increasingly growing, and this gives the information industry great power. The gradual shift of the media to the center of the political scene, not only during campaigning, but in everyday life (cfr. introduction), is the phenomena called of *mediatization*.

Mediatization produces effects, both in the political context and in the thoughts and actions of citizens. In the first case, we refer to "*structural effects*", in the second, we refer to " *psychosocial effects"*. Structural effects are divided into "*mediatic effects"* and *"political effects" (Sorice,2014).*

A first mediatic effect is the *spectacularization* of politics. The media, who pursue commercial objectives more than political ones, covers all political events and try to satisfy the *voyeurism* of society and reports accurately on them. Politicians at the same time adapt to the language and their message to what "sells" best on the media. Related to this is another mediatic effect that is referred to as *sound bites*, which refers to the fragmentation of the political debate scene, as a result of adaptation to the timing and management of the media space. The risk is to reduce dramatically the strictly political message into an often granted and not satisfying slogan. This risk does not seem to bother the politicians, who seem to prefer this slogan system to actually explaining their political programs (Sorice, 2011) and do not fear an excessive simplification of political issues. Basically the spectacularization of politics is a circular process and a joint product of the media and politicians (Mazzoleni, 2012). This means that the information industry uses political actors for the sake of economic revenue and political actors use the media to keep the spotlight on themselves and gain visibility.

A second effect is that of *theming*, this means the media decides which political news are relevant and which aren't. If the candidate wants to be on the news he must follow the agenda that the media impose.

Another mediatic effect is that of the *professionalization of politics* that has seen politics require increasingly more specialized managers to cope with political communication issues: image, reputation etc. We will deepen this particular effect later on in this chapter, especially for what concerns the growing role of a particular specialist, the spindoctor, in the last decades.

The last very important mediatic effect is that of the rise of political marketing. This too is a particular effect that will be treated better later on in this chapter; basically it is the overlapping of the concept of the

candidate, in politics, and of product, in economics and in marketing. The candidate becomes a product, with a specific brand that can be both the candidate himself or the party he is running for, and this product has to be "sold" to the "consumers" (the electorate).

It would be easy to see mediatization, and the growth of the influence the information industry on political leaders, as the only mover behind the personalization of politics. The key role that political parties play in the process, especially in European democracies, must not be forgotten. Political parties have slowly, but constantly, deeply mutated in the last decades and this mutation is both cause and consequence of personalization. The erosion of social and partisan loyalties we have already spoken about in the introductive chapter, made it necessary for parties to reinvent themselves in order to extend their electorate beyond the social group to which they usually referred to, and on which they could always count. They have all changed into catch-all parties (Garzia, 2011) and this implies that they had to give up on part of the ideology, featuring characteristics that result more appealing to the "new" voters such as the personality of the party leader (Grazia,2011).

1.2.1 *Political communication consulting: the Spindoctor*

The media initiated a process of *professionalization of politics*, as already said above. This means that there has been a progressive institution of specific political consulting figures. They are particularly important in election campaigns.
 They can be generally summarized in:

1) the **campaign manager**: he is in charge of the election campaign and responds only to the candidate whom he works for;

2) the **press secretary** is an important figure, he manages relations with the press, his role is absolutely essential for the reputation of the candidate;

3) the **pollster**: he adapts the political message to the trends and to voter preferences;

4) the **f*undraiser***: he is the one who takes care of fundraising to support the election campaign;

5) the **ghost writer or speech writer**;

6) the **agenda manager**: he is in charge of easing the relationships between candidates and citizens by organizing meetings, conferences and visits;

7) the **volunteer coordinator***,* is who manages the work of volunteers who offer support to the candidate, he organizes leafleting, electoral banquets, interviews on the phone etc.;

8) finally, Th*e **election manager***: he is who declares according to the laws the financial resources that were used during the campaign.

We have already asserted that the media have become fundamental for politics and for the outcome of the election campaigns . To give the the candidate the perfect good reputation image and to guarantee maximum visibility on all the media, the political professionals such as the ones briefly presented have gained a central role, above them all: the *spindoctor*.

The spindoctor is the expert able to manage the political communication strategies of the candidate to perform a job of orientation (spinning) of information and consequently of opinion. This figure took a prominent role in the panorama of political communication, that as we have seen is undergoing a radical

transformation: moving from a logic of propaganda to a logic of public relations.

In the 1960's spin doctoring was employed in the USA only for building language strategies and for the management of mediatic visibility. Today, it's practice crosses disciplines and professions: from marketing, to advertising, to journalism and public relations. Believing that spin doctoring is an invention of recent years is a mistake. Already after the second world war it started to evolve in primordial forms and it has evolved with the fusion in one of all the professional roles seen earlier in this chapter.

The moment television started appearing in everyone's houses was a crucial step in the formation of the figure of the spindoctor, making it an essential element for all forms of political communication strategy. In light of the media coverage the world in which we live in requires, the ability the spin doctor has to "control communication" appears to be a basic necessity. The expression "to control communication" refers to the the capability the spin doctor must have to impose a certain version of events, influencing the choice of the media in interpreting a piece of news. This capability is even more important in modern election campaigns: as we have seen, until half a century ago, the election campaign was run by volunteers, militants and leaders of the party; with the evolution of new technologies and media, with the advent, for example the UGC (user generated communications), the way we communicate has changed completely, and with it the very way of doing politics.

The spindoctor are, therefore, the so-called "professionals of politics"; they are image consultants, spokesperson and head of the press office all at once and they are part of a "spin team." Especially in the American context, that in this area tends and dictate the trend, it takes the name of "the spin industry".

In addition to building the image of the candidate as well as

addressing the message on the media the other great task of the spindoctor is to understand public opinion, the equivalent of understanding the consumer's needs in marketing: he must understand what voters need and what and what the arguments that do more leverage on public opinion are. To study these aspects an extensive use of surveys is employed.

The global social context looks for the spark of show-business (spectacularization); it thrives on the image and reputation of the candidate and communication aspects play an increasingly important role. Politics reflects the society in which they operate and will take shape on it. It is therefore clear that the role of an expert in communication strategies is today fundamental, this expert, as has been widely repeated is the spin doctor and his *entourage*.

The figure of the spindoctor, the name refers to the world of baseball, the "spin" being "the effect" that is given to the ball so that it is more complicated to be beaten by the opponent properly, has always been perceived as a fraudulent figure. Today, however, it has assumed a central role on a global scale and it has it's ethics and behavior code to follow.

The approach is therefore very close to a business model. It adopts marketing models, as a result of the loosening of the ideological aspects, the growth of the personalization of politics and the consequent lower sense of attachment to political parties. The politician, to which we often refer to as "the candidate", given the new political context of permanent campaigning.
Political communication "sells" a product, and the candidate is treated as a brand to promote, as we will see in the next chapter.

1.2.2 *Political Marketing: the candidate as brand*

The Oxford Dictionary defines marketing as *"The action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising"*. No wonder that, until a few years ago, speaking in these terms of politics and political issues was not acceptable. This definitions lacks in considering all the conditions related to ideology, militancy sense of belonging and ideals to which politics have always been bound. The mutation processes that have been discussed in the previous paragraphs, certainly have led to the integration of the concept of marketing in politics and of marketing oriented strategies in political communication approaches.

Nowadays, it is routinely argued that *"winning parliamentary or presidential elections without marketing is nearly impossible"*. The widespread diffusion of marketing techniques as applied to political campaigns has led Bruce Newman to announce the entrance of politics in the age of manufactured images. In this perspective the political spectacle consists, first and foremost, in the construction of leadership . Pre-campaign market research (e.g., opinion polls and surveys, focus groups etc.) helps to understand *"what type of leadership is most in demand by those segments of the electorate that are also potential constituencies"* (Campus, 2010). Once their image is packaged according to the demands of the voters, politicians are eventually sold on the (electoral) market by means of advertisement; empirical research on political advertising has demonstrated its strong impact on voters' perceptions of the candidates (Garzia, 2011).

With this premise it is possible to attempt a general definition of Political marketing by adopting Michel Bongrand's formulation (1986): Political marketing as that set of "*techniques that are designed to allow adjustment of a candidate to his potential electorate, make it grow in terms of notoriety and create the difference with competitors and opponents"* (Sorice, 2011).

Kotler and Levy underlined how electoral campaigns have come to apply the 4P marketing mix: *product, placement, promotion* and *price.* The *product* is the image of the candidates and parties to which they belong; the *promotion* and *placement* are the design, the planning and the identification of the recipients of the communication; and, finally, the *price* is represented by the votes of the voters and their trust in the candidate (De Blasio, 2009) .

Political marketing can be approached in three ways: a "product-oriented" approach can be adopted, and proposes an ideological offer, a "sales-oriented" approach which is basically about promotion; and a "market-oriented" approach in which the candidate or the party follow the requests of the majority of voters in what they offer. This third dynamic tends to populism.

The product-oriented policy is the more traditional dynamic; also the sales-oriented one is frequently adopted. Both dynamics are adaptable to political communication actions and ideological purposes.The third case is different: it is undeniable that from a tactical point of view it has obvious advantages, however, understanding which the "individual" needs are requires a thorough market research, sociologically founded and an understanding of public opinion that can not be limited the only study of the surveys, that in a political context are only an indication of what the actual situation temperature is and are an effect of reality, often of propaganda.

Beyond the possible classifications political marketing is an important indirect query tool of the company and to strategic action. It must here be stressed that a campaign does not end with the mere tactical action, it is also necessary to build a notoriety campaign and its strategic legitimacy. The communication plan will be then composed of many elements : of image strategies, of events , of news management, of spin-doctoring and of communication strategies.

Staying within the lines of this commercial allegory (which is not really that allegorical at all) the next step of a good marketing plan is the ability to build around the "product-candidate" a symbolic value: basically, he or she must be turned into a brand (Romoli Venturi et al., 2014). Donald Trump is a very good example of this as we will see later on.

The *brand* is the first element of communication to any commercial or political reality. It is the emblem a of all the external and internal communication efforts of the organization itself. It is part of the traditional classification of the core elements of the marketing mix which has been discussed above. The brand must summarize all the expectations that the target market and, more generally, the relevant public puts in the "product-candidate". The brand of an object is easy to manage, what is complex to establish is to maintain it's status in the long term (Romoli Venturi et al., 2014); the same occurs for candidates. The maintenance of the opinion on a candidate in time is even harder.

Brand PR is the branch of public relations that gets to the heart of market strategies that now form an integral part of the process of marketing mix of a communication strategy. "*And it represents all actions to strengthen the equity of the brand and the strategic positioning of the company and its products in the media, through reports, amplifications of events or sponsorships, leading them continuously, awareness and planning"* (Romoli Venturi et al., 2014). The consolidation of a brand must be established with the marketing function, in politics, it is the spindoctor, who takes care of the editorial content that is attributed to the brand / candidate, who chooses the type of "media" channel through which communication and information convey and who collaborate with the journalist providing the necessary materials for the preparation of the article. These phases appear very linear in theory, but are much wider in actual operations.

The ability of the communications professionals resides in the capability to convince the reporter to address the article content in favor of interest to the company, in politics of the candidate (Romoli Venturi et al., 2014)

1.3 *How does the electorate evaluate the leader*

If, how we have seen, personalization is due to both new media and structural changes within the party lines it is essential to explore the effects of personalization on citizens' perception of political leaders (Garzia, 2011).

Until now what has been explored is the political environment and its mutations and transformation over time. Using as a guideline Diego Grazia's research work the perception the electorate has of the candidate/leader and how he or she is perceived from the public will be object of analysis in this chapter.

From a psychological point of view, the researcher must always try to answer the same question when trying to find out on the basis of what political leaders are evaluated   by their followers–voters. Do individuals have a realist or a constructivist approach? In other words, do they perceive the world the way it is or do they create a personal representation of it in their heads? Adopting the point of view of cognitive realism, cognition of the physical and social reality around us occurs directly. There is no use of mediating cognitive structures, and thus perceived objects appear in one's mind as they really are (Garzia, 2011). On the other hand, a cognitive constructivist approach believes that the process of perceiving reality happens through the construction of certain mental images that are the result of a personal interpretation of the received information (Garzia,2011).

The study of how political leadership is perceived requires the employment of a constructivist perspective.

According to the *perceptual-balance theory*, the image a politician gives of himself should be defined through the voter's perception *"based on both the subjective knowledge possessed and the messages projected by the candidates"*. Cwalina, Falkowski, and Newman (2008) argue that *"the term candidate image means creating a particular type of representation for a particular purpose (e.g., voting), which, by evoking associations, provides the object with additional values.The values through which the constructed object is enriched may never be reflected in his or her 'real' features — it is enough if they have a certain meaning for the receiver"* .

Fig.1.2 (Garzia, 2011)
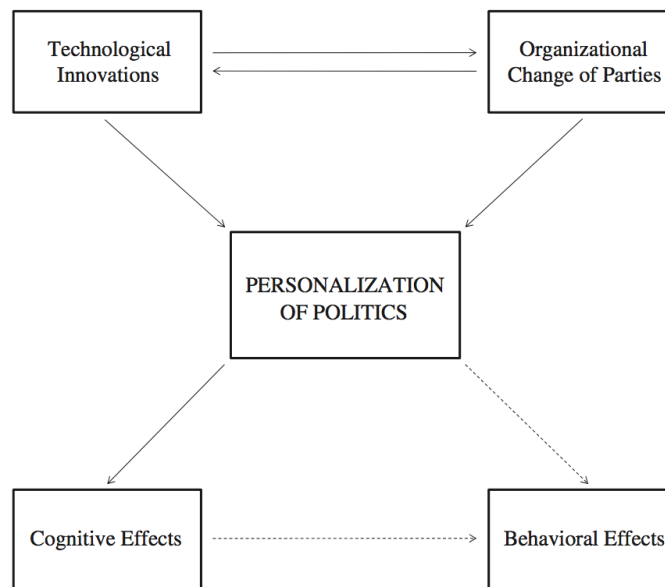
This means that the image of a candidate is 'in the eyes' of the elector; this means it is voter-driven rather than candidate-driven. This well coincides with what has been stated earlier on the dependance candidates have on public opinion, giving it a psychological justification.

The number of aspects of a leader's personality on which voters can base their evaluation is extremely vast. Empirical analyses have

shown that voters develop a mental image of political leaders as persons on the basis of a restricted number of elements even if researchers have found more than 40 traits on which the could base their opinion. "*such simplified perceptions of the personalities of political leaders may derive from a cognitively efficient strategy that voters adopt to cope with the massive amount of daily information to which they are exposed*" (Garzia, 2011).

Personality traits have been found to play a crucial role in guiding voters' processes of leader perception . Personality traits are "*a basic component of our images of other persons of all kinds whether family member, acquaintance, or public figure*" . According to psychologists personality traits are habitual patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion they are:

a) stable over time,

b) different among individuals, and

c) they influence behavior (Garzia, 2011).

Therefore candidates' personality traits are of crucial importance to voters, for they give an idea of what sort of leader that candidate will eventually be. Several survey based studies demonstrate that the of traits on the basis of which the electorate tends to evaluate political figures can be summarized into five general categories:

1) *competence* (meaning experience and ability);

2) *trust* (meaning honesty and integrity);

3) *reliability* (meaning responsibility, decisiveness and stability);

4) leadership appeal (meaning inspiring ability, communicative ability, warm and likable attitude);

5) *personal appearance* (meaning age, health etc.) (Garzia, 2011).

Another approach asks respondents to give an evaluation of presidential candidates on close-ended response categories. Kinder, in 1986, evidenced these categories as central:

1) *competence*;

2) *leadership*;

3) *integrity* and

4) *empathy* .

In general according to a consistent number of surveys done across the years, honesty is perceived as the most important characteristic for a president (Garzia,2011).

The reason for honesty to be so important is quite obviously clear: politicians do their job in a place and way that are hard to observe (and control) and difficult to interpret correctly. Because of these conditions, voters will take into account those characteristics that reduce the chances that a politician will not act in an honest and disinterested manner .Basically it is what a representative democracy is based on: voters vote for "*representatives whom they can trust*" and whom they can rely on. Yet, as explained by Kinder and other academics (1980):

"it is one thing to demonstrate that people possess prototypic conceptions of an ideal president. It is quite another to show that the elements of character and performance citizens emphasize in their thinking about an ideal president carry special weight in their preferences toward real presidential contenders" (Kinder et al., 1980) (Garzia, 2011). Actual election demonstrate another thing though. In 1972 for example, Richard Nixon succeeded in spite of the widespread perception of his dishonesty. Similar conclusions are reached by studies conducted in Italy (Barisione, 2006): in a survey conducted in 2001 a wide majority of the sample regarded honesty as the characteristic to possess. Nonetheless, the winners in the subsequent elections was Silvio Berlusconi, who scored lower than his counterpart in terms of perceived honesty (cfr chapter 2.1)

Why does this happen? Why is there a difference between the public's idealized conception of a political leader and the actual characteristics of elected politicians?

Nisbett and Wilson's (1977) explain that the conception of the ideal president respondents hope will win reflects what the culture honors, not what voters actually take in account in their choosing the real candidate. As made clear, the attention on individual leaders by the media has moved the public's attention from their role of politicians to that of individuals From here the paradox of candidates for the presidential nomination competing to look as unpresidential as possible, and of presidential (or prime ministerial) candidates chosen on the basis of their communicational, expressive, and relational capacities — qualities defined by Greenstein (2001) as 'proficiency as public communicator' and 'emotional intelligence'. In this sense, leaders like Bill Clinton, Silvio Berlusconi, Tony Blair, and Barack Obama stand as paradigmatic examples in different ways and in different periods in time.

We have seen that voters' evaluative criteria has been influenced by the ways in which they are presented on the media: people elaborate an opinion on candidates in the same way they elaborate an opinion on ordinary people: "*the ordinary Joe theory*". By relying on the personality of a politician instead of on his ideology, allows individuals to apply evaluation criteria that they constantly employ in everyday life in interacting with ordinary people. In this way, voters are able to arrive at an overall judgment of a certain politician without exerting the effort to monitor everything he says or does (Garzia, 2011).

If voters do make use of their intuitions about human nature when they compare presidential candidates, they might approach their decision in different ways. On the one hand, they could expect candidates to be *supermen*: men whose honesty, strength and competence rise above the limitations given to ordinary people by human nature. On the other hand, voters could base their decision on an approach for which they assume that everyone is human, and therefore rely on candidates who don't hide their limitations and they believe they best interpret their conception of the average human being: an everyday-man whose personal attributes are very similar to their own.

Today political leaders draw their authority "not by being beyond people", but "by being of and like them" . D'Souza in 1997 in his work *How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader*, on Reagan, showed that the key to his success was his ordinariness. He identified with his own public. His presidency gave birth to a nowadays very common tendency amongst political leaders: that of trying to appear as an *Ordinary Joe (Garzia,2011).*

Personality psychology has already proved that individuals are most attracted to those who they perceive as more similar to themselves. This similarity-attraction theory has been adapted by Caprara and Zimbardo (2004) to political behavior. People tend to like those politicians whose personalities match to their personal characteristics better. But how similar to his public is this leader actually? This question finds an answer in the ways in which politicians attempt to convince the public of their personality. From this point of view it is important to consider the role played by professionals from the field of political marketing (e.g., image crafters, campaign consultants etc.) the package the candidates according to the desires of voters and take care of the storytelling and of the reputation management.

1.3.1 *Leader effects on voters behavior*

As said above, voters tend to evaluate party leaders on the basis of integrity, reliability, and competence. Considering this It seems that *"candidate assessments actually concentrate on instrumental concerns about the manner in which a candidate would conduct governmental affairs".*

It has also been proven that the impact of leaders' personality is directly proportional to the level of political knowledge of who is evaluating (Glass, 1985). Apparently the best educated citizens emerge as the most likely to take in consideration the personality traits of leaders when the have to decide who to vote for.

We can therefore state that one of the most important consequences of personalization is the increasing centrality of perceived leaders' personality in the individual voting calculus. The sociological (and psychological factors have been overcome in structuring individuals' voting behavior. There has been a progressive individualization of vote choices that implies, among other things, an increasing voting volatility between one election and the other.

Leader personality can influence political behavior either directly or indirectly (King 2012). The indirect leader effect consists in the influence that a leader exerts on voters *"not as a result of anything he or she is, but as a result of things that he or she does"*; while "b*y direct effects is means the influence that a leader or candidate exerts on voters by virtue of who he or she is, how he or she appears and how he or she publicly comports him or herself"* (King, 2012).

Chapter 2: Evidence of the evolution-revolution of the candidate-centered political environment in Europe and in the USA

In this chapter we will respectively analyze the experiences of Berlusconi, Grillo, Renzi, Marine Le Pen, Obama and Donald Trump who all represent different examples of the evolution-revolution of the political environment in western democracies. Their stories will all be faced first by exploring who they are professionally and in their private lives and then by explaining in what way the contributed to the evolution process of the political environment. As will appear evident, their professional and private background has been crucial in their ability to gather consensus among the public. This will demonstrate once more how much more weight the candidate has today over the ideology or party he supposedly represents.

2.1 From Berlusconi to Renzi in Italy

2.1.1 Who is Silvio Berlusconi?

Silvio Berlusconi was born in Milan on the 29th of September 1936. In his career he outstands initially in the entrepreneurship building field, it is only in 1975 that he enters the world of the media with Fininvest, a financial company. Finivest is a holding of what became a huge television business, centered on an advertising agency called Pubblitalia 80, that was founded in 1979.

Many of the collaborators that worked with Berlusconi on this project became his political associates (ex. Dell'Utri, Ghigo, Galan) when, in 1983, he founded *Forza Italia*, the political movement that represented the center-right wing's position. It was cradle of his new way of conceiving political communication, based on the advertising business

model. Berlusconi changed significantly the way of doing politics in Italy shifting from a Bottom Up approach to a Top Down approach, that found its maximum expression in the institution of Forza Italia conventions.

Berlusconi was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in March 1994, and was confirmed in the four legislatures that followed, and following the national elections of the 24 and the 25 of February 2013, he was elected Senator for the first time. He was elected Prime Minister four times: the first in the 1994 legislature, then in two consecutive legislations (2001-2005 and 2005-2006); and finally in the 2008-2011 one. With a total of 3340 days in the role of Prime Minister his is the Prime Minister that has lasted longer in the Italian Republic governments until today. Only Benito Mussolini and Giovanni Giolitti sat on that seat for longer than him. Furthermore the two governments that lasted the longest since the proclamation of the Republic in Italy were his.

However Berlusconi's interest for politics does not go back only to 1993 to Forza Italia. His earliest position date back to July 1977 when he publically stated that he believe that the Italian Communist Party had to remain "*confined to the opposition by the transformed Democrazia Cristiana, so as to restore the Italian Socialist Party at the government"* , the secretariat of which was Bettino Craxi since July 1976. Craxi and the PSI showed in the following years a significant opening to private TV, which culminated with the approval of the *"decreto Berlusconi"* on the 16th October 1984 and its reiteration through the "Berlusconi bis" on the 28 November.

During the eighties and until 1992, Berlusconi supported the PSI and Bettino Craxi, that was a close friend of his, supported Berlusconi on his network through multiple electoral spots. This was the very beginning of his new and revolutionary approach to political communication in Italy.

An example of this can be found in the realization of a 12 minute TV spot,shot by Sally Hunter in spring 1992, with the aim of being broadcasted on Berlusconi's channels during the election campaign. In the spot Silvio Berlusconi is standing next to a piano, and comments the program of the government led by Bettino Craxi (1983-1987). In the spot he states: "(...) but there is another aspect that I think is important, and that gives the government the great political credibility it has. The great political credibility on the international scene, which is - for those who work as an entrepreneur in the markets - something that is necessary in order to carry out positive actions in political environments that are always very difficult for us Italians, and that sometimes are even hostile. "

In 1993, following the political vacuum that had formed after the scandal of Tangentopoli, Berlusconi started off directly and personally in the Italian political arena in an attempt to gain the consent of the two thirds of electors orphan of political references and that strongly feared Occhetto and his "joyous war machine" ("gioiosa macchina da guerra") and his historical reference symbols, the hammer and sickle.

On the 26th January 1994, the day of his official descent in politics, he released a pre-recorded statement to all the televisions, stating his choice and clarifying his position in these words:

"Italy is the country that I love. Here I have my roots, my hopes, my horizons. Here I learned from my father and from life, my profession as an entrepreneur. Here I also learned the passion for freedom. I chose to take the field, and take care of public affairs, because I do not want to live in a country ruled by illiberal immature forces and by men intertwined in a politically and economically bankrupt past (...). "

Berlusconi's video message was the first major sign of the change that was taking place on the Italian political scene. The video delivered on

all the TV news programs had a tremendous impact: Berlusconi appeared reassuring, with a prest smile; the vaguely dim light created a soft atmosphere (focus achieved through the positioning of a sock in front of the camera) and behind him a bookcase with family photos that the showed him in the office of a private practice, as that of many professionals.

The image was new, much closer to the people than the one of the cold electoral sector to which the electorate was accustomed, that presented an anonymous background and the party symbol next to the candidate. The hatched themes were love, family, freedom and anti-communism, expressed by a successful entrepreneur, to a well-defined target: the quiet bourgeoisie Italian, tired of party chatter, disappointed by the political system governed by bribes, frightened by the rise of the communist left that apparently had no opposition.

The descent into politics of Silvio Berlusconi and his media- centered party functioned as a watershed in Italian politics, especially with regard to the way of conducting election campaigns and to the new communication tools adopted to achieve consensus. With Berlusconi, the political communication saw a revolution through the change of the type of communication, and this has progressively also changed the culture and the values of voters.

At the end of the eighties a collaboration between the political system, which was starting to weaken, and the television system had started: together with the great social changes that were taking place also the traditional media and politics began to need the television more and more. It was, in 1993, with the "*Vietato Vietare*" campaign of Fininvest, against the limitations on TV promotions, that television programming began to influence and affect with political content on the new citizen-viewer-voter. At that point the link between television and political communication had become natural. The process culminated with a video message from Berlusconi that made his character and his party first a television subject, then a new political and very powerful one.

Berlusconi presents himself as the "new man", as opposed to the "old man" of the First Republic. He presents himself as unpolitical, as a "man of action": *"what we want to offer Italians is a totally new political force made of totally new men, what we want to offer the nation is a program of government that is only made of concrete and comprehensible commitments"*, he says, always in the video message of January 18, 1994. Berlusconi always adopted, since his very first campaign the same approaches, methods and tools that marketing offers to capture the consumer's attention. He was the first Italian politician to understand and exploit the so-called "electoral market" (Mannheimer, 2004), studying it through scientific studies and analysis: he was also the first to make extensive use of surveys in Italian politics. The leader of Forza Italia had understood that with the phenomenon of the de-ideologization of the masses the good politician today is the one who uses every day marketing techniques for the realization of his political action; it is about knowing the electorate and understanding its needs, it is not about representing the electorate from above but from within. Another thing introduced by Berlusconi was the lowering of the linguistic register: from the complicate political language everyone was used to Berlusconi shifts to a normal everyday linguistic register. He simplifies the slogans (less taxes for all, a million jobs, etc.) so that they are understandable to citizens of every cultural level. The leader of the center-right has always been pointed out by almost all media experts as the only one capable of speaking to the people, his image and his words were easily stored: you could not help but confront him with his speech, with his often politically incorrect statements for the establishment but shared by the common man. Also his constantly being always deliberately above the lines ended up becoming a stylistic aspect of the image of Berlusconi himself.

With Berlusconi communicating goes from being the frame to being substance of politics. It embodies, at least in part, the thought of the Canadian sociologist Marshall McLuhan, according to which it's the medium that determines the structural features of communication and

that produces pervasive effects on public opinion, no matter the content that is conveyed each time. Hence his famous thesis for which *the medium is the message.*

Berlusconi goes beyond this theorization, the generalized consensus is based on opinion, on the political scene the complexity of the phenomena does not gain any competitive advantage, truth is what is generally believed to be true, opinion is not knowledge- based: this would require more time and more articulated speeches, while here the slogan of political communication is being simplified. The difference, then, is not in what Berlusconi says, but in how he says it and through what medium. The communicative power of Berlusconi lies in this: he manages to make himself understood; he is a worker among workers, a housewife among housewives, a socialist among the socialists, a nostalgic among nostalgics, a resistant among resistants. A memorable example is the 2001 election campaign. The guiding manifesto was "*A   worker president to change Italy".* Everything, in his talks opposes an "us" to "them", he was an empathetic listener and made you feel part of a whole. He always perfectly used the medium of television: only the idea to show up in the italian icon talk show hosted by Bruno Vespa, Porta a Porta, in the 2001 election campaign and sign an actual contract with Italians, with a table,a pen and a sheet paper, was, like it on not, revolutionary. Even in times when consensus seemed to be a little bit weak he made sensational electoral recoveries:

- In 2006, during the very last two minutes of television electoral confrontation with Prodi, when he could no longer reply, Berlusconi promised the abolition of the ICI on the first house, repeated it twice looking straight in the camera, straight into the viewer's eyes. He lost the election by 24,000 votes, after being at a disadvantage in the polls until a few months before a few million votes, but above all laid the foundations for the rematch two years later.

- In 2013, after a period of silence, in a moment of great crisis according to the surveys, he went on television and reached the top

of his performances, playing on the most difficult of fields for a politician of the right wing, in particular for Berlusconi: the talk show hosted by Santoro: Servizio Pubblico. He drew the following elections when according to the results of the surveys, just a few months before, gave him badly defeated.

Berlusconi through his communicative skills gave Italians a sort of Italian Dream, the image of a different Italy where everyone could grow individually and collectively, an Italy that combined the economic well-being with freedom.

2.1.2 Who is Beppe Grillo?

Beppe Grillo was born and raised in Genoa in the district of San Fruttuoso. His parents owned a factory that built flame equipment for cutting and welding metals (La Cannelli Grillo di Genova). He graduated in high school majoring in accounting and began his university studies in the faculty of Economics and Business. After an initial job as a representative of trade activities in the clothing sector he started his career as a comedian.

It was Pippo Baudo that discovered him and convinced him to change his stage name from Giosuè to Beppe Grillo, as his friends had alway called him. His performances were characterized by satirical content, and over time this trait increased exponentially, becoming more and more direct and evident in his jokes and puns. On the 15th November 1986, during a television variety show called *Fantastici 7,* he told a joke on the Socialist Party and Bettino Craxi, the Prime Minister of the time. After this Grillo's presence on public television was removed. This 'expulsion' did not last long since he returned on the screens of RAI for the Sanremo festival. In 1998 the French group Canal Plus owner of the TELE + paying channel, transmitted his shows, and among these shows, a thirty minutes monologue, aired on the evening of the 31st of December, immediately after the traditional end of year speech the President of the Italian Republic always delivers, that

basically consisted in a teaser of the speech just broadcasted on all Italian channels. The title of the program was *Discorso all'umanità ("speech to humanity")*. The format of the show was represented in the same way from 1998 to 2001, clearly and without commercial breaks. But when, in 2002, TELE + was sold to Rupert Murdoch, Grillo decided to interrupted this television show. On the 10th of June 2002   Grillo justified his decision and declared:

"With Murdoch in TELE + I will not accept any program. I will continue to perform on the street. "

 The experience with TELE + marked his passage, as a comedian, from performing on television shows to performing in theaters and in squares, presenting shows like *Un grillo per la testa* and *Cervello e Apocalisse morbida.*

 In 2005 he opened the blog *beppegrillo.it* together with Gianroberto Casaleggio, in occasion of the first stop of his tour across Italy a show that had the same name (beppegrillo.it). The show's decision to rely on a blog can be traced back to the events that led to the progressive removal of Grillo by national television broadcasters.

"Right now the world, without realizing it, is experiencing a third world war: that of information. The only way out is to know. Knowing the news. We have a medium, the Internet, which allows us to get straight to the news. The television, politics and news papers always come after. " -Grillo.

June 26, 2007, can be considered the date of the debut of Grillo in politics. He delivered a speech to the European Parliament in which he discussed new technologies and criticized the presence of convicts in the Italian Parliament. At the same time he announced the organization of the *Vaffa-day*: an initiative to collect signatures for the presentation of a popular law regarding the characteristics

parliamentarians should have in order to be elected and the cases of revocation and forfeiture and the amendment of the electoral law. During the initiative, that took place on the 8th of September 2007 in many Italian squares and at various Italian embassies abroad Grillo managed to gather 336,144 signatures, exceeding by far the 50,000 required to submit the proposed law. The initiative had a follow-up on the 25th of April 2008 , the so-called *V2-Day*. This time the event was devoted to the theme of information. In January 2008, Grillo on his blog announced the start of a phase of direct political participation through *"liste civiche a 5 stelle",* that would be personally 'certified' by him, that would contain the instances of the activists. On the 8th of March 2009, representatives of certified "civil lists" subscribe to Florence the essential point program, geared especially to the themes of environmentalism and public goods. On July the 12th he announced he was going to candidate himself to the primary elections for the leadership of the Democratic Party. On the 14th, though, the Democratic Party National Warranty Commission rejected his candidacy because he recognizes himself in movements that openly oppose to the PD. On the 2nd of August 2009, as they did not allow him to run in the primaries, he announced the intention to start in autumn 2009 his own political movement, *"Il MoVimento 5 Stelle"*, that presented the same program that had been proposed with earlier in the "*Liste civiche a 5 stelle*". The movement was presented to the public on the 4th of October and the day of the inauguration Grillo also announced its participation to the following regional elections of 2010.

This brief summary of the transformation from comedian to politician of Beppe Grillo is essential to understand his communication style.

 Grillo is not the first comedian to go into politics, before him, in France, in the eighties, already Coluche had placed had candidated himself to the presidential elections. The two comedians, had also met on the set of the movie *Scemo di guerra* by Dino Risi in 1985. The candidacy of Coluche in 1981, then withdrew just before the day of the

elections, had been a great success, even if the main newspapers tried to resize the importance of what was happening and tried not to give the event any echo.

The success was undoubtedly favored by the French political and social context in the early eighties: the number of unemployed was in strong growth, high inflation reduced real wages, the strikes were expanding, while the incumbent president, Giscard d'Estaing was overwhelmed by the scandal of diamonds received by Bokassa, the dictator of the Central African republic. It was to this scandal that Coluche had dedicated his monologues on *Radio Montecarlo*, with extraordinary shares. His program was removed from the radio, for direct intervention of the majority shareholder, was probably the motivation that convinced him to present his candidacy for president: he would have obtained the grandstand right to say what to a comedian was censored to. The survey attributed to the French comedian 16% of voting intentions: a level comparable to that reached by the *MoVimento 5 stelle* last year.

The similarities between the policies of the two comedians and their social contexts initiatives are evident. Thesimilarities are found both in the program (fight against corruption, elitism, the inefficiency of an increasing collusion between politics, finance and economics), both in the context of a political and social crisis which favored their success. Moreover there are very important similarities in the forms and communication strategies of their political discourse.

The entrance of a comedian in politics can be particularly effective because it uses and transforms elements of popular culture as anthropologists often highlighted. With the language of satire, of imitations and caricatures, a comedian can communicate content that otherwise would be non-transmittable.   Content communicated this way can overcome the barriers posed by social norms more easily and influence in depth the ideas and the feelings of the audience. The performances staged can revive the "rituals of reversal" and the

carnival celebrations that allow the working classes to give vent to anger and pent-up frustrations. In the popular culture, though, these rituals conclude without affecting power relations and the situation. Coluche and Grillo did not limit their intervention to reproducing this powerful mechanism of public involvement, they offered an unexpected outcome, they personally exposed themselves to show the possibility of influencing the institutions that manage the political power.

The methods of political initiative development, collection and aggregation of the supporters of the agreement, were several.

 While Coluche immediately proposed his person in the competition for the election of the French Republic, Grillo followed a much slower and gradual path before taking on an important role in the political arena, using all the possibilities the web offered. The changes in the political role of the comedian have resulted in a gradual change of forms and of the language register used to deliver the message: in a first moment, already scheduled theater performances were used to launch campaigns and support the activities of local groups; and later, rallies were organized to support the lists of the M5S were partly transformed into comedy shows.

As already mentioned the decision Grillo took of entering politics was strongly influenced by the events that brought him to move away from the most important national television networks. Away from the screen he built a different relationship with the audience, bringing on stage a strong environmentalist polemic. Even before his direct engagement with the blog, Grillo had supported countless events, initiatives and campaigns promoted by various groups and by political and social associations. With his theatrical performances and interventions in the press, he gave speeches on various topics from global capitalism, biotechnology, information itself, ecology and citizens' rights. However

it was only after the opening of his personal blog that the direct involvement in the political comedian took a stable profile.

The blog quickly gathered a wide participation; with two hundred thousand daily visits and more than a thousand comments for each post, the blog has become the first in Italy by number of incoming links, and among the first in the world for number of accesses (placed 7th in the world ranking published by Forbes 2009) . In 2005 he won the award for best Italian web site in the category "news and information". In the past Grillo had even criticized the type of commercialization of information technology and its operation, to the point that in his show Time Out (2000) he ended every evening with the destruction of a personal computer. Only later on he understand the potential of a tool such as the internet and was convinced of its indispensability to communicate with society. After opening his blog he was convinced more and more of the strategic role of the Web as a source of global information and as an engine for promoting social change.

 The strategic use of the Web by Grillo is often compared to the use of commercial television by Berlusconi. By a matter of fact, at first Grillo was fascinated by the figure of Silvio Berlusconi, enough to declare in 1994:

"They must be sent away, they are to be sent away , these people here! We must vote for entrepreneurs! I'm glad Berlusconi turned up: I want to go vote for him!".

 After that he took the distances from Berlusconi very quickly because of the deep differences in strategies and objectives pursued by the two of them. The important differences between the two characters emerge from the nature of the media they prefer. Their professions that are both not political, entrepreneur and comedian, are crucial in determining both their communications and their behaviors towards the target audience. Berlusconi's television allows a one-way

communication between those who run it and the audience, that remains largely passive, until they are questioned in surveys or asked to vote in any election. A similar relationship to the one that exists between the producer and the consumer, the first chooses the product to be offered on the market, the latter decides whether to buy it or not. On the other hand, the web of Grillo allows a continuous interaction between those who produce messages and those who receive them, it creates space for discussion and facilitates the active engagement of all the users: both the comedian and his audience.

These differences between the mediums chosen by the two political parties are reflected on the idea of democracy that the two politicians have in mind. Berlusconi has used television to put himself and his business skills at the center of the party, to take over the government and make Italy a plebiscitary democracy. Grillo built a movement that seeks to use the web to promote all possible forms of direct and participatory democracy. The *MoVimento 5 stelle* was born and grew on the Web in the name of a digital direct democracy, as a contemporary *Agorà*, founded on the horizontality of the online communication, as opposed to the verticality of Berlusconi's televised communication and the alleged total transparency. The realization of the project to develop new forms of participation and democracy, starting from *beppegrillo.it* blog has encountered various problems and difficulties causing controversy within the movement itself.

For example, with the growth of the movement the Casaleggio position within the movement has become less clear. The online marketing company has been compared to Mediaset and to the relationship it has with Berlusconi.

It is clear that Beppe Grillo's success is strongly linked to his character and to his comic profession that is by itself highly communicative. It is also undeniable that he was the first in Italy to make a systematic and massive use of "network", which is without

doubt the most impactful communication today and the one with the highest growth perspectives. We speak of prospectives because the Internet penetration in Italy is far from that of television, for now. Beppe Grillo has emphasized his use of the Internet as a tool of direct democracy, but the degree of knowledge that Italians have on Grillo was achieved mainly through news television. Grillo used traditional media, creating the news, and thus his popularity by refusing to talk to the media or insulting the journalists that represented it. In 2013 the success of Grillo in terms of communication was determined by the mainstream media that spoke about him, not because suddenly the participation of the Italians on the web grew. The participation of Italians on the Web for the election of the President of the Republic didn't collected more than a few thousand votes. Actually it was the television that spoke about the flop of the online participation he pushed for so much.

Also when, before the European elections in 2014, the *MoVimento 5 stelle* appeared to be in trouble according to surveys Grillo went on television where he had always disdained to go, in what Italians call the *Third Chamber of Bruno Vespa*, Porta a Porta.

To conclude, it is possible to state that the Grillo communication has both the physical contact aspect (he appears in city squares) and the virtual one (his presence on the web). but not declaring it he uses traditional media: indirectly, when he can, and directly, when he is forced to by the results of the surveys. Strongly supported by a communications expert like Casaleggio and his own professional skills Grillo has undoubtedly delivered a new political communication model in Italy. However, what the actual impact of his communication strategy will be, and which effects it will bring is hard to say today. The real difference with the example of Berlusconi who is a twenty year case of specialists analysis, consideration may be given in a few years. What we can say is that Grillo has introduced 2.0 in Italian politics and this has certainly transformed the perception of politics in Italy. Infact, as

we will see in the next chapter, Renzi has led the undeclared beginnings of integrated communication in politics.

2.1.3 Who is Matteo Renzi?

Born in Florence on January 11, 1975. Son of Laura Bovoli and Tiziano Renzi, he is the second of four children. He grew up in Rignano sull'Arno, and studied in Florence: he graduated in highschool at the Dante Institute in Classical studies, he then signed up at the University of Florence where he graduated in Law in 1999 with a thesis in History of Law entitled *Administration and political culture: Giorgio La Pira Mayor of Florence 1951-1956* ,Professor Bernardo Sordi was his supervisor. He was a scout in the Italian Catholic Association of Guides and Scouts and wrote on the national magazine of the scout branch *Rover/Scolte* "Camminiamo Insieme". He has worked with various responsibilities for the CHIL Srl, owned by his family marketing services company, in particular he coordinated the sales service of the newspaper *La Nazione* in the province of Florence with the direct management of the newsboys team. He also handed out leaflets and distributed phone directories.

Renzi begins his political activity during his high school years. In 1996 he contributed to the creation of the Prodi Committees in Tuscany and enrolled at the Italian Popular Party, of which he became, in 1999, provincial secretary. Between 2004 and 2009 he was president of the Province of Florence. On the 22nd of June 2009 he was elected mayor of Florence winning with 59,96% of the votes. He candidated himself as part of the national leadership of the Democratic Party. In 2010 he was, according to various surveys, the most beloved Italian mayor. On September 13, 2012 is officially a candidate himself, during a rally in Verona, to the primaries of the center-left for the Prime Minister elections. He lost against Bersani at the second round of the primaries, on the 2nd of December 2012, getting 1,095,925 votes, 39.1%, against Bersani's 60.9% (1,706,457 votes). During the electoral campaign for

the 2013 general election he loyally supported Pier Luigi Bersani, despite fierce fighting with determination to scrap the old party directive class. The disappointing electoral conclusion Bersani brought home raised Renzi's image no matter the party establishment and on the 9th of July 2013, Renzi confirmed in an interview with *La Repubblica* his plans to run again for the position of Democratic Party national secretary. On December 8, 2013 he was elected secretary of the Democratic Party with 67.5% of the votes. After the resignation of Enrico Letta he was given the task of forming a new government. Task he accepted on the 21st of February 2014. The success achieved by the Democratic Party in the European elections of May 2014 which reached 43% is indisputably attributable to him .

Matteo Renzi was presented on the Italian political scene as the *"dismantler":* he threw out the old to make room for the new, the fresh, the young and dynamic. This policy line is also reflected on his communication choices. After the primaries, at the end of 2013, Renzi resulted difficult to reporters, giving evasive answers and often also not very polite ones. After all the nouns that revolve around the concept of scrapping and the attitude with the media make it look very much like the Grillo communication strategy!

Very quickly , however, he realizes that the penetration of his media message is inextricably linked to the relationship with the media and, more generally, with the communications team. There are two key words to describe Renzi's communication: *disintermediation* and *availability*.

Disintermediation because Matteo Renzi is the first Italian politician who uses the mass media and is not used by the media. An example of the fact is that unlike Berlusconi and Grillo , Renzi has not taken a selfie on Porta a Porta with Bruno Vespa in occasion of the 2014 election campaign. He posts on social media and doesn't let the media post things on him, his attitude is different for what concerns the relationship with the electorate, to whom he never denies a selfie, to

stay in our example . Renzi has no reference television channel , no news organization support; he participates in all the talk shows, from Vespa's to Santoro's , and no one makes his life easier, but no one is openly hostile either. Renzi has estranged the information world from that of politics, in the sense that the mechanisms of one and the other do not intertwine anymore, but they move parallel to each other without touching.

The *availability* of Renzi, instead, resides in the fact that together with the estrangement of the world of information from that of politics he is very available to respond and to communicate through the same mediums. According to the communication scheme of Renzi the message should be simple, convincing, straightforward and available to everyone, not only of those involved (Mario Lavia, 2014). Renzi's message is transversal and undifferentiated, it seeks to involve all, differently from to those of Berlusconi and Grillo which are, as already said, one vertically and the other horizontally directed to very specific targets. Renzi's communication uses any type of media from the television to the press to the Web. Renzi moves in a credible way when he is with Bruno Vespa, with Fabio Fazio, with Daria Bignardi, and his manners go viral and are generally recognized by everyone very quickly. Renzi is also the one who wears his leather jacket and appears on the tv show *Amici di Maria De Filippi*, proving to be part of the medial flow, not only to use it (Lavia 2014). As for the web, the great communication revolution accomplished by Renzi in Italy has been the use of Twitter that was not yet well integrated into the sphere of the media of Italian politics and that was perfectly consistent with his desire to disintermediate his contact with the voter. Certainly the philosophy of short, direct and understandable messages, fits perfectly with the Twitter operation. The keywords used by Renzi quickly became hashtag, making *the hash (#)* symbol of Renzi's communicative frenzy and of the need that the Prime Minister has to maintain a continuous and direct line with his voters/followers. Renzi is constantly connected, he always has his I-phone in hand and is always

ready to tweet what he does, will do or has already done. He posts any kind of thing, even trivial things: on the first day as prime minister he told everyone through Twitter that he was at work early in the morning. His being perennially connected has important consequences. There is a transformation of the relationship between politician and voter, which is obviously not only more direct but faster; and especially avoids the journalistic analysis of what is happening, Twitter is part of the disintermediation of which we spoke earlier. Renzi has a direct relationship with the electorate via twitter, more direct than that of Grillo, who's who runs the blog and responds to reader comments. Renzi responds to each one personally. He puts on the same level of his constituents does not propose himself to them as a guru to follow. In this his experience as a Boy Scouts certainly helped and was an important part of his training, just think about the hashtag *"#Ascolto"* and the success it has had. As well as Grillo, Renzi was helped from Cyber-experts, like Filippo Sensi that helped him to exploit the network, increase followers and above all to calculate the feedback of his tweet. Through Twitter Renzi he has also conquered television and newspapers that reflect their tweets and they give much wider spread of the medium used in *stand alone*. Berlusconi led television on Italian political scene, Grillo led the Network and Renzi has gone a step further, he brought Social Networks on the plate. What are the long-term benefits of a strategy like this one? The communicative approach Matteo Renzi continues to remain on with no doubt recalls that of an approach that points to the strengthening of a brand. The *cross-mediality*, which is the integrated communication that optimizes the use of all available media, is the best way to make a "brand" of everything that revolves around a politician. Renzi is undoubtedly a central character in those that are the horizons of change of a communication strategy geared to the search of a new face and a new credibility for Italian politics, but digital and traditional media have publics with very specific characteristics, and are extremely segmented within. The pervasiveness of communication sometimes is likely to take little account of the centrality of this issue, featuring an image little

closer to the real, and translating politics into a perceptual universe of magic, especially at times like this, it can be a very little result resolving (Nicola Bonaccini, 2014). In conclusion as to the communicative phenomenon of Grillo, Renzi is too recent to be assessed definitively too, especially with regard to the depth of the change that resulted in the mode of conveying political messages in an area of the center-left that has traditionally had difficulty to adjust to de ideologization processes.

In terms of communication analogies the couple Renzi-Berlusconi seems the most solid example of the evolution of Italian political communication. The digital direct democracy of Grillo seems more utopian for organizational reasons, for representativeness and for reasons of content. The message has the ability to gather voices for protestimg, but they tend to have little unifying force when it comes to building positive policies. Even if the officially deny it, Berlusconi and Renzi are similar and probably symathyze one for the other. The first sees in the second, (besides the different political positions) a continuation of his same way of in conveying political messages; and the second, is new kind of politician that is able to step away from party differences and recognizes the ability of Berlusconi to be close to his constituents through his personal leadership and media. Renzi, however, is the first Italian politician, which has decisively enhanced his political action through communication and that doesn't claim to come from outside the world of politics. A difficult choice of communication in a moment of low opinion of the political profession, but that at least in the short has not caused negative effects.

2.2 Marine Le Pen in France

2.2.1 Who is Marine Le Pen?

Born Marion Anne Perrine-Le Pen, (Marine Le Pen short) at Neuilly - sur - Seine on the 5th of August 1968 , is a French politician, Member of the European Parliament since 2004 and president of the *Front National* since the 16th of January 2011.

She graduated in law, and became lawyer. Daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, in early age, she followed him in politics and joined the *Front National*. She got married and is mother of three children, in 2002 she divorced from her first husband and married a second time to Éric Iorio, an important member of the *Front National*, from which later on she divorced too. Her current partner is Louis Aliot, vice president of the *Front National* and was secretary of the party from 2005 to 2010.

She represented the FN at the Regional Council of Nord-Pas-de-Calais from the 15th of March 1998 to the 28th of March 2004. Since 2002 she is president of the association *Generations Le Pen*, an organization close to the *Front National* that aims to promote the thinking and actions of Jean-Marie Le Pen among young people. In April 2003 she became vice president of the *Front National*, in 2004 she ran for president of the Ile-de-France region and obtained 12.3% of the votes, becoming regional president.

Marine Le Pen is considered to be the expression of a new, liac and more moderate trend within the FN, which surfaced after the presidential elections of 2002, when her father received a greater consensus than Lionel Jospin and arrived to the ballot (where he then lost against Jacques Chirac).

After the 2004 European elections she won a parliamentary seat in Strasbourg and from January 2007 she took care of her father's

election campaign for the forthcoming presidential elections. In July 2009 she was re-elected Member of the European Parliament for the North-Western constituency.

Marine Le Pen candidated herself to the 2010 French regional elections of 2010 to run for president of the *Nord-Pas-de-Calais* region, getting the 18,31% of the votes in the first round and the 22,20% at the second round, almost reaching the number of votes of the representative of Sarkozy's coalition. In this occasion her father Jean-Marie Le Pen congratulated her publicly and spoke about the possibility for her to succeed him in the leadership of the FN. Infact, on the 19th of november, during the 2011 presidential campaign and after her father's resignation, Marine Le Pen was elected President of the party with a percentage of 67.65% of the votes, beating Bruno Gollnisch.

Marine Le Pen was then a candidate for the French presidential elections of the 22 April 2012. In the first round she got 17.9 percent of the votes, finishing in third place, after Hollande and Sarkozy. It is the best result ever achieved by FN in presidential elections.

In 2012 she was investigated on by the prosecutor of Lyons accused of incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence against a group of people because of their religion. On the 2nd of July 2013 the European Parliament, on the request of the Minister of Justice of the French Republic, authorized the waiver of her parliamentary immunity, pointing out that the alleged facts were not charged to her directly and that there was obvious relationship between the facts she was accused of and the exercise of her Member of the European Parliament functions and therefore there was no reason to suspect the existence of a case of *fumus persecutionis* (a juridical expression, that indicates that the actions of a legal entity do not seem dictated by law enforcement or by an explicit search for truth, but by the intention to harm a specific person or entity).

After the great success at the 2014 European Elections in which the *Front National* resulted to be the first party in France, in March 2015 Marine led the *Front National* to the 25.19% at department elections while moderates, led by Nicolas Sarkozy, got the 29.4 % and the Socialists and their allies collected 21.8 % of the votes. This was the best result ever in local elections. The following week , however, in the second round she didn't even manage to win one department despite the many votes obtained. Anyway she could count on thirty councilors across   France   against   only   one   she   had   before.

At the first round of regional elections on the 6th and the 13th of December 2015, she ran for president of the North-Calais-Picardy region, where she got 40.64 % of votes at the first round and 42.23% at the second round of balloting.

Generally and besides the finale electoral turnout, it is possible to state that with the 2012 presidential elections Marine Le Pen confirmed to the world she is the unrivalled successor to the leadership of the *Front National,* a party that until then had only known Le Pen senior as a leader since 1972 when it was founded.
Marine added 2.5 Million votes to Jean-Marie's electorate of 2007. It is out of doubt that the contemporary french social context helped her: from the fact Sarkozy became more and more unpopular, to the financial crisis, to the European sovereign debt, to the issues linked to immigration and last but not least to the several filo-islamic terrorist attacks France suffered, that gave her credibility to many of the eyes of those that still were skeptic about her.

2.2.2. Le Pen is an "umbrella brand"

Marine Le Pen's electoral campaign in 2012 was initially focused on economic issues: from the withdrawal of France from the euro to the recovery of a supposedly lost national sovereignty. The FN's economic

objectives were motivated by a sort of *"economic patriotism"*. In her campaign she also spoke a lot about all of the issues related to immigration, to national identity and often her speeches were strongly declared anti-islamic ones. This didn't avoid her problems, as said above, but throughout the years (especially in recent times) the great issue of terrorism in France enhanced her credibility dramatically.

Marine outlined quite quickly what the philosophy of the "new brand" of the *Front national* was: the *Front National* changed, but didn't change with Marine Le Pen, this is, basically, what is behind her communication strategy.

Marine Le Pen fits perfectly in the alveus of the candidate-centered political context we are analyzing.

 Apart from the economic and political issues she brings forward in her campaign for the 2017 presidential elections in France there is much more. She is doing an intense work on the storytelling of herself, therefore, on the image the French people have of her. The best example of this tendency in her political communication strategies is the opening of a blog "*Le carnet d'espérance". Le Carnet d'Espérance* is basically a window on her life, it is all about who Marine Le Pen is, who her family is, nothing in the blog recalls to the *Front National,* not even the graphics. The opening of this blog was the concretization of her will to express herself "*sans intermediaire"* so that her points and beliefs couldn't be caricaturized by the press. On the page Marine Le Pen present's herself with the sentence:

"Je suis une femme libre, une mère, une Française et j'ai choisi de m'engager pour mon pays".

("I am a free woman, a mother, a french that chose to work for her country").

Opinionists speak about a process of de-demonization of the party initiated by Marine Le Pen when she took over the leadership of her father. By a matter of fact she did soften the party's positions on many social and political issues, but the great step forward Marine took, if compared to her father's leadership, concerned the communication aspect.

It is evident that the change starts with her: she is a woman, she divorced two times, she has three children and pursues a very complicated and controversial, but flourishing, political career. All points that take the distance from the traditional family values and dogmas of the first *Front National* that saw a different role for women and that were more rigidly conservative on family assets. Marine, though, doesn't want to lose the votes of the traditionalist electors of her father's movement, so, while on one hand there is, her, Marine, who represents the liac "modern" family, where she is the worker, the mother, the independent woman who conquered a world traditionally led by men and that seeks for new votes in different electoral basins; on the other hand there is Marion Le Pen, her niece, who embodies the traditional ideal of family and the original values of the extreme right French party: married in young age, with a model family, strong on her political decisions but in a very feminine way, who reassures the "old guard" electorate.

Marine took the distances from her father, both personally and politically but the communication strategy adopted demonstrates this doesn't mean she took the distance from her name and family too, on the contrary she transformed her family name into a brand.

Basically, to say it with the words of marketing Marine Le Pen made of the Le Pen family an *umbrella brand or family brand.* An umbrella brand is usually the result of the merger of several individual images that are put together under the "protection " and authority ,as well as the strength of the brand awareness, of a large and solid brand, that generally is the mother company. This does not mean that all products must flow into the company brand, some may belong to particularly

distinctive market sectors and maintain their peculiarities. The great advantage of the appeal of an umbrella brand is that it facilitates the introduction of innovative products or the reachout in a new market sectors by leveraging the knowledge and previous reliability of the mother brand. This means that following this strategy the possibility and profitability of the brand extension will increase (Del Monte & Partner, 2013) . The best example of umbrella brand is *Coca-cola*. Under the umbrella of Coca-cola there are *Coca-cola Light, Coca-cola Zero* and *Coca-cola Life*: different products that refer to different targets.

Marine Le Pen applied the same logics to the leadership of Front National. Le Pen is the "mother brand" and under the Le Pen umbrella stand Marine and Marion that have the same objective but target different electoral basins. This strategy takes advantage of the new social political context we live in and enlarges the general electoral basin of the Front National.

2.3 Barack Obama: the revolution of 2.0 spin-doctoring

2.3.1 Who is Barack Obama?

Barack Obama was born on August 4, 1961. He is an American politician who is the 44th and current President of the United States. He is the first African American to hold the office and the first president born outside the continental United States. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Obama is a graduate of Columbia University and Harvard Law School, where he was president of the *Harvard Law Review*. He was a community organizer in Chicago before earning his law degree. He worked as a civil rights attorney and taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School between 1992 and 2004. While serving three terms representing the 13th District in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004, he ran unsuccessfully in the Democratic primary for the United States House of Representatives in 2000 against incumbent Bobby Rush.

In 2004, Obama received national attention during his campaign to represent Illinois in the United States Senate with his victory in the March Democratic Party primary, his keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in July, and his election to the Senate in November. He began his presidential campaign in 2007 and, after a close primary campaign against Hillary Clinton in 2008, he won sufficient delegates in the Democratic Party primaries to receive the presidential nomination. He then defeated Republican nominee John McCain in the general election, and was inaugurated as president on January 20, 2009. Nine months after his inauguration, Obama was named the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

During his first two years in office, Obama signed into law economic stimulus legislation in response to the Great Recession in the form of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010. Other major domestic initiatives in his first term included the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, often referred to as "Obamacare"; the Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act; and the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010. In foreign policy, Obama ended U.S. military involvement in the Iraq War, increased U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan, signed the New START arms control treaty with Russia, ordered U.S. military involvement in Libya in opposition to Muammar Gaddafi, and ordered the military operation that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden. In January 2011, the Republicans regained control of the House of Representatives as the Democratic Party lost a total of 63 seats; and, after a lengthy debate over federal spending and whether or not to raise the nation's debt limit, Obama signed the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012.

Obama was reelected president in November 2012, defeating Republican nominee Mitt Romney, and was sworn in for a second term on January 20, 2013. During his second term, Obama has promoted domestic policies related to gun control in response to the Sandy Hook

Elementary School shooting, and has called for greater inclusiveness for LGBT Americans, while his administration has filed briefs which urged the Supreme Court to strike down part of the federal Defense of Marriage Act and state level same-sex marriage bans as unconstitutional. In foreign policy, Obama ordered U.S. military intervention in Iraq in response to gains made by ISIL after the 2011 withdrawal from Iraq, continued the process of ending U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan, promoted discussions that led to the 2015 Paris Agreement on global climate change, brokered a nuclear deal with Iran, and normalized U.S. relations with Cuba.

2.3.2 The Obama 2.0 revolution

One of the media's favorite pictures during electoral campaigning in the USA is the image of hands. Hands raised up to the sky in sign of victory, hands that reach out to caress children, hands that wave to public (Calabresi, 16.09.2012). Harry Truman counted the number of hands he would shake, following a logic for which "*every handshake is a vote*". Hands are still important today, even with the advent of television and of the internet, and it is because of what they stand for. The secret to win an election, especially in the American system, resides in the ability of a candidate to relate to the public, or better in the ability the candidate has to make the public relate to him and it is exactly what hands are supposed to symbolize: the relation between people: between the candidate and his voters.

There is no doubt that Obama is a master in empathizing with his public, this ability of his was very important in the first campaign and it is probably what allowed him to win the election, also because it came through social media.

Social media changed the perception of the public. They caused an outmatch of the traditional Habermas distinction between emotional

and rational (Sorice,2011). Fondamental in the new asset is the role of the spindoctor. Profession we have spoken about earlier in this thesis. Spindoctors have had a central role in both the 2008 and the 2012 Obama campaigns.

In the first one (2008) *social networks* were used in an organic and organized way for the first time. Everything worked around the two main slogans of the 2008 Obama campaign: "*Yes we can!*" and "*The change we can believe in*!".

In the second one (2012), as the emotional lever wasn't as strong enough anymore, because the four years of Obama's government had been sort of disappointing for many americans, the spin-doctoring and communication team actuated an intense and complex strategy of *data-mining* and *micro-targeting*.

It was Jeremy Bird, one of the less known gurus of Obama's 2012 campaign, thirty years old at the time, he who understood the potential all that data had. He is infact considered to be a genius of the *ground game:* persuading and mobilizing home by home, vote by vote, crossing thousands of data on consumers through the use of new technologies like apps for tablets and smartphones, that has been brought to levels of precision never seen before. This system allows to *micro- target,* in other words to understand what the interests of the individuals are and tailor the message on their characteristics. Micro-targeting is possible thanks to *data mining,* that would be the action of collecting the data, the same way you extract minerals from a mine (Lucchini, Matarrazzo; 2014).

According to Mark Sullivan, founder of the *Voter Activation Network* (that keeps track of all the information on democratic electors) , *"what has been done in 2012 made the innovations - the consistent use of social media - of the 2008 campaign simply pre-historical".*

The campaign *Obama for America* invited all of Obama's electors to sign up to his web site through facebook, that way they could reach not only those who liked his page but also all of their friends. This system, that appears to be very simple, actually allowed the creation of the most powerful and detailed database in the history of electoral campaigning (Lucchini Matarrazzi,2014).

How Joe Rosparas, chief of Obama's digital strategy, pointed out the objective was to create a technology that would encourage electors to "feel involved" in the campaign, in line with the *community organizing* philosophy of Obama. For example, he was the first President to create a hashtag on Twitter :*#DontDoubleMyRate* against the raise of university taxes. He also did a video that was broadcasted and shared on social networks on youtube on this subject. The 2012 campaign was with no doubt addressed to a digital public.

While in the 2008 the link between the data possessed only happened if requested and generally manually, in 2012 all the data gathered on a person would be automatically crossed, even if provided by very different sources. This attitude risked violating privacy rights, but melting all the data gathered in one database only, appeared to be more economical, quick and allowed better choices. This new database included the *Vote builder*: basic information (age, address, job and electoral history) of 190 million electors. The system crossed this information with the data gathered by the 2008 supporters of President Obama, integrating them with all the information taken from the 34 million facebook profiles of the President's fans. As Sam Graham-Felsen, Obama's chief blogger, outlined this is a huge political revolution: when you find the correct combination to use the power of friendships on facebook the horizon of possibilities becomes infinite.

The director of the digital division, Teddy Goff, spoke about *"persuasion by interaction"*. Every elector had the possibility to tell his or her personal story on a digital shared platform, creating messages that resulted being much more powerful than the messages any

candidate could have studied and tailored to the public. Instead of building a story of the candidate, Obama's campaign storytelling was done by the electorate, it was everyone's story and this had a much stronger mobilization. Obama's campaign focused on the intertwining of the relationships through the social media. The logics of this is simple: if it is a friend that invites me to an event or proposes me to do a donation I will be much more willing to participate, than if it is a complete stranger that asks me, even if that stranger is the president of the USA.

The last step of this communication revolution is *hyper-targeting.* Already tested in marketing, it basically addresses information virtually instantly and at lower costs. The company CampaignGrid is used mainly by republican candidates and gives this kind of service. The co-founder Jeff Dittus explained how he worked for a republican candidate (who he did not identify) during the primaries, providing electoral spots online that were sent to 400 thousand electors of a specific area in Florida that participated at at least two of the last four primary republican elections. The messages were adapted on the base of the gender, for hispanic electors. In the moment in which these individuals would open the video message, the system would select the most appropriate one on the basis of the receiver's characteristics. *"This is the future of political campaigning"* Jeff Dittus sustains (Lucchini, Matarrazzo, 2014).

The last interesting point to analyze for what concerns Obama's 2012 campaign is the extraordinary use of smart-phones. We can speak about a *smart-politics era.* On a total of 90% of the registered electors, 27% declared they used their phone to keep up with what was happening during the campaign and to find information on programs. Usually phone are used to comment on twitter and facebook. The system revealed itself to be incredibly useful to fundraising: 10% of the donators for the presidential campaign used smartphones or tablets. (Lucchini, Matarrazzo, 2014)

Obama's two campaigns made history. They changed the way of doing politics and of communicating to the public. The represent a watershed between old and new politics and politicians.

2.4 The 2016 American Presidential Elections: Donald Trump star of the show

2.4.1 Who is Donald Trump?

Donald Trump was born on the 14th of June 1946 in New York City. He was the second youngest child of Mary and Fred Trump's five children. Of his four siblings, only three are still alive: Maryanne, Elizabeth, and Robert. His older brother Fred Jr. died in 1981 from alcoholism.

Donald Trump is today an American businessman, television personality, author, politician, he is chairman of the Trump Organization, which is the principal holding company for his real estate ventures and other business interests, and most importantly he is the Republican nominee for the 2016 presidential elections.

Trump attended *Fordham University* in Bronx for two years, beginning in August 1964. He then moved to the *Wharton School of Finance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania*, which offered one of the few real estate studies departments in United States at the time. While there, he worked for the family company, Elizabeth Trump & Son, name after his grandmother. Trump graduated from Wharton in May 1968 with a Bachelor of Science in Economics.

Trump began his real estate career at the *Elizabeth Trump and Son* particularly focusing on middle-class rental housing in the New York City neighbourhoods of Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island. One of Trump's first projects was the revitalization of the foreclosed Swifton

Village apartment complex in Cincinnati, Ohio, which his father had purchased for $5.7 million in 1962.

He took over control of the company in 1971 and renamed the company *The Trump organization*. That year, he also moved to Manhattan, where he took part in larger construction projects and used attractive architectural design to win public recognition. He and his father drew attention in 1973 when the Justice Department accused them of discriminating afro-americans who wanted to rent apartments because of their skin colour, rather than merely screening out people based on low income as the Trumps stated. In the end the Trump company and federal officials signed an agreement under which the Trumps made no admission of wrongdoing, and under which qualified minority applicants would be presented by the Urban League.

By 1973, Trump was president of The Trump Organization and oversaw the company's 14,000 apartments across Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. In 1978 the city selected his Midtown Manhattan site as the location for its Jacob Javits Convention Center. Trump's first big deal in Manhattan was the building of the Grand Hyatt Hotel in 1978 next to Grand Central Station. The Grand Hyatt would replace the aging Commodore Hotel, owned by the Penn Central Transportation Company, which was in bankruptcy. Fred Trump was a silent partner in the initiative, due to the fact his reputation had been damaged in New York real estate circles after investigations into windfall profits and other abuses in his real estate projects, making Donald Trump the front man in the deal. According to Wayne Barrett (journalist), Fred's two-decade friendship with a top Equitable officer, Ben Holloway, helped convince them to agree to the project. Donald negotiated a forty-year tax abatement for the hotel with the city in exchange of a share of the venture's profits. The deal helped reduce the risks related to the project and consequently provided an incentive for investors to participate.

In 1981, Trump purchased and renovated a building that would become the Trump Plaza.

In 1983, Trump completed development of the Trump Tower, a 58-floor skyscraper in Midtown Manhattan. The Trump Tower was developed by Trump and the Equitable Life Assurance Company, and was designed by architect Der Scutt of Swanke Hayden Connell. In the Trump Tower there are both the primary penthouse condominium, residence of Donald Trump, and the headquarters of The Trump Organization. The Trump Tower was also the setting of the NBC television show *The Apprentice*, as it also includes a fully functional television studio set.

Harrah's at Trump Plaza opened in Atlantic City in 1984. The hotel/casino was built by Trump with financing by Holiday Corp. He also acquired a partially completed building in Atlantic City from the Hilton Corporation for $320 million. When completed in 1985, the hotel/casino became the *Trump Castle*. Ivana Trump managed the property.

He repaired the Wollman Rink in Central Park, built in 1955, were started in 1980 by a general contractor unconnected to Trump, with an expected 2 1⁄2-year construction schedule, but were not completed by 1986. Trump took over the project, completed it in three months for $1.95 million, which was $750,000 less than the initial budget, and then operated the rink for one year with all profits going to charity. This gave him positive visibility amongst people of New York.

Trump acquired the Plaza Hotel in Manhattan in 1988. He paid 400 million dollars for the property and once again had Ivana manage its operation and renovation.

In 1988 Trump acquired the Taj Mahal Casino in Atlantic City. The casino was opened in April 1990, and was built at a total cost of 1.1

billion dollars, which at the time made it the most expensive casino ever built. Financed with $675 million in junk bonds at a 14% interest rate, the project entered bankruptcy the following year. Banks and bondholders, facing potential losses of hundreds of millions of dollars, opted to restructure the debt. The Taj Mahal emerged from bankruptcy in October 1991, with Trump ceding 50 percent ownership in the casino to the bondholders in exchange for lowered interest rates and more time to pay off the debt. He also sold his financially challenged Trump Shuttle airline and his 282-foot (86 m) megayacht, the Trump Princess. The property was purchased in 1996 and consolidated into Trump Hotels & Casino Resorts, which filed for bankruptcy in 2004 with 1.8 billion dollars in debt, filing again for bankruptcy five years later with 50 million dollars in assets and 500 million dollars in debt. The restructuring ultimately left Trump with 10% ownership in the Trump Taj Mahal and other Trump casino properties. Trump served as chairman of the organization, which was renamed *Trump Entertainment Resorts*, from mid-1995 until early 2009, and served as CEO from mid-2000 to mid-2005.

Although Trump has never filed for personal bankruptcy, hotel and casino businesses of his have been declared bankrupt four times between 1991 and 2009 to re-negotiate debt with banks and owners of stock and bonds. Because the businesses used *Chapter 11 bankruptcy*, they were allowed to operate while negotiations proceeded.

On October 7, 1999, Trump announced the formation of an exploratory committee to inform his decision of whether or not he should run for the 2000 presidential elections. However, after a flop in the California primary, Trump withdrew his candidacy.

Trump considered the idea of running for president in 1988, 2004, and 2012, and for Governor of New York in 2006 and 2014, but never really entered those races. He was considered as a potential running

mate for George H. W. Bush on the Republican Party's 1988 presidential ticket but lost out to future Vice President Dan Quayle.

As Trump publicly speculated about seeking the 2012 Republican presidential nomination, a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll released in March 2011 found Trump leading among the potential contenders, one point ahead of former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. A Newsweek poll conducted in February 2011 showed Trump within a few points of Barack Obama, with many voters undecided in the November 2012 general election for president of the United States. A poll released in April 2011 by Public Policy Polling showed Trump having a nine-point lead in a potential contest for the Republican nomination for president while he was still actively considering a run. His moves were interpreted by some media as possible promotional tools for his reality show *The Apprentice*.

Trump after speaking at Conservative Political Action Conference in February 2011, Trump publicly questioned Barack Obama's citizenship, amplifying the longstanding controversy about Obama's eligibility to serve as president. Although Obama had released his birth certificate in 2008 Trump echoed activists' demand that Obama disclose a "long form" certificate as well. Trump said that he had sent investigators to Hawaii to research the question, but he did not follow up with any findings. He also repeated a debunked allegation that Obama's grandmother said she had witnessed his birth in Kenya. When the White House sought to put the matter to rest by releasing Obama's long-form birth certificate, Trump took credit for obtaining the document, saying that he hoped it checked out. His official biography mentions his purported role in forcing Obama's hand, and he defends his pursuit of the issue when prompted. In 2013 he said, "*I don't think I went overboard. Actually, I think it made me very popular."* When asked in 2015 whether Obama was born in the United States, Trump said he didn't know why Obama wouldn't release his records, and did not want to discuss it further. While calling for release of the long form

certificate, Trump also called for Obama to release his school records, questioning whether his grades warranted entry into an Ivy League school.

Trump's strengths as a potential candidate in the 2012 presidential election included being a businessman, not being a politician, not talking like a politician, and not thinking like a politician. He generally had polled at or below 17 percent among the crowded field of possible Republican candidates.On May 16, 2011, Trump announced he would not run for president in the 2012 election, while also saying he would have won.

In 2013, Trump was a featured speaker at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). During the lightly-attended early-morning speech, Trump said that President Obama gets "*unprecedented media protection"*, he spoke against illegal immigration, and advised against harming Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Also in 2013, he spent over 1 million dollars to research a possible run for president of the United States. In October 2013, New York Republicans circulated a memo suggesting Trump should run for governor of the state in 2014, against Andrew Cuomo; Trump said in response that while New York had problems and taxes were too high, running for governor was not of great interest to him. He also made statements denying climate change that were discordant with the opinion of the scientific community. In February 2015, Trump opted not to renew his television contract for *The Apprentice*, generating speculation that he might run for president in 2016.

Donald Trump turned his name into a brand, in a different way than that of Marine Le Pen though. This sentence from the book "*Trump Revealed: An American Journey of Ambition, Ego, Money and Power"*, by Michael Kranish and Marc Fisher of *The Washington Post,* captures the essence of the Trump brand:

"Trump summoned reporters to a press conference at Trump's Bar, located on the ground floor of Trump Tower, close to Trump Grill, just steps away from Trump's Ice Cream Parlor and the Trump Store, which was then pushing a new cologne for men called, Donald Trump, the Fragrance."

Some people psychoanalyze Trump and attribute this self-magnification of the man into a brand as a form of narcissism. But Kranish and Fisher take a more strategic view of him than that.

The authors believe he has encouraged an outsize image of himself so that he can profit from just being Donald Trump."*Obviously, the Trump brand is what makes him, he has from his very early days been told by his father not to be a nothing, that he has to be something and something big. And Donald Trump has spent so much of his life trying to outdo his father and be his own man. So being Trump, being Trump on the buildings, Trump in universities, this is all part of who Donald is. (...)You have to look at the world that way as a businessperson does. You have to put yourself front and center. And that's the way he's operated"* (NPR,2016).

2.4.2 "The Donald"

The first television confrontation between the 2016 presidential candidates dates back to August 2015, more than a year ago. Since that day there is only one question that is on everyone's mind: Why are the United States of America taking Donald Trump seriously? The answer usually is something that follows the red line of : because he is an ace in communication, and he uses television and social networks like nobody else in this campaign. He has the ability to capture the anger and the discontent of the american-white-middle class. This explanation is without doubt truthful, but it isn't enough.

That of *Trumpism* is a very complex phenomena, even if he like to present himself as the *great simplifier*: he acts as a clown, but is very good at dosing his theatricality with his determination to reach the points he preaches on and on which he is extremely serious. He is the only one able to move in such a swift way through his contradictions. His whole political message is based on protectionism, isolation and populism, that in a climate of discontent like the one of the USA of the last years finds an incredibly fertile soil.

When his 2016 Presidential Election campaigning experience started many didn't really consider him as an option, even if according to surveys, his consensus was in continuous growth. Those same people have been proven wrong by events. The fear of an actual possibility of his establishment was also enhanced by the "Brexit effect": even those who have always been skeptical in his regards now believe that everything is possible in the political context we are living in; even Trump's establishment at the White House.

His being against the establishment, against the *élites* does with no doubt recall elements of the populist political movements that have been flourishing across Europe (cfr chapter 2.1.2). Trump is different though, he is unique in his kind. First of all the differences are historical: the political histories of the USA and of european countries is very different (cfr. introduction). Secondly, Trump built his whole caricatural character on being the *"hero of the vague and indistinct"* (Gaggi, 13.04.16); besides he is a TV show-man and and entrepreneur. "*He is contradictory by choice, he plays a game with his electorate with mirrors that reflect their dreams and aspirations*" (Ferraresi, 2016). He knows what people want and just gives it to them.

"The Donald" is the triumph of the candidate-centered social context we are here analyzing. He is running by himself. The *Grand Old Party* is horrified by his positions on isolation (even if in the past, before

Bush and Reagan great part of the party had isolationist positions). By a matter of fact many in the last year have taken the distance from him publicly (for example the Bush family declared they were not supporting him in his campaign, this happened after Jeb Bush withdrew his candidacy).

Trump is hostile towards economic liberalism for reasons that date back to his entrepreneurial past. These reasons root, not in some abstract political theory, but in the fact that great part of his fortune was built by his father, building the neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Queens with public subventions. Trump's attitude is the consequence to the will of protecting a fortune that was built in the most american of ways: from zero. It is the fortune of his father, a self made man he wants to protect. It is the product of the *American Dream* his wants to preserve. The *American Dream* is a concept that comes out often in american campaigns because it is a subject individuals are particularly sensitive to, Obama too referred to it in other terms.

The real difference between Trump and the new european leaders resides in the fact that he puts himself beyond true and false. George Bush and John Kerry were killed politically at the presidential election because of their contradictions; Trump does not only contradict himself continuously (in the same interview he declared he was "pro-life" (against abortion) but that he understood the reasons of who is "pro choice" (pro abortion)) he is also very proud of his ability to do it, and to always find a way out.

He imposes to his electorate the logics of a reality show, he acts like he never really left the set o*f The Apprentice :* what counts is not what is or isn't true, but the strength words are said with, and the more angry and vulgar they are, the better. What counts is the candidate not the ideology; it's all about charisma.

One of the most important characteristics to underline is the language. Trump went back to "basic English". No complicated words, no political terms, just everyday simple and direct English. His has been defined as a *liquid language* : electors seem to retain what they agree with and just let the rest flow away.

We already underlined the communicative strength of this ability earlier in this thesis by analyzing Silvio Berlusconi. Like him, Trump, is able to speak to people in a register the understand and in a language they are able to memorize. By a matter of fact american journalists coined a new word to express the parallelism that exists between the two: *Trumpusconi.*

The similarities between the two politicians are not limited to the ability of the two politicians to reach the voter. The communicative skills and the idea to lower the political register in order to be understood by everyone and in order to capture the attention of those that until then had been disinterested in politics, is certainly the common characteristic they have that is most important to politics. However the two have several other common traits. First of all they are both born as entrepreneurs and both of the operate in the building field. Both of them, therefore, approached the world of politics in a very economic result oriented way. Both of them come from the world of television and, even if in slightly different periods of time, both understood that the political scene is not very different from the set of a TV show. Both of them put their family on this set and managed somehow to make it look like a very close family, despite divorces (those to widely broadcasted on the news); very young and beautiful wifes and very varied aged children. Both of them made of their being unconventional their distinctive trait and managed to get people to tolerate attitudes that generally would be intolerable.

Donald Trump runs for an "*extreme reality show: the conquest of the White House*". It is not an opponent who uses these word to describe

Trump's run for the White house, but his spindoctor, Paul Manafort, and this by itself says a lot.

Chapter 3: Measuring the ROI of political communication strategies offline and online

3.1 Measuring the ROI of PR strategies and the limits of its application to politics

Evaluating a PR strategy means measuring its effectiveness both quantitatively and qualitatively. Evaluation provides the opportunity to learn what was done right and what was done wrong, both as a look backwards to performance and as a look forward to the improvement of performance. The desire of doing a better job next time is a major reason for evaluating PR efforts. It is equally important that companies and in our case candidates want to know if the money, time and effort spent are actually well spent or not (Wilcox, Cameron,Reber, 2015). Considering what has been said until now it is not possible anymore for political communication strategies to not have a ROI measurement system. This issue will be faced in this chapter.

 A way to evaluate the exposure to a message is through the ROI (return on investments): an index, commonly used in business, to determine the effectiveness of an action. In advertising it is also called cost-effectiveness and it is measured by taking the cost of the publicity program and dividing it by the total media impressions (how many people may have been exposed to the message) (Wilcox, Cameron,Reber, 2015).

Another approach often widely criticized by communication agencies, but often preferred by corporate officers, who believe it is a form of ROI, is the AVE method (advertising value equivalency). This approach calculates the value of a news story or of a broadcast mention by comparing it to what the space or time would cost in advertising. An example: News photos of President Obama drinking Guinness beer during a trip to Ireland were touted as being worth 32 million dollars in a world wide publicity for Guinness (Wilcox, Cameron,Reber, 2015).

For what concerns politics, the first step to take is to identify indicators able to evaluate the strategies of spin doctors and the action of politicians/electoral candidates. In this chapter the objective is to explain what has been theorized in the author's bachelor thesis: to apply the most recent methods of ROI to the world of political communication.

The latest trend seem to suggest that the final results of the activities should be considered significant: this means the "*outgrowth*" (stable general perception generated), not only the *"output"* of the short term or the *"outcome of the medium term"*. The *"output"* are those results that are expressed in quantitative terms (number of items, the number of people contacted, ...) or qualitative ones (favorable or unfavorable evaluation of outputs) and "*outcomes*" as those indicators, measured by research, representing the change caused at the cognitive, affective and behavioral level in interlocutors (surveys). The pyramid of McNamara represents this process below, at the top of it there is the *outgrowth* that is the determination of the final reputational level generated by the activities (Sorice, 2012).

In business these approaches are usually tracked on the long term, the company and its product are built to live at least a decade, in politics the time lap is much shorter, the duration of this type of approach approximately is a   legislature. The outgrowth so the stabilized perception of stakeholders in politics, essentially the voters, should strictly abide by this initial fixed period. The theoretical discussion is still focused on the need to move from actions that work only on the image, understood as the result of a deliberate construction often lacks any realistic relationship with the profound identity of the business or in our case the political subject, the strengthening of interventions that affect the reputation of the candidate. Reputation is the set of perceptions and opinions that the main stakeholders / constituents are formed on the organization or person according to their characteristics and their

behavior over time. It follows that an organization or a person have a good reputation if it's/his behavior meet the expectations of its stakeholders / constituents. In Figure (3.1) this state would be reached at the apex of the pyramid.

Fig. 3.1 -Pyramid of MacNamara
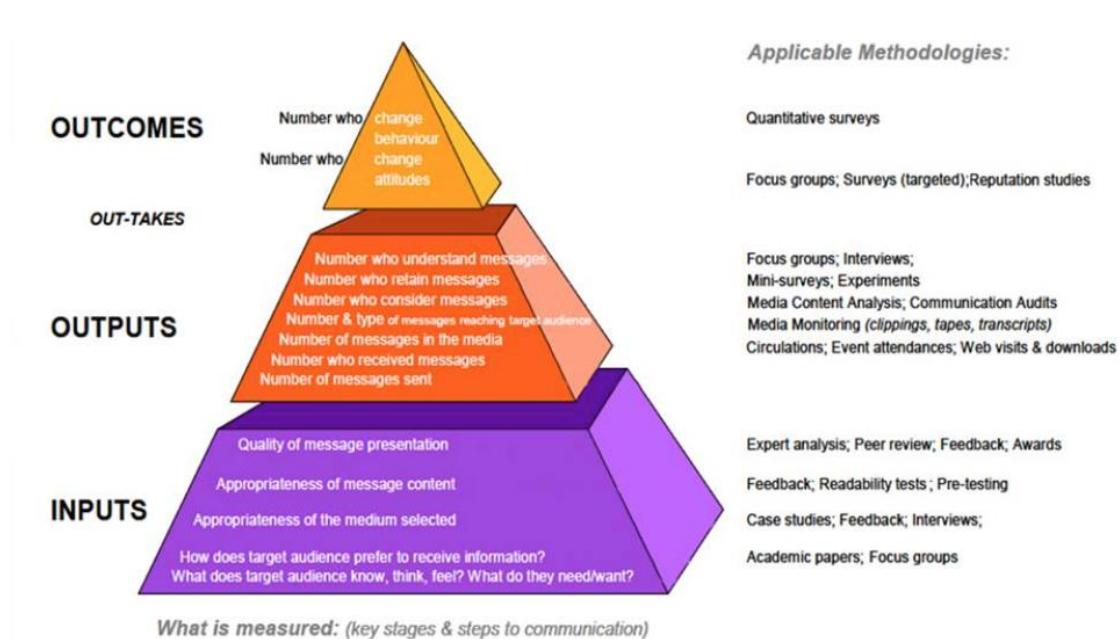
3.2   Measuring the outgrowth

Outgrowth indicators might appear as less precise and more complex but there is no doubt that for the moment they represent the only kind of data able to picture in a comprehensive way the final results of a communication or PR strategy. The first limit of outcome and outputs is that they don't give a general picture of how a communication campaign is going, the second is that lately communication and PR strategies have seen their content multiply exponentially. This has complicated the results that ROI studies can give as they cannot express the results in terms of *image* anymore: they necessarily have to express them in terms of *relation* and *reputation* (Invernizzi e Romenti, 2011).

The Reputation Institute elaborated a tool to give companies a solid framework able to identify the factors that determine reputation, monitor and compare the performance in terms of corporate reputation in the international field: the Reptrak™ model.

The model (Fig. 3.2) analyzes 23 key performance indicators, organized in 7 reputation dimensions (Performance, products and services, innovation, workplace, governance, citizenship, leadership). The heart of the system measures the *Pulse* of the public in a certain country, through a series of web interviews. The *Pulse* is the opinion the public has on companies on the basis of 4 elements that are considered to be necessary to build a solid general reputation: esteem, trust, admiration and positive attitude.

The analysis of the 23 indicators measures the rational behavior of the public. From the analysis of the results that come from the application of this model to the rankings the Reputation Institute elaborates every year it is clear that the best known companies, with high levels of positive visibility, reach the highest scoring according to the Reptrak model.

The same model has been applied to the reputation measurement of spanish CEO's (Reputation Institute, 2010). The model used is the one represented in Fig 3.3; Instead of the 7 clusters the original Reptrak model has, it considers only 4 of them: Influence, Leadership, Responsibility and Management. Corresponding to the 4 clusters and to the 4 *Pulse* elements there are 16 performance indicators.
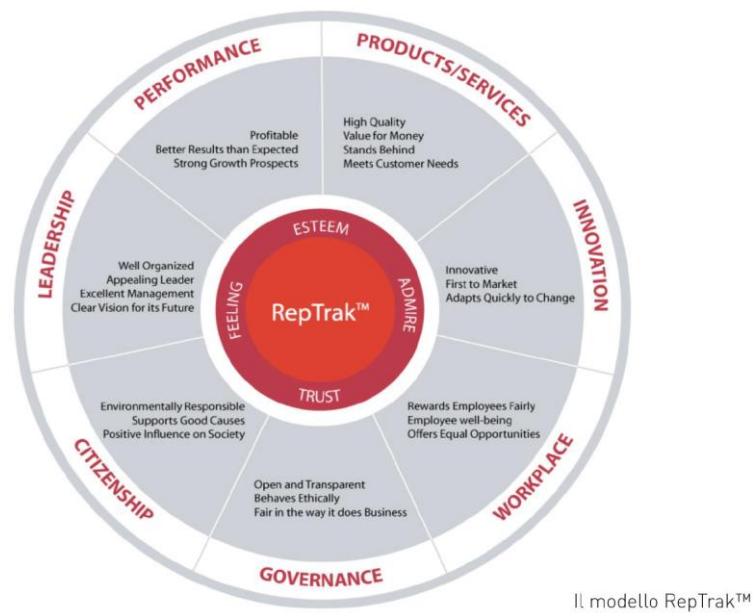
Fig 3.2 - The Reptrak model

Il modello RepTrak™

Fig 3.3 - The reptrak model applied to Spanish CEO's

This model, built for the evaluation of people, and not for that of companies, could potentially be applicable to the evaluation of politicians. It is only necessary to change the clusters and the

performance indicators into politically relevant terms as shown in the following table. The author of this thesis attempted to build   this political model theoretically in her bachelor thesis, proposing the following:

Fig. 3.4

Dimensions	CEO's Performance indicators	Political Performance Indicators
Leadership	- Has strategic vision - Ability to see change and opportunity - Strong Leader image - Team building skills - Efficient manager	- Has strategic vision - Ability to see change and opportunity - Strong leader image - Team building skills - Efficient politician
Responsability	- Good team motivator - Ethically correct - Takes care of his/her consumers - Supports social issues	- Good team motivator - Ethically correct - Takes care of his/her voters - Defends social issues
Management (CEO's) and political skills (Pol)	- Is known on an international scale - Expert in his field - Is a good manager - Creates economic value	- Is known on an international scale - Is a professional politician - Is a good politician - Creates social-political value
Influence	- Is a good communicator - Understands the market - Influences opinions	- Is a good communicator - Understands contexts - Influences opinions

This kind of analysis has the potential to add an e*motional score* through the *Pulse* measurement of a candidate and a rational score

through the evaluation of the dimensions that would show the stability of the reputational evaluation of the political subject who is being examined. The smaller the difference between the rational and the emotional score the safer it is to suppose that the politician has a medium-long period fixed vote base on which he can count. In chapter 4 we will see a different choice of indicators built by the RI referring to a political context.

3.3 Measuring the political outcome and output today: surveys and traditional media

Traditionally politics have always analyzed *outcomes*. In the last decades they have increasingly started to calculate the *outputs* through the analysis of the statistically calculated *time presence* on the screen built by the Osservatorio di Pavia in Italy.

As we have already seen in previous chapters the analysis of surveys in Italy was introduced by Silvio Berlusconi in the 1990's , while in the USA it was introduced in the 1930's when Horace Gallup founded the *American Institute of Public Opinion.* In the US, surveys were already proven to be an important tool in politics in 1936, when they predicted Franklin Roosevelt's victory on Alfred M. Landon, who otherwise was considered to be the most probable future president. Surveys and generally every kind of research on public opinion and citizen behavior have always been extremely important in free market based countries: most choices and decisions related to consumption are taken on the basis of more or less sophisticated analysis' on how different targets of the general public make their choices.

 In Italy, for instance, social researches were used almost only for business and firm production issues. Politics covered only 4% of the workload of social research institutes; only later on surveys became a necessary tool to politics too. The same happened in many other

countries, to the point that, nowadays, it is very improbable to find elections that are not foreran by public opinion research, studies and analysis. Research never stops, it is fundamental to have updated data for feedback of past strategies and to work on gathering consensus for future electoral campaign strategies to adopt, especially in the permanent campaign era we are in, this has become even more crucial.

Even the media commission increasingly more often social research in order to study the public's behavior and tailor information on the basis of the target they want to reach.

Surveys have come to be an important part of our lives, from a scientific point of view, to mass communication studies, to private discussions within our families, with friends and colleagues. Research has become part of politics to the point that, on the basis of the data it shows, alliances, decisions and strategies can be pulled together or changed. Many academic texts have demonstrated that the reason why research has become so determining in our lives is the progressive erosion of a way of perceiving politics as a party or an ideology and an increasing tendency to decide each time on the issue at stake. Many research papers examine this social evolution; in general what is most important to underline is that the "scientific quality" of a survey depends largely on four elements: the *statistic sample* (that indicates how generalizable the data is); the *formulation of the questionnaire;* the *interviews;* the *techniques used for the analysis (*Mannheimer, 2007). The survey is realized gathering the information through a series of questions (questionnaire) asked to a defined group of people (statistic sample), chosen in order to represent a certain part of the population (universe).

If the statistic sample is calculated correctly, the answers correspond to what the whole interested population would have answered if asked. It is evident that the sample must be perfectly representative in order to be useful. To have an even more representative sample it must also

be as numerous as possible, in order to have the most precise results. Also the formulation of the questionnaires is fundamental: the questions must be asked in a way that allows who answers them to be as clear as possible. The interviews are probably the most delicate step of the research process. The attitude of the interviewer can influence the opinion expressed by who is answering the questions, and obviously this has to be avoided as much as possible. This is the reason why the interviewer should never "help" answering the questions or explain what they mean and must at all costs keep the most neutral attitude possible. The increasingly common online interviews represent a form of warranty from this point of view. It is also very important to see if the question asked is open or close answered.

The first part of the analysis consists in selecting the data gathered, this means that it verifies there are no mistakes in the gathering procedure and in the elaborating of the data. After this, usually, all the data is sorted out in a *frequency distribution* table of the different ways questions were answered by who was interviewed; basically it gives the percentage of people that answered in each way. Even if asking one question at a time gives immediate feedback, it could, on one hand, potentially influence the answers of the statistic sample and on the other with only one question it is hard to analyze a whole social phenomena. For these reasons it is common to use synthetic indicators, based on several questions. Once the   individual's' behaviours statistically descriptive part is done of the, the actual causal analysis can start. This has as final goal the one of finding out *why* certain individuals assume certain behaviours. This way experts try to find out why this or that leader has more or less success, why a communication strategy works or not or why a government decision gathers or not consensus. For this kind of evaluation the statistic analysis tools employed are relatively more sophisticated, from contingency tables with multiple variables, to multiple regressions, to *cluster analysis* and many others. Also the temporal comparison

technique, that consists in comparing the answers corresponding statistic samples (or in the case of research on panels of the exact same people) gave to the same question or set of questions, in two different moments in time.

The goal of research on public opinion is to know and understand the environment and, when possible, to explain causes and dynamics of the decisions taken. On the basis of these interpretation models it is possible to estimate what individual's' future behaviours will be. For example their consumption behaviours or their political and electoral preferences. The evolution of technology allows to reach to information that was once unimaginable and it has revolutionized the whole concept of public opinion survey under every point of view, even the technical ones: from building the indicators, to the data detection techniques to the data treatment. Thanks to these processes' it is now possible to have a clear and much more precise idea of citizens' "profiles", this means a complete knowledge of their behaviours and of the processes through which they get to their conclusions.

The first studies on *political communication outputs* were done in Italy, twenty years ago at the "Osservatorio di Pavia" (a communication research and analysis institute). The institute was founded in 1994, together with the debut in politics of Silvio Berlusconi, that as we saw radically changed the whole italian political asset. What the osservatorio wanted to do was find a way to measure the effects a certain event had on the media system and what the consequences of the event would be. The University of Pavia put together in one coordinated team the research departments of economy, politics, social studies and statistics in order to look at the issue under multiple aspects, that until then had always been treated separately, giving a unique, omni-comprehensive vision. The goal was to take a correct, complete and scientific picture of the broadcasting media system, especially for what concerned it's relation with politics (Mosti,2014).

They built a sophisticated methodology able not only to measure the direct presence of the politicians on screens, but also the time to them dedicated, as individuals, as their parties, or as a large and variegated group of subjects, defined *Alter.* This group is primarily made of journalists, announcer of newscasts, conductors of information programs, but also talk-show conductors, men and women of the world of show business, of sports, etc.; all people that participate as testimonials in mediatized electoral campaigns.

To complete the model some parameters have also been detected in order to define the quality of the political presence in the best way, integrating the mere quantitative measurement (the playing time) with some qualitative elements mainly related to the context of intervention. Since 1995, the asset has gone towards a more structured system, that is continuously evolving: a permanent monitoring and analysis activity that has been like this almost continuously until today.

The permanent monitoring of political pluralism has undergone an extension in the local area. Since 2007, after a large initial phase of experimentation and measurement tied to individual local experiences, monitoring of regional newspapers for public service broadcasting is carried out continuously, as was already done on a national level. From the Osservatorio di Pavia, through a direct access to the Rai caskets, all editions of the TGR (regional news) of the twenty regional offices are subject to the same controls on political pluralism made on national programming schedule. The extension of the relevant field (the subjects of detected pluralism are numerous: mayors, city councilors, provincial, regional, councilors, civic lists, institutional offices, etc. multiplied by each of the twenty Italian regions) makes it extremely complex to manage and process of the enormous quantity of data obtained. It is data that also require constant updating linked, not only to constant upcoming of new rounds of elections, but also of the extreme volatility of groupings and political parties (and equally frequent and sudden individual role changes and reshuffles of the "giunte") that is, in the local area, an amplification of a national general

trend. The recent Osservatorio di Pavia studies have placed the focus on social media, especially Twitter. Between 2012 and 2013 various researches were done on issues of political and institutional relevance. During 2012 tweets of Bersani and Renzi were analyzed during the primaries of the Democratic Party. In 2013 the tweets on the campaign for the regional elections in Lombardia and the tweets on the Bologna consultative referendum on the use of municipal resources for kindergartens.

All the researches have also drawn attention to parts of communication with reference to topics, assessments and sources proper of the lexical dimension. (Mosti, 2014).

3.4 Experimental models to measure the output of the press and of traditional media

What has been said in the previous chapters reinforces the position for which it is necessary to push the output, and to work on with an integrated approach to affect the "outgrowth".

As for a company, in a political context, that is increasingly compounded of a multitude of messages, the quality of communication and its effectiveness can only be judged over the long term. It is, therefore, necessary to have tools that are able to assess the output and the quantitative and qualitative indicators cannot only be the ones mentioned previously. This chapter will try to suggest which are the most effective approaches to assess the outputs on the written press, on the radio and on television, on the internet and social media, relating the latest methods of analysis of the disciplines of corporate communication to those of political communication.

 The first step is in the context of a much neglected field in terms of qualitative and quantitative research: newspaper articles and magazines. The purely quantitative element of the number of outputs can be ignored as it is not relevant to the study.

The issue will here be approached to with the AVE method (Advertising Value Equivalency).

We will not enter here in considering the differences in doctrine between the supporters of this method and their relative opponents, many texts already exist on this in the world of business and even more have been written in the world of politics where the term advertising sounds sacrilegious. The same stands for the purists of journalism who are skeptic about the combination between information and advertising, even if only from the point of view of the evaluation method. With them there is no need, as said, to open the debate because the approaches of analysis are structurally different from a theoretical and ideological point of view. The only thing to underline is that anyone who opposes these methods does not offer them valid alternatives of analysis. A not perfect method, that must be improved it is better than no method at all (Romoli Venturi et al., 2014) .

Using the AVE a tangible evaluation of the coverage obtained on the media with political communication activities, can be hypothesized, in order to compare the results of this activity with the ones of advertising. The evaluation is calculated by measuring the editorial space dedicated to the politician and his message on the basis of the centimeters the article occupies and the subsequent proliferation of these figures times the costs of the magazine advertising space on which the quotation appeared. The numerical value resulting from the EAV calculation would be the cost that the politician would have to face to buy advertising space of the same size on the considered newspaper or magazine. By measuring all visibility areas covered in the media in this way and aggregating the results, it becomes possible to assign a total value to the media coverage of the action of political communication in a certain period.

The first step of all to proceed to the EAV calculation is the analysis phase of the typical elements of the article considered: the date of publication, the name and type of the newspaper or magazine on which it was published, and finally the title. This way you can separate all the different costs of a hypothetical advertising page inside the newspaper/magazine considered and calculate the EAV according to the space occupied from the article simply by measuring it.

The calculation of the EAV, though, reserves some practical problems.

The first one is related to advertising rates used, which, for the press, hardly correspond to the prices charged on the market by advertising agencies.

The second, even more important problem from a technical standpoint, is that it does not weight the difference between the political visibility of the party and the actual message contained within the article. The calculation takes into account only the size of the article as a whole and gives no relevance to the content of the object of interest.

IN any case the EAV is very useful for measuring the relevance of media coverage, because it considers the advertising price lists of a newspaper and this reflects both its popularity and its reputation. This use of the calculation allows to consider the two factors, considering both the size of the audience reached and the credibility of the source from which the news is spread.

The limits put in evidence do not allow us, however, to use this model as a complete comparison meter between different themes or political activities of a certain subject in a certain period in time.

The *Glebb Romoli Venturi method* applied to political communication provides qualitative indicators that make the reading and

comparability easier. The recommended use of the values (not the absolute values) is through the use of a comparative benchmark. It compares them to themselves in previous periods, and to their eventual competitors over the same period. Comparative studies carried out by LUISS University showed that this method is the best application of the AVE. (Sorice, 2012).

The Glebb Romoli Venturi method, starts from the calculation of the EAV, and changes the item value obtained on the basis of simple 1 to 1 equivalences with the equivalent advertising page, depending on the qualitative and quantitative characteristics that the article published has.

Here are the steps that lead to the calculation of what the model is defined as the **Rectified Equivalent Advertising Value (REAV)** in the model.

 After calculating the EAV based on the advertisement price list of the newspaper, attributed according to the type of article published, considering a different coefficient in relation to the space dedicated to the party or to the politician within the article considered, in order to obtain what will be referred to as the corrected EAV, the application of the coefficient is carried out as follows:

- If the article is completely dedicated to the party or to the politician object of the survey the coefficient will be 1, and then the list of advertising value will remain unchanged;

- If the article is not totally dedicated to the party or politician considered, but only presents a brief description, information, comments or additional iconography related to them, it is considered a collective product, the coefficient of which is 0.2, and therefore in this case the corrected EAV obtained corresponds to 20% of the price on the advertisement price list;

- Finally, if the party or politician are simply mentioned in the article, the quote will only have a coefficient of 0.05. The corrected EAV then corresponds to 5% of the price on the advertisement price list

The 5% and 20% of the value list are not scientifically derived, but empirically calculated through the observation of what would be reasonable to pay for the type of presence considered . The real course evaluation depends on the importance of the argument faced in the article, but the application of this type of proportion was a fair approximation for the average defect that could result in a similar situation. Once you have the proper EAV you can proceed with the calculation that leads to the REAV through multipliers related to the qualitative characteristics of the article. The values of the individual multipliers, which will be described later on, will be added together to reach a base 1. This sum multiplied to the corrected EAV value obtained previously determine the REAV. The multipliers are determined to be always an empirical evaluation of the presence of the party or politician in an article and they answer of their efficiency, on the basis of the qualitative criteria of comparison between the different characteristics of the article:

- **First page**: if article on the front page of a newspaper is entirely devoted to the party or to the politician considered , the article considered will be given an overall multiplier of 3, starting from the base of 1 and adding to it 2 to obtain an increase of the final value equal to 200% of the starting value.

- **Recall on the front page**: if on the first page of a newspaper there is a reference to an article related to the party or to the politician, the value of the item will be given a total multiplier of 2 to obtain an increase of the final value of 100%.

- **Title:** if the party or politician is then quoted within the title group its visibility is definitely increased, and therefore is assigned a total multiplier of 1.5, a 50% increase of the corrected EAV value .

- **Images**: also the presence of one or more images is certainly relevant to the eyes of the reader and for this reason the relative increase in the presence of pictures varies from 80 to 120%. The mere presence of a photo of the symbol of the party or of the politician in the article is given a weighting of 0.8 which added to the base 1 will generate a multiplier of 1.8. If the size of the photo is equal to or greater than 1/4 of the page, will add a further 0.2 is added, in this case the total multiplier is 2. Finally, if the party symbol is entirely readable within the picture, this will result in a further increase of value equal to an additional coefficient of 0.2, in this case the total multiplier is equal to 2. These two features can of course coexist and therefore lead to a maximum value of the multiplier of 2.2 when the photo is the same size of the article (> or = 1/4 page) and in it there is a full-readable symbol.

At the end of the qualitative evaluation the value of the article what is obtained by the sum of the individual multipliers and multiplied by the corrected EAV, will result in the REAV of the article taken in consideration.

$$\text{Corrected EAV} \times \Sigma \text{ quality multiplier} = \text{REAV}$$

The Glebb Romoli Venturi method does not only give an economic value, but it tries to establish the magnitude of the target hit.
To the calculation of the REAV, you add the "readership" (that is the number of potential readers of the magazine, certified in Italy by Audipress, on which the article being examined was published). Once obtained the values of REAV and of the readership relative to the newspaper output, it is possible to proceed to the determination of a further qualitative measurement tool: *the Press Quality Impact Index*

(PQII). The goal is to identify an indicator that weights the price of the appropriately mediated newspaper/magazine on the basis of if it is targeted to luxury, popular, local or national newspapers or magazines that have a potentially different readership size.

The PQII corresponds to the REAV of an article multiplied by the value of readership and then divided by 1,000,000 and calculated in GRV units (named after the initials of the Glebb Romoli Venturi method). The division by 1,000,000 is motivated by a careful reading of the index, which otherwise would give excessively high values.

$$(\text{REAV} \times \text{READERSHIP}) / 1{,}000{,}000 = \text{PQII in GRV units}$$

The GRV is the measure value that allows to measure the qualitative impact of press releases about a party or a politician. It is not an economic value, it is only an index value. Its function is to provide a qualitative assessment of the REAV in relation to the diffusion of the newspaper on which the article covered by the assessment was published. The index should never be read as an absolute value in itself, but only in its temporal evolution compared uniformly on the same or on the same political party with other political parties or competitors. The innovation of PQII, and GRV as its unit of measure, is the comparative ease of reading in terms of visibility between competing political parties or of the same political party in terms of evolution over the years. Through the application of this method it is therefore possible to make a consistent and objective evaluation of the size of the articles published in print on the basis of their visibility (Romoli Venturi et al., 2014).

The GRV is a measure that can not be easy when read in terms of a political Σ or a party Σ. The index used according to eventual requirements :

KGRV = thousands of GRV
MGRV = million GRV
GGRV = billion GRV

Once the calculation of the values and of the indexes of each article is done, it is necessary to aggregate the data to get an overview of the communication activities carried out in a given period of time. For the analysis of the visibility they have achieved it is necessary to consider the party or politician, compared to previous years. The starting point is the most obvious: the number of articles published in reference to the object. It means little by itself, but if read in conjunction with the other calculated values, it gains relevance.

The best way to give an explanation of how to set the aggregated data analysis is the numerical exemplification of the various phases of the study. Lets consider a hypothetical politician who measures his political communication activities over three years and wants to see which of his activities or his contents has had more exposure comparing one year to the previous one.

Table 3.5 shows the simple numerical output on newspapers of assets and content.

Fig. 3.5

Number of articles	Y-2	Y-1	%	Y	%
Political news	10	20	100	30	50
Social column news	5	7	40	9	29
Subject 1	20	25	25	30	20
Subject 2	15	12	-20	9	-25
Other comments	30	35	17	30	-14
Total	**80**	**99**	**24**	**108**	**9**

Fig. 3.6

REAV (€/000)	Y-2	Y-1	%	Y	%
Political news	100	130	30	220	69
Social column news	50	60	20	70	17
Subject 1	250	270	8	280	4
Subject 2	300	350	17	340	-3
Other comments	400	430	8	430	0
Total	**1100**	**124**	**13**	**1340**	**8**

Fig. 3.7

Readership (n/000)	Y-2	Y-1	%	Y	%
Political news	4000	4500	13	9000	100
Social column news	1500	1700	13	1750	3
Subject 1	6000	8000	33	8200	3
Subject 2	6000	8500	42	8200	-4
Other comments	6500	7000	8	7200	3
Total	**24000**	**29700**	**24**	**34350**	**16**

Fig 3.8

PQII (KGRV)	Y-2	Y-1	%	Y	%
Political news	400	585	46	1980	238
Social column news	75	102	36	122,5	20
Subject 1	1500	2160	44	2296	6
Subject 2	1800	2975	65	2788	-6
Other comments	2600	3010	16	3096	3
Total	**26400**	**36828**	**40**	**46029**	**25**

Fig. 3.6 enhances the type of outputs and offers a first index of the qualitative-quantitative visibility. We could for example say that our policy has tripled in three years its numerical outputs on newspapers about a politician's "political activities", but it has not tripled its value. It means that the quality of the outputs has not increased, instead it decreased in terms of visibility.

In "Subject 2" the outputs have decreased from Y-2 to Y, going from 15 to 9, but the relevance in terms of visibility has grown from a REAV of 300 to one of 340. This means that positive coverage improved the visibility, also with a growing audience that has gone from 6 million to 8.2 million potential readers (Fig.3.7). This analysis is confirmed by the PQII which went from 1800 to 2788 KGRV. Detailed examination of the segmentation, the intersection of numerical value and the target hit, in both absolute and relative terms, will lead to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of political communication. Important in the political field, as well as making an analysis of the visibility determined by the presence on newspapers and magazines, is also to be able to evaluate what kind of presence will be determined on the media of their party's reference area and on the media of areas of the opposition, both positively and negatively from a qualitative point of view.

In high praise political hostile press in certain contexts can have a boomerang effect: a targeted negative campaign. All the values that we have seen must, therefore, be seen and evaluated dynamically with the outcome analysis.The best example are surveys, they can lead the politician to set his political communication actions on the short period , monitoring the impact on the medium period, that means: positive growth outcomes, compared with relevant and targeted qualitative and quantitative outputs that guarantee a solid long term outgrowth, both in its emotional component and in its rational one.

3.5 Experimental models to measure the output of TV visibility

The most commonly used techniques today in Italy for the analysis of radio and television appearances are mainly the ones treated above built by the Osservatorio di Pavia. Nevertheless for television and radio we can use analysis methods similar to those we have studied for the print, based on the re-elaboration of audio / video data of clips recorded during the reporting period and their enhancement with the EAV and thus with the REAV. The process starts with the analysis of individual clips and detects keywords. The keyword considered s are significant words that match quotes, interviews and / or shots of a particular political party or candidate.

The second step is to calculate the *relative time presence*, the counting of the seconds of the actual presence of the keyword in the clip and also the subject related to it in the case of a service entirely dedicated to the same subject. Once collected this data,the analysis proceeds with the detection of auditel data and the share according to set-up time slots of clip broadcast, and later it is qualified in advertising costs for television or radio broadcast. The auditel data is the detection system in Italy for what the television broadcasts, the homonymous company that collects the data takes care of the study, basically it is the television equivalent of the audipress that is used above for the detection of press readership.

Monitoring of audience is automatic through an electronic detector connected to television sets present in statistically significant sample households that every day, minute by minute, detects TV viewing both who the guests are and who may be present.

The households of the sample are extracted anonymously and randomly in order to obtain a sample that is statistically significant:as representative as possible of the collectivity. The share, or the television audience rating, is used to assess how many people are following a given program. Technically this is the percentage ratio of viewers of a particular television channel and the total number of viewers who watch TV at that time; It is nothing but the average

percentage share of a program, calculated on the basis of the number of viewers present in front of the television (and distributed between the various channels) in the time lap in which the program in question was broadcasted. As for the advertising price lists, each issuer has a dealership to which who wants to buy advertisement spaces must refer. This means the price of the spaces is decided directly by the issuers. The EAV is obtained crossing the advertising costs with the relative times, according to the table (Fig 3.9):

Fig.3.9

Keywords	Issuer	broadcast	Connection time	Clip duration	Relative time presence*	Advertisement cost of 30 seconds
xxx	yyy	zzz	13:06	00.04.26	00.01.19	12.200€

(*As the price of the advertisement considered is for 30 seconds, it is necessary to convert the relative time presence, in the example above 00.01.19 that becomes 79 seconds)

The formula through which the evaluation proceeds is:

$$Initial\ Eav = \frac{Relative\ time\ presence\ in\ seconds}{30\ seconds}$$

$$\times Advertisement\ cost\ for\ 30\ second = \frac{79}{30} \times 12.200€ = 32.126€$$

The number thus obtained is the EAV. Telpress, an Italian company operating in the field of journalism that offers technologies and services for the collection and distribution of multimedia news products from traditional media and news, has decided to refine the analysis model.

It has been conceived on the basis of the GRV method for the analysis of the traditional press (and is being used at an experimental stage on some customers) a more profiled and qualitatively more reliable

AVE model for television, that, from now on, will be referred to as to the Telpress method (TP) (Romoli Venturi et al., 2014). The EAV, as we have already seen, is a value that does not take into account many qualitative aspects of the survey, but it does not consider some important aspects like, for instance, the actual relevance of the clip analyzed, the issuer or the quality of the image broadcasted. For this reason, with the same procedure of the GRV method, the EAV is first corrected by a Focus de-multiplier coefficient and then the result obtained is adjusted with a series of qualitative coefficients which, added to the base 1, become multipliers that allow to calculate the REAV (cfr. Chapter 3.3). The coefficient of focus is the de-multiplier that weighs the content of the clip in relation to the relevance of the clip object of analysis. Compared to the GRV method, the TP method adds a more specific focus on the video medium. The clip always contains mention of the keywords of interest, but it is in the framing of the clip that gives value to the presence of the image of interest. These coefficients applied to the EAV lead to the corrected EAV.

From the corrected EAV that has been previously obtained through five types of quali-quantitative coefficients applied to a base 1 it is possible to calculate the multiplier that leads to the determination of the REAV. The TP method of proceeding is absolutely similar to the GRV method procedure.

 Below the five quali-quantitative coefficients in detail:

1) The **source coefficient** is the multiplier that highlights the source, the broadcaster or radio, from which the clip is extracted. The classification of TV broadcasters is based on the average audience data, assigning a greater weighting to those national, public or private, with the higher auditel index.

2) The **type coefficient** relates the clip taken in analysis to the type of broadcast, radio or television, it was extracted from, distinguishing whether it is an exclusive interview (interview to the political party representatives or candidate that lasts for the entire clip), TV news or

radio news report, a talk shows (television program based on interviews and dialogues between a host and one or more respondents, or guests of the program), an Address Book (part of a radio program or a television program dedicated to a specific topic) or a reportage (careful and structural analysis on current issues).

3) The **image coefficient** is the index that assesses the presence and impact of an image relative to a character or to a party symbol regardless of the presence of mentions or interviews.

4) The **coefficient of visibility** of an image measures the ability to perceive and distinguish the image.

5) The **share coefficient** is the share index that weights the clips impact according to the share obtained by the transmission that broadcasts it . The share is the percentage ratio between the listeners of a certain issuer and the total number of listeners who are looking at other programs on different networks.

Once the appropriate coefficients are identified in relation to the clip the calculation of the REAV proceeds with the following formula:

REAV= corrected EAV x 1 + ∑ 5 quali-quantitative coefficients

3.6 Measuring the political output of the web and of social media

We conclude the chapter on the measurement of the ROI approaching the analysis of activities in the field of New Media and Social Network that for their nature, are more complex. They change and increase, the evaluation parameters taken into account. It is widely believed that the application of digital measurement logic designed for traditional media (readers, viewers, copies sold, acquired spaces, etc) is a partial approach and limited to measuring the impact of "digital" activities. The visibility that we get on new media and especially on social media,

should be measured by parameters that are able to detect not only the impact in terms of space, frequency and audience reached by the messages, but also - and above all - by the impact of the word of mouth and by the level of engagement that communication actions have been able to determine.

Vincenzo Cosenza, in his Social Media ROI (Cosenza, 2012), for example, refers to the types of measurement proposed by John Lovett. Those that can be adapted to the political communication are the basic metrics (counting metrics), specific for each digital platform (Fig 3.10), such as visitors to a site, the number of fans of a Facebook page, followers of a Twitter account, etc.

Fig. 3.10. -counting metrics (Romoli Venturi, F. ,2014)

Digital Platform	Metrics
Blog	- **Number of logins** (total number of connections to the blog in a period of time) - **individual users** (number of individuals that connected to the blog in a period of time) - **Pages seen** (number of pages of a blog users visited in a period of time) - **Time spent on the blog by the users** - **Number of quotes from other blogs** (indicator of authoritativeness of the blog/ interest of other bloggers) - **Comments** (indicator of the interactions/ interest of the users) - **Shares on social media**

	(posts shared from users on other social media platforms)
Twitter	- **Followers** (users that follow an account) - **tags** (number of messages to quote a user/ ask a question to the user/ answer a question) - **Presence on lists** (lists are a function of twitter that allow an organic organization of the followed accounts. If the list is public -visible to all users- it can be considered an interest indicator) - **Favorite tweets of other users** (Twitter gives the opportunity to put other users among their favorites by putting a star next to their username)
Facebook	- **Liker or Fan** (those who liked a page) - **People talking about…**(a kind of metric that considers multiple factors: the likes a page has, the posts of the users on their walls, like, comments and shared posts, answers to posted questions, answers to invitations, tags of the page) - **Engaged user** (number of people that clicked on a post) - **Reach** (number of individuals that viewed a post)

	- **Impression** (total number of views a page reaches) - **Virality** (the difference, expressed in percentage, between the number of people the number of people that created a story around a post and the number of people that actually saw the post)
Google+	- **Followers** (users that follow an account) - **Number of times a post is shared** - **+1** (number of users that click on the +1 of the page to express their appreciation)
YouTube	- **Signed in users** - **Channel views** - **Video views** - **Likes** (indicator f appreciation of the material posted on YouTube) - **Comments** (indicator of the interaction between users)
Tumblr	- **Followers** (users that follow an account) - **Likes** - **Number of times a post in shared**
Foursquare	- **Followers** (users that follow an account) - **Check-in** (it allows the user to communicate to other users where he or

	she is geographically speaking)
	- **Suggestions followed** (the suggestions the users follow)
	- **Number of times a post is shared**

The outcome metrics seek to measure the results obtained with reference to specific targets. Lovett identifies 6 "measurable" objectives. For our political communication purposes they are only four:

1. **To increase visibility**: It is one of the most important targets for a Digital PR activity.

For example, the reach of a post on a blog will be the sum of individual visitors of the blog over the number of times that the post has been shared on social networks. The share of the "digital" voice of a politician over another will instead be measured on the basis of quotations obtained on the Web measured in a given period of time.

2. **To promote dialogue**: That would mean to assess the ability to generate engagement towards the different audiences that can be measured.

For example, the involvement rate generated by a specific initiative, using KPI as the ratio between the number of shares/posts / comments and total views**.**

3. To generate interactions: The goal, here, is to turn users into the ambassadors of the political message. We can measure active users (out of the total users) and their ability to influence other users (measured by the amount of product content or the ability to recruit new members of a community).

4. **To Promote Advocacy**: Speaking of metrics to measure the presence and influence online, a brief study deserve Alexa Rank and Klout. Alexa Rank is an indicator that measures the activity (and thus the popularity) of a site or a blog (De Palma et al., 2014). It is based on a broad community of users who send information concerning their navigation and therefore allows a projection of the number of accesses to a WEB site. According to the Alexa ranking, the more a site is visited, the lower the Alexa rank value is. It is certainly not the only tool available on the Web to calculate activity rankings, but it is probably the most used.

Compared to all the digital world metrics available today, it has several limitations, but it remains a quick and easy way to get an general idea of the popularity and global reach of a site or a blog. On the other hand Klout is probably the most known and used among the various tools a communications professional has access to, to evaluate the online influence of a user (considering the set of digital and social profiles of the individual user).

Klout is a social networking service that offers customized analyzes statistics on social media. In particular, estimating the influence of users through the Klout score (scaled from 0 to 100) obtained by the level of interaction in user profiles of popular social networking sites, including Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn and Foursquare.

This influence is obtained from the broadness of the user's network, the generated content, and the level of feedback received. Once registered to the site, Klout analyzes all of the Social Network Service that who is doing the analysis results to be registered on; it measures the number of interactions that are generated and the type they correspond to and, finally, it assigns a Klout Index score that can go from 1 to 100 that represents its degree of online influence, which corresponds to the result of the intersection data that measures three main variables:

- **True Reach**: The number of "followers" of a user on social networks. It allows you to assess the actual size of the public that interacts with the user data, net of spam and unused accounts.

- **Amplification**: measures the possibility, or rather the probability, that a shared content will be re-shared by other users.

- **Network**: measures the ability to influence the user's contact network.

The Klout score has become a standard measurement because of its widespread use. The brands and companies can use the Klout index as a metric to evaluate and select the most interesting social media influencers, and as a platform for dialogue and relationship. For example, *Klout Perks* ("benefits") are products, services or exclusive experiences that companies offer to selected users based on their Klout score. These Klout Perks allow a brand to find influencers who in line with what they are looking for. Klout is still a relatively new service in constant evolution, which for the moment is a simple and immediate way to get an overview about the popularity and influence of a given user. On the other hand the system is not perfect, probably one of its most significant flaws is that it has a purely quantitative approach: infact it measures the amount of interactions of a company account, but does not provide information on the quality of these interactions. Quantity is not always the guiding criterion for evaluating a user's influence. An example of this is that a few years ago, according to the Klout score, the teenage idol Justin Bieber was considered to be more influential than the US President Barack Obama!

In Italy in April 2012 Roberto Saviano led the ranking of influencers with 73 tied with Arianna Ciccone (director of the International Journalism Festival), ranking before Pippo Civati (71) and Beppe Grillo (69) (blitzquotidiano, 2012). In August 2012 some changes were made to the algorithm to make it more accurate. Reuters broke the news in this way: "Obama finally beats Bieber as Klout score admits real world"!. The Klout score of President Obama reached 99.

When we speak of reputation and influence, numerical data is definitely not enough. Klout is definitely a valid and useful tool to orienteer in a new and complex digital world , but it should always be integrated with a broader analysis that takes account of qualitative factors, such as the quality of the products it contains and the debate that they cause in the network, the ability to interact with users who are not part of the sector, the number and value of news information, in "offline" life, etc. On the other hand, in its daily work the professional needs to have concrete parameters on the basis of what communication strategies should be structured. The most correct approach is therefore to integrate numerical metrics, as the ones of Klout and Alexa, with some more qualitative element, in order to increase reliability.

3.7 Integrated political communication is the way

The personalization of the political environment, and all the consequences that this has gradually brought in our lives (from the progressive de-idealization to socio-political individualism) have changed the political communication strategies to the point that now a candidate must basically sell himself to the electorate, he must make himself desirable to the crowd through political marketing strategies, as we have widely seen in previous chapter. It is evident that in this optic, not only the strategy has to be accurately studied by spindoctors but also the analysis of feedback and of ROI gain a central role in the success of a political communication campaign.

 This hyper-structuration of political communication campaigns towards which we are going takes the name of *integrated political communication,* where the word integrated refers to the fact that all medias (social, web and traditional ones) must not only be used simultaneously but also that all of them must be complementary one with the other. A political communication campaign today can be

successful only if the candidate is present and active on all mass media communication items, on all social networks and is mentioned to regularly in print news. On every media the candidate must adapt to his interlocutor and to the kind of tool he is using to broadcast his message (newspaper, blog, twitter or facebook profile or fanpage). A correct and efficient structuration of a communication campaign also allows a good evaluation of the campaign, consenting a constant and long term oriented improvement of its strategy.

A political communication campaign models a candidate's reputation. Reputation has become increasingly important for companies and even more for politicians who will to expand their consensus amongst the public or for candidate that wants to gain votes. It is not by chance that the models above have either been built directly by or have been shaped on the models of the Reputation Institute. As already said, the RI was also the first to build a model able to measure the reputation of the candidates of the 2016 presidential elections, very important and innovative this model will be analyzed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Measurement of the 2016 American Presidential Elections candidates' reputations through The RepTrak® Pulse tracker

4.1 The importance of reputation and the necessity to measure it

Studies carried out in recent years in the field of public relations and corporate communication seem to agree that their purposes are less and less definable in terms of *image building* of an *organization* but rather are the improvement of relations with its stakeholders and how to strengthen its reputation. This because image building only represents the outside appearance of an organization over which it can affect rapidly through propaganda operations or spin doctoring.

In the sixties and seventies Finn (1961) and Bernays (1977) ahead of their time highlighted the limits of the concept of image and its contents. Finn, on one hand, claimed that " *the image is the result of a deliberate construction and often lacks any realistic relationship with the profound identity of the company.* " Bernays on the other hand stressed that "*The term image evokes the fact that public relations have to do with illusions rather than reality.* "

In the nineties scholars and professionals started following them inviting to abandon the concept, and thus the term, image: at least when we it refers to corporate communication and public relations. In particular Grunig in 1993 stated that *"image has many negative connotative meanings: the average person sees image as the opposite of reality, as an imitation of something"*. Also Olins (1994) attributed to the concept of image a negative value by pairing it with something false and opposed to reality and emphasizing the manipulative dimension   of   it. The reduction of the importance of the image was offset by the affirmation of the importance of relations with stakeholders, which has

been highlighted in recent years by other scholars of organizational theory, economics and business, management and marketing (Invernizzi, Romenti, 2014). Essentially therefore the studies belonging to the sectors considered to reveal that the successful enterprise is one that maximizes the strength and social skills in its production and management activities.

The reduction of the importance of the image and the growing importance of relations with stakeholders was accompanied by reputation as the main purpose of public relations and of corporate communication. Reputation is the set of perceptions and opinions that the main stakeholders of an organization formed on the basis of its features and its behavior over time
a) entering into direct contact with it;
b) through the communication activities (direct and explicit) implemented by the organization;
c) through the network of relationships in which they are inserted.

Consequently an organization is considered to have a good reputation when its behavior meets the expectations of stakeholders and if over time there is deep coherence between :these behaviors, what is communicated directly and in an explicit way and the key messages that are received and disseminated within networks of relationships with   the   key   stakeholders. Two are therefore the characteristics that distinguish the reputation from the image:
1. the first is that the reputation is formed only over time and it can not modify rapidly, for example through targeted public relations or through an advertising campaign .
2. the second, that is crucial, is that the reputation is based on behaviors and actions of the organization (Fombrun and Rindova , 1996; Balmer and Gray , 1999) and therefore on its real history.

Therefore reputation can defined as the result of communication and public relations activities developed over time on contents and messages that correspond to positions taken and actions done by a company in the same period.

Assuming the widely described thesis adopted by this work for which the structure of politics is progressively converging towards a business model, and consequently political communication is absorbing the knowledge and conforming to the rules of corporate communication it is no surprise that reputation has quickly become something crucial in political spin doctoring too. Probably reputation has an even greater echo when speaking of politics, as the reputation to build and maintain is not that of a company or product but that of a person, with his or her personality and ideas. Considering this it is not possible to not understand how important it is today to keep track of how and how much (qualitatively and quantitatively) the reputation of a politician/candidate influences his popularity, his consensus, his probability to be elected. The Reputation Institute has built the *Reputation Institute's Presidential Election RepTrak® Pulse tracker* that measures the Reputation of the 2016 presidential candidate in the same way it measure corporate reputations, only changing the dimensions measured. This chapter will be dedicated to this Reputation Institute's innovative study.

4.2 The Study

The Reputation Institute, that, as seen above, had already studied the reputations of not only companies, but of individuals in its 2010 study on the reputations of Ceo's in Spain, also analyzed, using the Presidential election RepTrak® Pulse tracker, the reputations of the 2016 Presidential election candidates.

The Reputation Institute, in measuring the reputations of the 2016 presidential elections candidate, modified the original RepTrak® Pulse tracker's indicators and dimensions.

The Reputation Institute Reputation Institute's Presidential Election RepTrak® Study is a continuous tracker that ran between March and September 2016 (Reputation Institute, 2016). The RepTrak® Pulse measures the strength of the emotional bond between the candidate and the U.S. general public, in other words: his reputation amongst the electorate.

4.3 How does it work?

Fig. 4.1
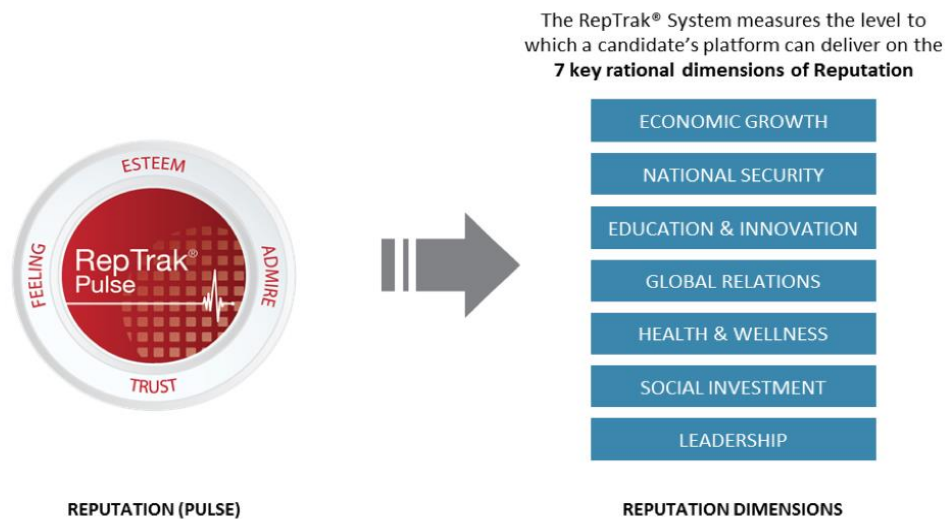
The RepTrak® Pulse takes in consideration seven dimensions of reputation, counter the four dimensions we saw were taken in consideration in the measurement of the 2010 study on the Spanish Ceo's reputation, that in the authors theorization had not been modified.

Conceptually the dimensions do not differ much. In the 2010 study they were: *Leadership, Responsibility, Management* and *Influence*. In the *Reputation Institute Reputation Institute's Presidential Election RepTrak® Study* they are just more specifically oriented to politics and core policy issues; infact the Reputation Institute evaluates the U.S. general public's perceptions of the candidate's platform's performance across:

1. **Economic growth:** how the voter believes the candidate will drive the economic growth for his or her family and for the country

2. **National security**: the ability the voter believes the candidate will have to keeps the country safe from foreign and domestic violence

3. **Education and innovation:** how according to the voter's perception the candidate will advance education policies in the best interests of the country

4. **Global relations:** how the voter believes the candidate will enhance the country's stature globally

5. **Health and wellness:** how the voter believes the candidate will promote health-care policies that are beneficial to his or her family and to the country

6. **Social investment:** how the voter believes the candidate will promote social policies important to his or her family and to the country

7. **Executive leadership**: if the voter believes the candidate has the experience to lead the country.

The seven dimensions appear to be very operative and oriented to the attitude towards concrete policies in different fields (economic,

international, social etc.) In the model previously proposed by the author and explained in chapter 3 the approach was a little bit different, infact, the dimensions stayed the same : Leadership, Responsibility Management (for candidate analysis it would refer to political skills) and influence, what changed were the indicators on the basis of which these dimensions would be judged on. This different approach gave a stronger weight to the content of the political activity. Only one dimension is strictly linked to the personal reputation of the candidated, leadership. It is opinion of the author that this approach would be appropriate in a social context in which who the politician/candidate is is as important as what the candidate's positions are. This model brings to a more comprehensive analysis of the candidate's Reputation and consequently of the quality of his political communication strategy. The closer the scores of the Pulse and of the 7 dimensions, the stronger and more solid the reputation is: this means that the emotional and rational aspects converge.

4.4 Getting a Reputation Pulse on the candidates

In the very first wave of the survey, in March 2016, the Reputation Institute measured the reputations of both Democratic and Republican candidates. Sanders and Clinton on one side; Trump, Cruz and Rubio on the other. The data shows that on the basis of a statistically significant sample of 1,524 respondents (sample that increases in time), with an analytical focus on the respondents who are registered voters in the U.S. presidential election, the appeal of all the candidates on the general public is seriously in question. Amongst them all Sanders is the candidate that ranked the highest, this does not mean, though his reputation score is good, it still is classified as "weak" according to the study as it is 58.2 out of a possible 100. Rubio e Cruz follow, Hillary Clinton is fourth, and Trump is last with a terribly low reputation score.

The RepTrak® Pulse tracker highlighted from the very beginning how the reputation of candidates evolves quickly. For example, between March and April 2016 Trump's reputation improved of 5 points, Clinton's of 1.3 ; while Cruz's declined 6.4 points and Sanders's declined by 2 points.

Fig. 4.2 - RepTrak® Pulse scores of the candidates among the US general Public in March 2016 (Reputation Institute, 2016)
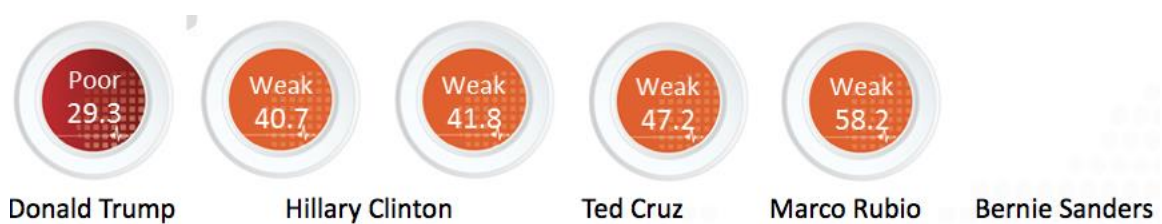
The improvement or worsening of the reputations relate to how well the candidates work on their communication on the subjects of the seven dimensions the survey is based on. In the period taken as an example above (between march and april), Trump's improvement relates to the fact that Republicans now see him as more apt to deliver on economic growth, education & innovation, global relations, health and wellness and social improvement (Reputation Institute, 2016). For what concerns his executive leadership skills, researchers are still doubtful. Hillary Clinton improved her scores in these same fields, leaving no doubt on the fact she also improved her executive leadership skills. Cruz and Sanders both lost points under the executive leadership point of view. In Cruz's case, apparently the republicans started questioning his actual honesty, and only 44% of them truly believe he appears genuine in what he says and stands for (Reputation Institute, 2016).

The candidates with the highest familiarity are evidently Clinton and Trump, but this does not correspond to a higher reputation. There is an

emotional disconnection between respondents' feelings for a candidate and the candidate's ability to deliver on tangible results such as executive leadership and economic growth (Reputation Institute, 2016). This in the model is expressed by the distance between the emotional Pulse and the rational dimension.

It is also interesting to observe the reputations of Trump and Clinton amongst independent voters. They, infact, appear to be indistinguishable, as they both have very low reputation scores. For independents both Clinton and Trump are "*snobby, arrogant and inward looking candidates that stand out from the crowd*". The only difference the two candidates seem to have is the difference in the single scores across the seven dimensions of reputation the candidates have (Reputation Institute, 2016). On par for executive leadership, Clinton leads when it comes to education, global relations, health and social investment and Trump beats Clinton when it comes to economic growth and national security (Reputation Institute, 2016).

4.5 What does "to have a low reputation" according to the RI scale?

We have evidenced how the 2016 presidential election candidates fundamentally have low reputation scores according to the *Presidential Election RepTrak® Pulse tracker* , but what exactly does low mean? On the basis of what do we define a score low or not? In general when using the *RepTrak®* model we consider the following scale:

The score is expressed out of a hundred, but no company (or individual) analyzed ever actually reached it, the general scores

registered until today refering to corporate correspond to 78/100 of Rolex, Disney and Google (Global RepTrack, 2016).

In the last years the Reputation Institute noticed that to have a strong reputation the company had to be strong in all of the dimensions considered for the corporate communication analysis. As we saw earlier, when it comes to the 2016 Presidential election candidates Clinton leads in education, global relations, health and social investment and Trump leads when it comes to economic growth and national security; but there isn't anyone that outstands in all of the dimensions.

From a corporate point of view there are some fields in which Reputation scores are generally higher than others: the first is generally Luxury brands (no wonder Rolex is one of the companies with the highest reputation score). In 2015 the Luxury brand business sector had an average score of 76.5 that classified them as the companies with the strongest scores in reputation (fig.4.3). The field with the lowest Reputation scores is Transport and logistics with an average of 56. If we consider the scores of the 2016 presidential election candidates the average score of their reputations is 43.4: 12.6 points lower than the lowest ranked!This means that if we added a new field to the chart represented in fig. 4.3 called politics for example it would figure like much lower than the rest.

This corporate communication parenthesis helps understand what the RI means when they say that the 2016 candidates have low reputations, what must be explored at this point is why these scores appear to be so low and what can be done to arise them in the future, as how we have seen reputation appears to be very long to build and requires long term projects.
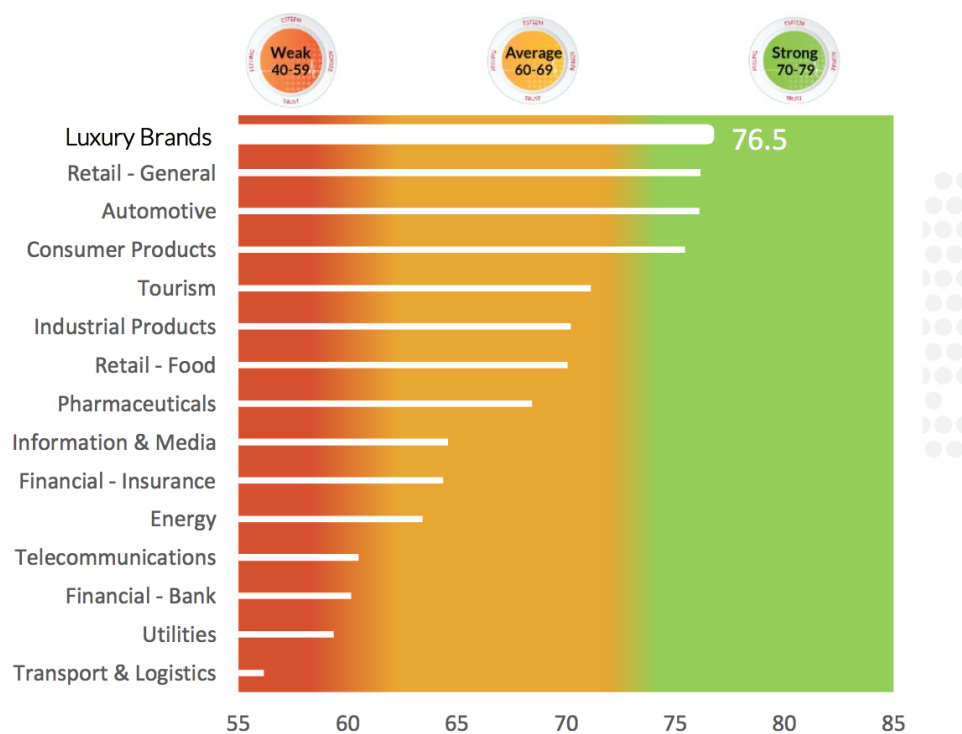
4.6 Why do all of the 2016 candidates have low reputation scores?

In a global political context like the one widely described in the first chapters of this thesis, reputation appears to be absolutely crucial to the success of a candidate. Why, then, are all the 2016 presidential election candidates' reputations so low?

Partially we already gave an answer to this question in the previous paragraph: the RI noticed that to have a strong reputation a company had to be strong in all of the dimensions considered for the corporate communication analysis, this applies to the candidates too. They have low reputation scores because they all have at least one or two dimensions in which the lack dramatically.

Furthermore, apart the limits in satisfying the public's expectations in all of the dimensions, there is a reason related to the electors. By a matter of fact it seems that, according to the study, when asked to rate the candidates the majority of the respondents either gives them a very

high score or a very low one. This probably happens because the candidate evokes visceral feelings of love and hate in the respondent. So basically the main reason for which none of the candidates has a high score is that not one of them completely meets the expectations of the general public, both from the point of view of their policies and personally.

Their inability to appeal to a large spectrum of voters raises the question: what do candidates have to do to enhance their reputations and satisfy the general public's expectations? In answering we refer to the study done in the period between March and April, so that also Rubio and Cruz can be taken in consideration.

Fig. 4.4 - Candidate scores between march-April 2016 (Reputation Institute,2016)

DIMENSIONS	SANDERS	RUBIO	CRUZ	CLINTON	TRUMP
ECONOMIC GROWTH	57.1	50.5	45.1	46.6	44.0
NATIONAL SECURITY	53.8	53.4	51.3	44.1	43.2
EDUCATION & INNOVATION	61.3	49.3	43.6	47.3	34.5
GLOBAL RELATIONS	54.7	50.0	43.8	46.2	32.6
HEALTH & WELLNESS	61.9	48.5	42.5	48.5	34.0
SOCIAL INVESTMENT	61.5	47.5	40.4	46.0	34.9
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP	54.2	46.1	44.5	48.2	37.7

Always according to the Reputation institute this is what is suggested to each candidate on the basis of the scores shown on the chart above:

- *Sanders is higher in reputation but lacks in perceived leadership qualities.* He is the closest to having an average reputation, thanks to the scores of the dimensions of education, health and social investment. Statistically speaking,however, the dimensions on which

he should work are those related to economic growth global standing and national security. Sanders still needs to prove he has what it takes to be commander in chief, he has the potential but has to be more convincing, he should find a political communication strategy able to "sell" him better to the public and show what he has to offer (Reputation Institute, 2016).

- *Hillary Clinton has the leadership creds but lacks in trust transparency and empathy.* The average of Hillary Clinton's scores in the seven rational dimensions is six points higher than her overall Pulse score. The US general public believes she has the experience and could deliver, its emotional connection with her is really weak. The general public is also looking for more transparency and more follow through from Clinton. The data shows that 28% of respondents believe that she provides sufficient information about her activities and only 27% think that she delivers on her promises (Reputation Institute, 2016).

- *Rubio suffers from lack of leadership skills and does not stand out from the crowd.* Rubio's challenges are similar to those of Sanders. Rubio's weakest score is in the executive leadership dimension, which carries almost a fifth of his overall reputation. More than half of the respondents are neutral or not sure if Rubio has what it takes to be the new leader of their country. Among the five candidates, Rubio is the one that stands out the least; he is perceived as the least daring, and as a candidate who lacks the innovative and excitement factors(Reputation Institute, 2016).

- *Trump stands out but needs to soften his approach.* Unlike Rubio, Trump is viewed as the most daring and differentiated candidate. However, he is not viewed as fostering open dialogue or providing transparency about his political and personal activities. Only 16% of the respondents believe Trump is concerned and supportive, and only 19% think he is honest. All this results in loss of trust, admiration

and esteem, and means that the majority of the U.S. general public finds it difficult to have a positive emotional connection with Trump(Reputation Institute, 2016).

- *Cruz needs to be inclusive,relatable, and more socially attuned.* The key dimension that has the strongest impact on Cruz's reputation is social investment based on his perceived ability to advance social causes important to families. Cruz's limited appeal is characterized by the fact that among respondents who are highly familiar with his platform, only 11% are Hispanic. Additionally, among women, Cruz has a poor reputation score of 35.0 when it comes to social investment. As a presidential candidate, Cruz has to incorporate the social challenges of all (Reputation Institute, 2016)*.*

4.7 Political Communication to spin opinions on reputation

There is no doubt that the 2016 presidential elections were probably the hardest elections that could have been chosen for a first time analysis like the one described above. However, they were elections in which political communication had a central role, therefore a measurement system was necessary and indispensable in order to have a minimum feedback and to avoid an otherwise dangerously easy waste of money.

As said already to build a reputation is an extremely long process, and it is even harder and longer when it comes to building the reputation of an individual: the candidate. The job goes beyond the construction of a positive image it has many sides and nuances that must be considered and the only way to bring a good reputation to life and to spin those opinions of those who still appear to be skeptical, is through well built political communication strategies. The construction of a good plan starts with research and this is how ROI measurements contribute to the cause, and why they have become crucial.

This is just the beginning and it is likely that in the next few years this field will flourish quickly, what today appears to be central is to measure all strategies in order to monitor their success on the long term and build progressively more accurate and precise models .

General Conclusions

The political context of the twenty-first century has changed in the last few years moving away from the first of the two centuries that preceded it. The fall of the Berlin Wall has relegated to history the experiences of governments based on Marxist ideologies in western developed countries. The capitalist system is no longer questionable, the alternative in countries of the free world is now between a liberal-social state or a social-liberal one. The attenuated differences between the economic and social choices that voters may make, increases the importance of the personal dimension of the candidate.

Over the last decade political communication tools changed and this changed the political activity itself, also having a strong impact on the content of the message delivered. The speed of information, the instant sharing of messages with an enlarged and heterogeneous public, has helped make complicated mechanisms simple. It has privileged the incisiveness of the message over its accuracy, and the filter-function parties had has gradually been reduced. International scenarios show us a political world that has not found its final and stable order yet. Certainly the time of heavy equipment and Party branches in every municipality has ended, however the digital development has not reduced the need for physical contact with people.

This appears to be clear in this work through the analysis of the profiles of the contemporary leaders we have reviewed. In spite of the judgment international politics *intelligentiae* and their establishments give them, an undeniable thread binds Berlusconi, Grillo and Renzi, Le Pen, Obama and Trump: they are not party leaders, they are the party, they are containers themselves of a political expression, they are real commercial brands that need a completely different promotion compared to that of the past.

The new form of political communication does not need party functionaries, but communication specialists, research and sophisticated tools. A statement of this kind would seem to predict a decrease in the cost of politics, but it is the exact opposite. Demonstration of this is the increasing budget of the US presidential campaigns. The public is more profiled, targets are diversified, the tools to reach those publics are multiple, and the analysis is more and more consequent and increasingly expensive.

Italian politics, like those of western democracies, in general, should take note that political competition is now a business, in equal measure to that of an activity in the world of consumer goods. It is necessary to invest in communication in order to target consumers/voters, with increasing precision. To see this positive evolution, even in economic terms, it opens an important door in terms of services. These will gradually be more qualitative and these jobs will probably be carried out by digital natives: the famous young people who feed the unemployment statistics of many countries.

 Among the problems that must be overcome are the controversial ones related to political funding: public funding is increasingly incomprehensible to a wide strata of the population and is insufficient, in perspective, to absorb the rising costs that politicians will have to deal with. In a context of this kind an americanization of the political struggle with the development of a regulated fundraising system is to be expected. This should prevent the development of illegal forms of financing and of bribes.
Rules establishing quantitative limits, are likely to be useless in the fight against illegal funding. Another problem, of a purely political nature and that this new communication has inherent in itself, is that this digital democracy puts the executive powers aside in favor of the moods of ordinary people. Speaking in terms of traditional politics it would be like deliberating through continuous referendums, with no

real controls of the representatives over the positions expressed often by in informed and incompetent people.

The hope is that our political elites aware of the risks and opportunities that new technologies offer will be able to grasp those aspects that will promote the right balance between popular participation and competence in legislating in an increasingly complex world that needs more professionalism and less improvisation. These considerations form the context in which spin doctors of political leaders must operate, who would be responsible for developing models to measure the ROI of their communication strategies.

We come, then, to conclude on the heart of what was the study developed in this thesis, that would be the attempt to create new instruments to spin the reputation of political candidates through communication. Reputation, in fact, can be defined as the result of communication and PR activities developed over time. In this context in which the structure of politics is progressively converging towards a business model, and consequently political communication is absorbing the knowledge and conforming to the rules of corporate communication it is no surprise that reputation has quickly become something crucial in political spin doctoring too. Probably reputation has an even greater echo when speaking of politics, as the reputation to build and maintain is not that of a company or product but that of a person, with his or her personality and ideas. Considering this it is not possible to not understand how important it is today to keep track of how and how much (qualitatively and quantitatively) the reputation of a politician/candidate influences his popularity, his consensus, his probability to be elected. The Reputation Institute has built the *Reputation Institute's Presidential Election RepTrak® Pulse tracker* that measures the Reputation of the 2016 presidential candidate in the same way it measure corporate reputations, only changing the dimensions measured.

Referring to the pyramid of Mcnamara and its most extensive interpretations, we have seen how to bind input, output, outcome, outgrowth, and thus the individual's reputation. The ROI optimization models need to be focused on maximizing the power inputs and outputs, or on the only two variables on which you can operate with PR activities. Therefore it is important to have a value or a reference index to be reported to the outputs (eg. newspaper articles, television services, interactive content on social media) to be able to correlate the outcome (eg surveys) on public opinion. The multiple effects in a certain lap of time will determine a correlation between input-output/outcome, and on the long period the correlation will be determined on the correlation outgrowth/reputation that represents the stable political behavior of the target/elector.

It is opinion of the author that the definition of methods to arrive to the creation of values to put into causal relationships is an essential element for analysts of political communication to be used in the near future. Currently the analysis of surveys has become a must in communication strategies, major international research companies, such as the Reputation Institute, are testing the analysis on the basis of indicators calculated to get the reputation of political candidates. Evaluations of the results of outcome and outgrowth are not yet the subject of scientific correlations with the inputs and outputs generated by communication. They are still mainly generic, subjective and intuitive evaluations.

This research offers an opportunity to give a value for example to print output with the GRV method that also applies to politics. The press, however, in a recent survey by Edelman Trust Barometer (Print Power, 2016) indicates that 70% of people trust traditional media more compared to last generation medias. 82% of respondents agrees that we all need more reliable information, while 59% believes that social media is less reliable than traditional sources. It is clear, however, that

the measurements are also performed on the input / output of web communication and social media, especially as a prospective change.

Therefore, it is not by chance that we have particularly focused on measuring the ROI of strategies on newspapers and magazines, considering that reliability for in politicians is even more important than it is to products in business. We tried, therefore, to apply to politics the most accurate method among those of Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE). Even if not everyone agrees on the use of the AVE method, the choice of adopting it was made on the basis of the principle that, in order to determine a value necessary to determine the correlations we referred to before, it is better to have a not perfect method than no method at all. Moreover, proof of the validity of the GRV method is confirmed by studies published by LUISS University.

The limit of this method is that the indicators taken into account express economic values and are to be considered only as a benchmark relative to the comparison of the politician with his competitors or of the politician compared to himself in previous periods. If this is clear, nothing hinders the implementation of the GRV method, born for corporate analysis, in the the political world. The measured output value that considers the focus of the articles through a series of de-multipliers and re-evaluates the quality of it by applying multipliers that weigh the influence of images, the impact of titles and the positioning of the article on the media, that guarantees a sufficient differentiation of individual communication outputs. The sum of the values of all the communication outputs of a given political character, indicates a quantity that well represents the general volume of the communication strategies on the subject. The subsequent application of the Press Quality Impact Index helps to relate this to the affected audience numerosity. In traditional media we cannot forget the radio and television for measuring the ROI for which we have indicated the TP method of direct derivation from the GRV method.

In perspective, it is evident, though, that, despite the data reported by Edelman, measurements must be done also on the inputs and on the outputs of web and social communications. In this work we tried to identify, in a complex and articulated world as that of new media, different indicators. In this case it is only the combination of these with cross-checks between the different rankings of medias examined, unique users reached and the ability to engage them interactively, to be able to address the communication optimally. The future will see politicians act as a managers, consulting the "t*ableau de bord*" of its communication, thus having clear the causal links between the inputs given to the Network and the public's liking expressed in scientific terms. They will be called to an integrated communication policy that will weigh the effect of using different media: the passive reception of the target of television and radio,the passive-reflective target of the written press and the degree of interaction in the virtual world.

The work conducted on the various Italian and international leaders, the fortunes of which are certainly attributable to their skill in communicating with the tools available today, are the proof that we must not forget that their success is largely due to the same ancient skills needed in Greek Agoras: dialectics and personal empathy among the people. It is hard to enhance the ROI of a handshake or a smile in the crowd. When all the candidates will have the scientific analysis of the research and causal links between their inputs and the subsequent outgrowth, personal charisma and the ability to move amongst the people will again be the only decisive element to win in a political competition.

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Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche

(Summary)

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Measuring the ROI of communication strategies in a changing candidate-centered political environment: the 2.0 revolution from the USA to Europe

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Summary

The political context of the twenty-first century has changed in the last few years moving away from the first of the two centuries that preceded it. The fall of the Berlin Wall has relegated to history the experiences of governments based on Marxist ideologies in western developed countries. The capitalist system is no longer questionable, the alternative in countries of the free world is now between a liberal-social state or a social-liberal one. The attenuated differences between the economic and social choices that voters may make, increases the importance of the personal dimension of the candidate.

Over the last decade political communication tools changed and this changed the political activity itself, also having a strong impact on the content of the message delivered. The speed of information, the instant sharing of messages with an enlarged and heterogeneous public, has helped make complicated mechanisms simple. It has privileged the incisiveness of the message over its accuracy, and the filter-function parties had has gradually been reduced. International scenarios show us a political world that has not found its final and stable order yet. Certainly the time of heavy equipment and Party branches in every municipality has ended, however the digital development has not reduced the need for physical contact with people.

Traditionally social communication and media studies tend to consider political communication and electoral communication separately. The first one studies the relation between political actors and citizens through an approach of *interlocution logics;* the second aims to reaching consensus on the basis of votes, following what can be defined as *logics of propaganda*. Today the line between the two forms of communication is blurred. The evolving concept of *permanent campaigning* represents a new type of relation between parties and citizens and between citizens and building of consensus.

Permanent campaigning is not a new concept. It was born in the USA, its first theorization goes back to the first half of the 1980's and was conceived by a journalist called Sidney Blumenthal, that noticed it in both Reagan's and Clinton's presidential mandates. In Europe this trend took place more slowly, but with the advent of television and the diminishing weight of the radio in influencing public opinion, with the phenomena of the spectacularization of politics, with the fragmentation and crisis of the "great ideologies" in favor of the personalization of leaders and with the imposition of new social models (the *performing society*) based on spectacularization and self-representation logics, finally also european countries started changing their campaigning methods and embracing this new way of conceiving politics (Sorice, 2014).

The concept of permanent campaigning refers to the propensity of advanced societies to overcome the ordinary timing of communicative dynamics of electoral campaigning in political life: there is no distance between the electoral period and the political cycle any more. The political behavior has become subordinated to the relation with public opinion and to the "needs" of political communication strategies. Electoral campaigns do not have the only goal of creating consensus, but also of reaching an increasingly large cluster of electors, to incorporate those *floating voters* that now represent the real objective of a political communication that evolved in taking the distance from the 19th century ideologies. This kind of campaigning results more and more influenced by marketing and information management, an example of this is the phenomena of *infotainment*. In Europe an explicit interpretation of these new logics of permanent campaigning can be found in a speech held by Tony Blair back in 1997 to the deputies of the Labour party in occasion of his establishment at Downing street when he said: "*Today is day one of the campaign to win a second term - don't let one of you forget that*" (Sorice, 2014). Other very important phenomena that sign the evolution of the political context, and that are crucial in analyzing the different ways the maturation of this new way

of conceptualizing politics are personalization, disintermediation and spectacularization. These three processes will be studied in the first chapter of this research, as they are the major elements that define the timing with which each country moves its first steps towards the brand new political environment of the 21st century.

The internet plays a fundamental role it this process. It allows a more horizontal relation between politics and the public and through the web, citizen participation to the decision making process becomes crucial for consensus. The evolution from a web 1.0 to a web 2.0 social, and consequently political, context was fleet in countries like the United States, whilst in Europe it is still processing. Experts speak about web 1.5, when referring to these countries, to underline the fact that the process has certainly started, but is still not complete. A very good example of web 1.5 country is Italy, the evolution of which will be analyzed in chapter 2, where the relationship between politics and the internet is still at the very beginning, but is giving some very interesting feedback (Lucchini, Matarrazzo, 2014).

This appears to be clear in this work through the analysis of the profiles of the contemporary leaders we have reviewed. In spite of the judgment international politics *intelligentiae* and their establishments give them, an undeniable thread binds Berlusconi, Grillo and Renzi, Le Pen, Obama and Trump: they are not party leaders, they are the party, they are containers themselves of a political expression, they are real commercial brands that need a completely different promotion compared to that of the past.

Berlusconi is the first, in Italy, to shift the asset of politics to a candidate-centered environment. With him communicating goes from being the frame to being substance in politics. It embodies, at least in part, the thought of Marshall McLuhan according to whom it is the medium that determines the structural features of communication and that produces pervasive effects on public opinion, no matter the content conveyed each time. Hence his famous thesis for which "the

medium is the message. He goes beyond this theorization, the generalized consensus is based on opinion, on the political scene the complexity of the phenomena does not gain any competitive advantage, truth is what is generally believed to be true, opinion is not knowledge- based: this would require more time and more articulated speeches, while here the slogan of political communication is being simplified. The difference, then, is not in what Berlusconi says, but in how he says it and through what medium. The communicative power of Berlusconi lies in this: he manages to make himself understood; he is a worker among workers, a housewife among housewives, a socialist among the socialists, a nostalgic among nostalgics, a resistant among resistants. Furthermore, all this is possible because of the use of television for the first time in politics.

Grillo's success was strongly linked to his character and to his comic profession that is by itself highly communicative. It is also undeniable that he was the first in Italy to make a systematic and massive use of the "network", which is without doubt the most impactful type of communication today and the one with the highest growth perspectives. We speak of perspectives because the Internet penetration in Italy is far from that of television. Beppe Grillo has emphasized his use of the Internet as a tool of direct democracy, but the degree of knowledge that Italians have on Grillo was achieved mainly through news television. Grillo used traditional media, creating the news, and thus his popularity by refusing to talk to the media or insulting the journalists that represented it.Grillo communication has both the physical contact aspect (he appears in city squares) and the virtual one (his presence on the web). but not declaring it he uses traditional media: indirectly, when he can, and directly, when he is forced to by the results of the surveys. Strongly supported by a communications expert like Casaleggio and his own professional skills Grillo has undoubtedly delivered a new political communication model in Italy.

Renzi has stood out because of two characteristics: disintermediation and availability. *Disintermediation* because Matteo Renzi is the first Italian politician who uses the mass media and is not used by the media. An example of the fact is that unlike Berlusconi and Grillo , Renzi has not taken a selfie on Porta a Porta with Bruno Vespa in occasion of the 2014 election campaign. He posts on social media and doesn't let the media post things on him, his attitude is different for what concerns the relationship with the electorate, to whom he never denies a selfie, to stay in our example. His *availability*, instead, resides in the fact that together with the estrangement of the world of information from that of politics he is very available to respond and to communicate through the same mediums. According to the communication scheme of Renzi the message should be simple, convincing, straightforward and available to everyone, not only of those involved (Mario Lavia, 2014)

Marine Le Pen is considered to be the expression of a new, liac and more moderate trend within the FN. She fits perfectly in the alveus of the candidate-centered political context we are analyzing. Apart from the economic and political issues she brings forward in her campaign for the 2017 presidential elections in France there is much more. She is doing an intense work on the storytelling of herself, therefore, on the image the French people have of her. The best example of this tendency in her political communication strategies is the opening of a blog "*Le carnet d'espérance". Le Carnet d'Espérance* is basically a window on her life, it is all about who Marine Le Pen is, who her family is, nothing in the blog recalls to the *Front National,* not even the graphics. The opening of this blog was the concretization of her will to express herself "*sans intermediaire".* Marine Le Pen made of the Le Pen family an *umbrella brand or family brand.* Le Pen is the "mother brand" and under the Le Pen umbrella stand Marine and Marion (her niece) that have the same objective but target different electoral basins. This strategy takes advantage of the new social political context we live in and enlarges the general electoral basin of the Front National.

For what concerns Obama there is no doubt he is the man that changed the way of doing politics in our time. The important steps forward were two:one for each campaign. In the first one (2008) *social networks* were used in an organic and organized way for the first time. Everything worked around the two main slogans of the 2008 Obama campaign: "*Yes we can!*" and "*The change we can believe in*!".

In the second one (2012), as the emotional lever wasn't as strong enough anymore, because the four years of Obama's government had been sort of disappointing for many americans, the spin-doctoring and communication team actuated an intense and complex strategy of *data-mining* and *micro-targeting*. The last step of this communication revolution is *hyper-targeting*. Already tested in marketing, it basically addresses information virtually instantly and at lower costs. The messages were adapted on the base of the gender, for hispanic electors. In the moment in which these individuals would open the video message, the system would select the most appropriate one on the basis of the receiver's characteristics.

That of *Trumpism* is a very complex phenomena, even if he like to present himself as the *great simplifier*: he acts as a clown, but is very good at dosing his theatricality with his determination to reach the points he preaches on and on which he is extremely serious. He is the only one able to move in such a swift way through his contradictions. His whole political message is based on protectionism, isolation and populism, that in a climate of discontent like the one of the USA of the last years finds an incredibly fertile soil. *The Donald"* is the triumph of the candidate-centered social context we are here analyzing. He is running by himself. The *Grand Old Party* is horrified by his positions on isolation (even if in the past, before Bush and Reagan great part of the party had isolationist positions). By a matter of fact many in the last year have taken the distance from him publicly.

These examples are proof that the new form of political communication does not need party functionaries, but communication specialists,

research and sophisticated tools. A statement of this kind would seem to predict a decrease in the cost of politics, but it is the exact opposite. Demonstration of this is the increasing budget of the US presidential campaigns. The public is more profiled, targets are diversified, the tools to reach those publics are multiple, and the analysis is more and more consequent and increasingly expensive.

Italian politics, like those of western democracies, in general, should take note that political competition is now a business, in equal measure to that of an activity in the world of consumer goods. It is necessary to invest in communication in order to target consumers/voters, with increasing precision. To see this positive evolution, even in economic terms, it opens an important door in terms of services. These will gradually be more qualitative and these jobs will probably be carried out by digital natives: the famous young people who feed the unemployment statistics of many countries.

Among the problems that must be overcome are the controversial ones related to political funding: public funding is increasingly incomprehensible to a wide strata of the population and is insufficient, in perspective, to absorb the rising costs that politicians will have to deal with. In a context of this kind an americanization of the political struggle with the development of a regulated fundraising system is to be expected. This should prevent the development of illegal forms of financing and of bribes.

Rules establishing quantitative limits, are likely to be useless in the fight against illegal funding. Another problem, of a purely political nature and that this new communication has inherent in itself, is that this digital democracy puts the executive powers aside in favor of the moods of ordinary people. Speaking in terms of traditional politics it would be like deliberating through continuous referendums, with no real controls of the representatives over the positions expressed often by in informed and incompetent people.

The hope is that our political elites aware of the risks and opportunities that new technologies offer will be able to grasp those aspects that will promote the right balance between popular participation and competence in legislating in an increasingly complex world that needs more professionalism and less improvisation. These considerations form the context in which spin doctors of political leaders must operate, who would be responsible for developing models to measure the ROI of their communication strategies.

We come, then, to conclude on the heart of what was the study developed in this thesis, that would be the attempt to create new instruments to spin the reputation of political candidates through communication. Reputation, in fact, can be defined as the result of communication and PR activities developed over time. In this context in which the structure of politics is progressively converging towards a business model, and consequently political communication is absorbing the knowledge and conforming to the rules of corporate communication it is no surprise that reputation has quickly become something crucial in political spin doctoring too. Probably reputation has an even greater echo when speaking of politics, as the reputation to build and maintain is not that of a company or product but that of a person, with his or her personality and ideas. Considering this it is not possible to not understand how important it is today to keep track of how and how much (qualitatively and quantitatively) the reputation of a politician/candidate influences his popularity, his consensus, his probability to be elected. The Reputation Institute has built the *Reputation Institute's Presidential Election RepTrak® Pulse tracker* that measures the Reputation of the 2016 presidential candidate in the same way it measure corporate reputations, only changing the dimensions measured.

Referring to the pyramid of Mcnamara and its most extensive interpretations, we have seen how to bind input, output, outcome, outgrowth, and thus the individual's reputation. The ROI optimization

models need to be focused on maximizing the power inputs and outputs, or on the only two variables on which you can operate with PR activities. Therefore it is important to have a value or a reference index to be reported to the outputs (eg. newspaper articles, television services, interactive content on social media) to be able to correlate the outcome (eg surveys) on public opinion. The multiple effects in a certain lap of time will determine a correlation between input-output/outcome, and on the long period the correlation will be determined on the correlation outgrowth/reputation that represents the stable political behavior of the target/elector.

It is opinion of the author that the definition of methods to arrive to the creation of values to put into causal relationships is an essential element for analysts of political communication to be used in the near future. Currently the analysis of surveys has become a must in communication strategies,   major international research companies, such as the Reputation Institute, are testing the analysis on the basis of indicators calculated to get the reputation of political candidates. Evaluations of the results of outcome and outgrowth are not yet the subject of scientific correlations with the inputs and outputs generated by communication. They are still mainly generic, subjective and intuitive evaluations.

This research offers an opportunity to give a value for example to print output with the GRV method that also applies to politics. The press, however, in a recent survey by Edelman Trust Barometer (Print Power, 2016) indicates that 70% of people trust traditional media more compared to last generation medias. 82% of respondents agrees that we all need more reliable information, while 59% believes that social media is less reliable than traditional sources. It is clear, however, that the measurements are also performed on the input / output of web communication and social media, especially as a prospective change.

Therefore, it is not by chance that we have particularly focused on measuring the ROI of strategies on newspapers and magazines, considering that reliability for in politicians is even more important than it is to products in business. We tried, therefore, to apply to politics the most accurate method among those of Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE). Even if not everyone agrees on the use of the AVE method, the choice of adopting it was made on the basis of the principle that, in order to determine a value necessary to determine the correlations we referred to before, it is better to have a not perfect method than no method at all. Moreover, proof of the validity of the GRV method is confirmed by studies published by LUISS University.

The limit of this method is that the indicators taken into account express economic values and are to be considered only as a benchmark relative to the comparison of the politician with his competitors or of the politician compared to himself in previous periods. If this is clear, nothing hinders the implementation of the GRV method, born for corporate analysis, in the the political world. The measured output value that considers the focus of the articles through a series of de-multipliers and re-evaluates the quality of it by applying multipliers that weigh the influence of images, the impact of titles and the positioning of the article on the media, that guarantees a sufficient differentiation of individual communication outputs. The sum of the values of all the communication outputs of a given political character, indicates a quantity that well represents the general volume of the communication strategies on the subject. The subsequent application of the Press Quality Impact Index helps to relate this to the affected audience numerosity. In traditional media we cannot forget the radio and television for measuring the ROI for which we have indicated the TP method of direct derivation from the GRV method.

In perspective, it is evident, though, that, despite the data reported by Edelman, measurements must be done also on the inputs and on the outputs of web and social communications. In this work we tried to

identify, in a complex and articulated world as that of new media, different indicators. In this case it is only the combination of these with cross-checks between the different rankings of medias examined, unique users reached and the ability to engage them interactively, to be able to address the communication optimally. The future will see politicians act as a managers, consulting the "t*ableau de bord*" of its communication, thus having clear the causal links between the inputs given to the Network and the public's liking expressed in scientific terms. They will be called to an integrated communication policy that will weigh the effect of using different media: the passive reception of the target of television and radio,the passive-reflective target of the written press and the degree of interaction in the virtual world.

The work conducted on the various Italian and international leaders, the fortunes of which are certainly attributable to their skill in communicating with the tools available today, are the proof that we must not forget that their success is largely due to the same ancient skills needed in Greek Agoras: dialectics and personal empathy among the people. It is hard to enhance the ROI of a handshake or a smile in the crowd.

 When all the candidates will have the scientific analysis of the research and causal links between their inputs and the subsequent outgrowth, personal charisma and the ability to move amongst the people will again be the only decisive element to win in a political competition.

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