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"THE STRATEGIES OF THE ELECTED: HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION"

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INTRODUCTION

Political communication is a field of study intrinsically linked to the dynamics of modern society, as it plays a crucial role in influencing political choices and determining the fate of entire nations. This thesis aims to explore and analyze in detail three fundamental aspects of political communication through the distinct chapters of this work.

The first chapter, "Political Communication," lays the foundation for our understanding of this vast field by examining the birth and evolution of political consulting. This pivotal figure has played an increasingly significant role in shaping politicians' communication strategies, influencing public perception, and directing election campaigns. Furthermore, we will delve deeper into the analysis of political marketing, a concept that has transformed the political landscape into an arena increasingly resembling the market, where communication and persuasion have become fundamental tools for winning public opinion. Finally, we will explore the complex dynamics of consensus, studying how political communication strategies can shape collective opinion, contributing to the formation of public policies and the success of leaders.

The second chapter, "Beyond Words, Non-Verbal Language," immerses us in the crucial world of body language in politics. This chapter highlights how non-verbal communication is pivotal in the communication process, analyzing how charismatic leaders of the past, including Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin, were able to captivate large crowds through gestures, facial expressions, and posture. Additionally, we will focus on the analysis of the body language of a contemporary figure of significant resonance, Donald Trump, and his impact on modern politics. Furthermore, we will examine how fashion has become a powerful tool of political communication, capable of conveying subtle yet meaningful messages through clothing, accessories, and personal style.

The third chapter, "Leadership and Winning Communication," will lead us to explore the key characteristics that define a successful leader in the political arena. Through the analysis of the lives and careers of figures such as George Marshall, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Margaret Thatcher, we will examine how charisma, determination, and a well-defined personal identity have contributed to their significant impact on

political history. Each of these figures represents a unique example of how effective leadership and communication can shape and influence the destiny of entire nations. In summary, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth view of political communication, highlighting how it has shaped and continues to shape the social and political fabric of our era. Through the examination of the aforementioned chapters, we intend to offer a critical and analytical perspective that will help us better understand the subtle yet powerful mechanisms that guide political communication and effective leadership in contemporary society.

CHAPTER I: POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

The Birth and Evolution of Political Consultancy

The role of political consultant is simultaneously ancient and modern, much like politics itself. History reveals the presence of many political advisors, and when reading the works of Quintus Tullius Cicero and Niccolò Machiavelli, one encounters true manuals of political consultancy. However, in contrast to the context in which Cicero and Machiavelli operated, what has changed is not the essence of election campaigns, which concerns the gaining of consensus, but rather the technologies and means available, and consequently, the language. The modern emergence of the political consultant coincides with the era of media. The first professionals in election campaigns were already active in the 1930s, and there was a growing development, especially from the late 1950s onwards, with the increasing influence of television. According to Jon Napolitan, one of the pioneers of the modern profession, a political consultant is nothing more than a specialist in political communication capable of intervening in the three phases that make up an election campaign: message definition (deciding what to say), media selection (deciding how to say it), and actual communication (saying it). In its modern version, political consultancy is a relatively young profession that continues to evolve with each electoral cycle, influenced by the introduction of new media and technologies. In this sense, the history of political consultancy can be traced through different eras, much like in political communication. To talk about the era of political consultancy, certain distinctive characteristics are needed: the introduction of a new medium that necessitates a change in communication methods and the adoption of a different approach to managing election campaigns and/or decision-making processes. The history of political consultancy today is in the so-called fourth era, which began with Obama's re-election in 2012, characterized by the introduction of a new approach to campaign management and organization, as well as an unprecedented impact of digital media and big data. The campaign was conducted, according to Jim Messina, who led it, like a Silicon Valley startup and made use of professional roles never used before. To understand the ongoing change, it is important to start with the eras that preceded the fourth. The first era began in the 1930s and ended in the 1950s. The key figures were mainly professionals initially from the world of public relations and later from Hollywood and the emerging advertising industry on Madison

Avenue. In 1933, the first modern political consultancy firm, Campaigns Incorporated, was established in the United States.

The 1950s saw the rise of television as the dominant medium, with a pivotal moment being the 1952 American presidential election in which Eisenhower defeated his opponent, in part thanks to the correct and effective use of television ads. The ad topics were selected based on market research conducted by Gallup on the main issues according to American citizens. The second era, which began in the 1960s and extended into the early 1980s, coincided with the diminishing importance of party structures and the subsequent outsourcing of various functions. The victory of Kennedy over Nixon in 1960 marked the start of television's dominance. Kennedy was the first politician to use television directly in his presidential campaign with the help of a "pollster," Louis Harris. In France, the use of pollsters and consultants dates back to the 1965 presidential elections when the centrist candidate Lacaunet was advised by Bongrand, who focused the campaign on the candidate's persona, following the American style of election campaigns. In Italy, it was in the 1980s that political marketing tools began to gain prominence, but the real leap in quality occurred with Berlusconi's entry into politics. The 1980s saw the use, for the first time, of 6 x 3 posters displayed before the 30-day campaign ban, as well as the debut of election ads on television. In the 1983 parliamentary elections, all major parties used these tools: DC (Christian Democracy) with a series of ads starting from dangerous situations and ending with a happy ending, PSI (Italian Socialist Party) with ads centered around the party leader, Bettino Craxi, and PCI (Italian Communist Party) with more cinematic-style footage. The third phase of consultancy began in the 1990s and extended into the early 21st century. One of the main phenomena of this phase was the globalization of political consultancy, linked to a category of professionals. Television remained the central medium but was joined by the internet with the digitalization of existing media. Winning was no longer possible by relying on a single tool, and the fragmentation shifted the focus of campaigns to the use of messages on a large scale and micro-messages targeted at carefully chosen voter segments. The 2008 presidential elections probably marked the end of the third era: television remained the main medium, but the impact of the internet, relational databases, and social networks began to be seen. The 2008 elections demonstrated how digital media when used harmoniously and coordinated with more traditional

tools, can enhance the effectiveness of individual aspects. The "Obama for America" campaign had access to 13 million email addresses. The transition to the last phase was led by two candidates, Romney and Obama, compared to four years earlier, the playing field was radically changed by technology: in 2012, most voters used social media. The ongoing technological transformation is changing the way election campaigns are conducted and opening the doors to new skills and professional roles in political communication.

Political Marketing

The field of political marketing goes beyond the realms of communication activities, public relations, and election campaigns. It delves into how political products are created, the behavior of politicians and political parties, their offerings, and how these respond to the needs and desires of citizens. The potential utility of marketing in politics was first proposed in 1969 by Kotler and Levy, who, in a famous article, argued that marketing, which had previously been confined to businesses and commercial organizations, could be extended to all types of organizations. As the ties between political parties and citizens gradually loosened, leading to greater electoral volatility, voters increasingly began to be treated as consumers, drawing more analogies between the market for businesses and that of politics. By adopting marketing terminology, we can speak of a "political product" and a "brand" to define political parties and candidates. The rise of political marketing is associated with a new era of political communication, one that no longer has a dominant medium and is increasingly characterized by multichannel and multimedia political communication. While television remains the primary medium, its role has diminished, and it must coexist with other media, with the increasing importance of the internet and direct mailing activities. Simultaneously, as channels and access possibilities increase, the audience becomes fragmented across numerous thematic channels. The dominant paradigm of modern campaigns is marketing logic, and their execution is entrusted to specialized units and consultants. Campaigns have become so extended in duration that they are referred to as "permanent campaigns," and the cost of conducting them has become very high. In terms of strategic objectives, mobilization and persuasion coexist, and campaigns are directed at specific groups of

voters to turn out the weaker base. Political marketing can help political parties and candidates achieve multiple objectives, starting with the most obvious one: winning elections. There are also more specific goals, such as increasing the number of members and their involvement in party activities, promoting a particular ideology, cause, or legislative proposal, influencing the media and public opinion agenda, entering a government coalition, finding new segments in the political market, and gaining consensus.

Effective marketing should not only be capable of selling but also of building a long-term relationship. It's about establishing trust with consumers that goes beyond the point of purchase. Unlike early definitions of political marketing, which were influenced by the overlap with political communication processes and limited to election campaigns, more recent definitions encompass organizational and relational aspects that include the governance phase. Political marketing now involves ongoing activities of analysis and strategy to better understand the competitive context, the needs and desires of citizens, the development of programs and ideas, the definition of public messages, and the implementation of effective public policies. Despite the well-established success of politicians and parties that have embraced political marketing, there are still significant "cultural" differences between parties and countries. This suggests two possible options for the introduction and evolution of political marketing: a partial option and a comprehensive option. The partial option is often simply associated with the introduction of a set of techniques from the world of marketing and advertising to make candidates more appealing to voters. Image and how one is perceived become crucial in politics. In politics, an image is created through the visual impressions conveyed by the physical presence of the candidate, their media appearances, experiences, and leadership skills. Adopting a comprehensive option, on the other hand, requires a significant change that leads the entire organization to try to determine the needs and desires of target groups and to satisfy them more effectively and efficiently than competitors. This approach involves identifying useful voter segments for achieving specific goals, choosing the most suitable positioning to attract their attention and gain their consensus, and developing the "product" that you want voters to "purchase." In line with those who have long argued (Luhmann, 1979) that there is no human activity, including politics, that can escape the laws of communication, marketing becomes a strategic

interaction, a "conversation," and a key element of sociability. It is in this view of consumption as a social action that we can find the compass to navigate the new role of marketing and the increasingly prominent use of communication as its development lever. Storytelling plays an important role in this context. It is a technique and philosophy that has highlighted not only relational marketing but also narrative marketing. Voters must be convinced to "purchase" the "political product." Communicating through stories, rather than merely telling stories, compels everyone to navigate through obstacles between real reality, narrated reality, and perceived reality. It creates a narrative universe that populates a semiotic cultural habitat within which candidates sell attention, ideas, actions, solutions, and decisions.

The first difference to consider in narrative sciences is the distinction between history and story. In the first case, it refers to the chronological list of events that define the leader's political history and place them at the center of the narrative. In the second case, it refers to the story told about the history that one wishes to make known, the system of perceptual, linguistic, and iconic representation through which the political leader (or their party or movement) attempts to produce meaning not only about what they have been and are but also about what they would like to be. In a story, there is always a history since the narrative is predisposed to become a psychological, social, cultural, and political habitat. Web 2.0 has radically transformed the way political storytelling is done, serving not only as a medium for horizontal rather than vertical communication but also as a tool to quickly and cost-effectively give visibility to proposals, visions, and solutions that once would have gained recognition only through mainstream channels. Political storytelling, by focusing on narratives more than ideas, manages to simultaneously reach large and generalist audiences as well as niche and specific audiences, using not only paid and earned media but also owned media. Marx had prophesied in The Capital that commodities would speak, independently of the words used by producers of goods and services. Brands have spoken, are speaking, and will speak in the future. At the same time, however, those who use words constantly, as in politics, become a brand, that is, an identity, image, and reputation, thanks especially to storytelling.

The consensus dynamic

In the captivating realms of the art of rhetoric and the unabashed world of politics, there exists a field of study known as political language analysis. This field examines, among other things, the forms, paradigms, and modus operandi of how consensus is garnered through words. It's no revelation: the ultimate goal of every politician is to build a broad consensus that allows them to govern. Typically, political language is used with greater precision during election campaigns, but in reality, the process of political communication between leaders and citizens (and rulers and the ruled) is an ongoing one. Today, continuous political marketing techniques and disintermediation overlay the traditional process of political communication, which can be divided into phases. It begins with internal communication focused on the party's, leader's, or movement's identity and progresses to the campaigning phase, where a well-defined political program is formulated to appeal not only to the core base of voters but also to the less engaged. Finally, there's the phase of consensus-building, which coincides with the period leading up to the vote, where voters align themselves with the political formulas proposed by the leaders in the field. However, it's important to note that opinion alignment and consensus often do not coincide, and much of the real voting intentions are realized within the confines of the voting booth itself. The objective, then, is to create a sense of shared purpose between leaders and citizens, to formulate a political formula that aligns as closely as possible with the needs of society and its citizens, and to devise a communicative strategy capable of bridging the gap between alignment and consensus. What worked best in 1994 with Berlusconi was the communicative strategy employed by the then-new Forza Italia, which tapped into the phenomenon of so-called cryptomnesia. It identified something new that was already known and inserted it into the political formula. The keywords were freedom, security, and employment. Contrary to what one might think, the post-political moment is the most challenging. The institutional phase comes into play, where the entire election campaign spectacle is no longer permissible, and the race for the throne transforms into the maintenance of the throne and promises. This is why the process of political communication is a process of political socialization of citizens: in short, the effects of discursive practices will be realized if continuity is established between political language, propaganda, and institutional practice. In 1976, Patrick Caddell was the first to suggest the use of a new governance strategy:

gaining the support of public opinion through a continuous political campaign. It's a new way of doing politics and conceiving the relationship between institutions and citizens, which Blumenthal would define as a "permanent campaign." It combines image creation with strategic calculation. In the permanent campaign, governing is transformed into an ongoing election campaign and turns the government into a tool for supporting the popularity of the elected officials. Various cultural factors and changes have contributed to the rise of permanent election campaigns. These include the decline of party organizations, the extension of primary or, rather, pre-primary election durations, and the increasing role of technology and new media. With the permanent campaign, communication activities are extended, and the continuous pursuit of consensus persists even in non-election periods, turning every day into a day of voting.

One of the most significant elements of the permanent campaign climate is the communication of elected officials in executive positions, which maintains a tone more similar to that of an election campaign than to institutional rhetoric. A significant example is Donald Trump, who did not cease his prolific tweeting and maintained his direct and controversial style even on domestic and foreign policy issues. In early 2019, Trump had 58 million followers on his profile and 25 million on his institutional profile. The two accounts mostly had the same tweets, unlike Obama, who used to post different content on his personal and institutional profiles. Trump used Twitter to influence the political and media agenda during the election campaign and continued to do so as president. Attacks on the media continue to account for almost a third of the content produced (31%), while tweets on political topics are only 14%. It's interesting to note that 17% of the tweets contain personal attacks, not only directed at members of the Democratic Party but also members of his party. Communication, even as president, remains highly adversarial and aimed at delegitimizing anyone who opposes him. However, the permanent campaign is not sufficient to resolve the dichotomy between popularity and consensus if it is not supported by a comprehensive set of analytical and communication tools aimed at understanding the general context, the desires and needs of voters, and the perception of the work being done.

CHAPTER II

BEYOND WORDS, NONVERBAL LANGUAGE
The Importance of Body Language in Politics

Our entire culture is built upon words, their learning, and their significance. However, when we find ourselves face to face with someone, it only takes a few seconds for us to form an impression of who we are encountering. A wrinkled garment, a hairstyle, the fragrance of their perfume, their body shape, the expression and mobility of their eyes, their physique, and the position of their shoulders all influence our judgment without the need for the other person to speak. In politics, more than in other contexts, having the eyes of the world upon you requires significant preparation and meticulous choices, not only in every word spoken but also in every movement and gaze. Body language in political communication can convey much about the individuals involved, often more than what is conveyed verbally. Nonverbal communication can provide many clues about people's intentions and emotions. Body language is so relevant that it can contribute to the personal branding strategy of political figures and the development of true trademarks.

Consider Donald Trump's "shrug," which has become almost a signature, a recognizable mark used by the politician in many different contexts and situations. According to Larry Sabato, a well-known political analyst and director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia, Trump's message is clear: he intends to convey the idea of command, hegemony, control, and power, concepts on which he partially based his election campaign with the slogan "Making America great again." The body reveals intentions, attitudes, and personalities automatically and uncontrollably, but often the signals betraying these attitudes escape both those who produce them and those who witness their execution. Another political example, included in the analytical literature, is the 2004 interview of George W. Bush by Coleman, in which he displayed a series of signs of tension such as stammering, repetitions, hesitations, and erratic eyelid movements, all signs of discomfort, confusion, and embarrassment. Anthropologist Mehrabian has established that only 7% of all information that reaches us through interaction passes through words; the rest, which is nonverbal communication, is divided into 38% coming from tone of

voice and 55% coming from signals of hands, arms, legs, etc. In the case of mass communication, gestures often have a stronger impact than the words themselves or the content of the speech. Many people do not listen carefully to politicians' speeches; instead, they grasp the essence of the speech and essentially receive synthesized messages. The way a politician is dressed, their tone of voice, their expression, and their gestures evoke a certain feeling in observers. Politics is increasingly intertwined with entertainment. In many countries, televised debates have become crucial during elections. The communication politicians employ through these means probably has never had such a high impact in terms of votes. On the other hand, most citizens pivot on traditions but also on feelings to participate politically in society. Researchers have identified six common gestures used by politicians to secure the consensus and sympathy of the masses:

• They do not furrow their brows. A relaxed forehead signifies control of the situation, inspiring trust and confidence. The opposite indicates tension and anxiety.

• They look into the eyes or into the camera, which is the same in television language. People tend to believe interlocutors who look them in the eye.

• They have calm and steady breathing. This signals self-control and conviction in their words, implying speaking without stumbling and not running out of breath. It communicates "cool-headedness" or intelligence.

• Their hands and fingers are without tension. Contrary to what many might think, clenched fists, pointing fingers, and gestures of this nature convey mistrust. Relaxed hands, on the other hand, communicate closeness and warmth.

• Their legs and feet remain still. This conveys firmness, security, and frankness.

• They do not touch their face. People interpret the gesture of touching one's face while speaking in front of an audience as a sign of confusion or as an indicator of deception.

• They offer a moderate and equitable greeting. Leaders who inspire trust in people greet everyone politely without making distinctions. When faced with a large number of people, they look in all directions while greeting.

Politicians and leaders always generate a visual impact with their presence. It is their first act of communication with their followers. This visual impact includes four areas that exert significant influence: facial expression, body language, clothing, and personal appearance. All these elements correspond to nonverbal language and

generate an "impression," a specific perception. A political debate can lose its effectiveness due to some elements of nonverbal language, such as excessive blinking. Neurologically, this indicates that the person is trying to find a way out in their mind because they feel trapped. It is a common gesture among politicians when they have to address a topic that makes them uncomfortable. Furthermore, the tension of the jaw muscles, which manifests as difficulty articulating certain sounds or excessive rigidity in the lower part of the face, is associated with people who fear that their thoughts or feelings about a topic will be exposed. Holding one's breath for a second is a gesture that "betrays" insincere politicians. It represents a conflict between what they think and what they say. Poker players are always very attentive to this attitude to guess the other's hand.

In 1970, Birdwhistell developed a comprehensive and detailed vocabulary of body movements, hypothesizing that these functioned like words in a language, although the path to scientific proof would only emerge in subsequent years. Gesture and speech are strongly linked, and just as there is a slip of the tongue, there is also a slip of gesture: the subject lets slip a gesture that betrays something they are trying to conceal. Often, not the entire gesture is executed, but only part of the action. When a slip occurs, only a single element, even an incomplete one, will appear as a slightly raised shoulder, a gesture of a finger perhaps slightly hinted, not only showing the finger but also shaking the hand slightly. If the subject manages to repress their anger strongly, the gesture is not executed at all.

In 1970, Birdwhistell developed a comprehensive and detailed vocabulary of body movements, hypothesizing that these movements functioned like the words of a language, although the scientific evidence for this would only become clear in the subsequent years. Obviously, gestures and words are closely connected, and just as there is a "slip of the tongue" in language, there is also a "slip of gesture" in body language: the subject inadvertently makes a gesture that betrays something they are trying to conceal. Often, the entire gesture is not executed, only part of the action. When a slip occurs, it typically involves a single element, even if it is incomplete: a slight raise of one shoulder, a brief hint of a finger gesture, not just showing the finger but also gently shaking the hand. If the subject can strongly suppress their anger, the gesture may not occur at all. Another indicator of a slip is that the action is performed outside the normal presentation position. Usually, gestures are made at

chest height, in a visible position. In cases of repression, the gesture is executed in an unconventional position, often without the subject being aware of it. Because non-verbal slips do not always happen and manifest uninhibited by consciousness, they are considered reliable and convey a specific message. When a person is being deceptive, they tend to make fewer gestures than usual. This demonstrates that it's not just the number or type of gestures that can reveal a lie, but also the mere occurrence of gestures can be revealing. The gestures that lead to deception are often illustrative. These gestures decrease when someone is lying. Illustrative gestures help explain ideas that are difficult to put into words; for example, snapping fingers when trying to remember a word. These gestures signal to the listener that the search is ongoing and the speaker hasn't finished speaking. Therefore, gesturing increases with active participation in the conversation. Another clue to deception is provided by manipulative gestures: wiping, scratching, adjusting hair, tapping feet, etc. These types of gestures, which last for a long time, may appear purposeless. They can involve actions like twirling a lock of hair, rubbing fingers together (usually involving the hand), or even any body part or object (common objects include pens, matches, cigarettes, or hairpins). If someone notices they are being observed, they often stop or mask the gesture. Manipulative signs are often accused of being signs of lying, but this is not always the case. Everyone has a kind of "favorite gesture"; some people like to twirl a ring, and others may stroke their mustache. Manipulations are accessible to consciousness, so they are unlikely to be used to relieve the emotion of lying unless the stakes are high. In that case, what can happen is an intermittent sequence. It is known that through "words" it is not always possible to discern the true intentions of the interlocutor, whereas non-verbal signals, which are difficult to control, offer a more significant insight into the subject's feelings. Gazes, gestures, postures, and interpersonal space constitute elements of investigation that have generated important research areas, especially in the analysis of political speeches where lies can impact entire nations. In Italy, a good example of manipulation through body language appears to be Silvio Berlusconi. He has always tried to be seductive, linking his persuasive ability to his way of dressing and speaking, leaving nothing to chance. His clothing combinations, fabrics, and colors became predictable early on. This also applies to the repetition, in the best advertising style, of slogans and catchphrases, such as the derogatory term "communists" used against his opponents (borrowed from Margaret Thatcher, who labeled the Labour Party

"socialists"), or verbal combinations like "mi consent" (allow me). But it is particularly the figurative representation of his political movement as a team, as Berlusconi describes the leadership group around him (once again using a term far from traditional political vocabulary), that allows him to present himself as a coach, a figure who advises, motivates, persuades, and invents: a manipulative figure far removed from traditional politics. From a bodily and movement perspective, this produces a continuous variation on the theme: within the canon embodied and practiced by the leader, only non-distinctive individual variations are allowed. A television example might help explain this aspect. In a memorable shot during the Milano Italia program (1993), which aired a few months before the March 27, 1994, elections (marking the beginning of a two-decade period in which Berlusconi would control the boundaries of Italian political discourse), the leaders of the new Forza Italia party were shown on television for the first time. At one point, the program's director used a long tracking shot to focus on the socks and shoes of those sitting in the front row. They were a group of officials from Berlusconi's companies who had been "transformed" into political leaders. Emulating the leader's style, they were all men, dressed in elegant clothing, and even sat in the same way, with their legs crossed. Almost all of them, with northern Italian accents, also spoke in the same way. What set them apart from the old party activists? The fact that each of them, much like in a company, maintained their individuality and a certain level of competition with others, all while working toward a common goal. This effect of homogeneity, of continuity beneath individual variability, produced a new type of credibility and represented a way of doing things, a collective but individualistic body, which was, in fact, unprecedented in Italy.

Another example to analyze is the leader of the Five Star Movement. For Grillo, at least in the beginning, there was supposed to be no difference between leaders and voters: the reference was exclusively to citizens, of whom the M5S presented itself as the direct expression. When asked by journalists about his political role, Grillo consistently claimed to be a comedian. Observing footage of events like the V-days in 2007 and 2008, it is clear that Grillo still fully embraced the role of a comedian on these occasions. He playfully insulted the head of the Naples committees with a derogatory term in a pseudo-dialect, vulgarly addressed one of the participants, and, most importantly, ridiculed some political figures. It is also noticeable that Grillo did

not speak from a podium reading a prepared speech; instead, he acted more like a host who improvised based on a predetermined outline, inviting various individuals onto the stage to formulate proposals or reflections independently. It appears to be a strategy based on the valorization of the emotional component of the relationship and on a mimetic form of dialogue that occurs between the audience and performer within events that resemble happenings rather than political rallies. His manner of delivering speeches seems aimed at engaging the audience emotionally: surprises, emphases, and pauses, much like in a concert, are managed by the speaker to listen to the participants' reactions, give space to their collective expressions (shouting, interjections, responses), or invite them to respond or complete their sentences. It is a frenetic discourse, at times not entirely comprehensible, and it presents itself as not entirely preordained. The goal is not to communicate the reasons for the protest or the nature of the proposals, but primarily to make the shared frustration and the collective reaction to it visible and sensibly perceptible. In a video posted directly by Beppe Grillo on his social media channel On April 19, 2021, in defense of his son, who was under investigation for the alleged crime of group sexual violence, the leader vehemently attacked the young alleged victim, defending his youngest child from the very serious accusation, whether rightly or wrongly. Experts explained that the message, "Send me to jail instead of my son," was provocative, but the anger was genuine. In the first minutes of the video, Grillo tries to remain calm, to control his combative spirit. At the beginning of the footage, one could say that it's a bit more of the character, the 'angry Grillo' in front of the camera. However, after a while, genuine anger flares up: his body language changes, his energy changes, and even his facial expression changes, turning red. From the moment he starts yelling and forcefully banging his hand on the table, the anger becomes real. He exhibits exaggerated gestures with violent outbursts. He makes energetic movements, most of which, from a technical standpoint, have precise meanings. First, he uses what is technically called "claw hands," as if he wants to tear something apart. Then, he delivers strong slaps on the table. Contact with objects, whether slaps or pounding fists on a table, represents a form of redirected anger as if he is venting it towards an object rather than striking someone. Not to mention that he can't stay still in his chair; he leans forward toward the camera. In doing so, he reduces the proxemic distance and invades others' personal space. Grillo aims to maximize the sharing of the short video, by posting it on social media. The goal of a skilled communication

strategist is not only to convey the message but also to put it on platforms that allow for immediate dissemination and, above all, sharing by others.

How to Win Over Masses: Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin

 The language of oratory was emblematic in the 20th-century dictators who, along with the widespread use of body language, managed to gain the approval of the people. They were true orators, known for adopting well-studied expressions and postures to convey their sense of authority. They captivated the masses not only with their grand speeches but also with their firm and influential postures and the use of their image and body as a model to follow. The speeches of Benito Mussolini, for example, were based on fixed patterns and templates: applause, speech, pause, applause, speech, and final applause. Mussolini had an extraordinary ability to engage the audience at the right moment during his speeches. His great skill was in drawing the masses into the discourse, creating a communicative circularity with the audience. Mussolini's speeches were effective and engaging thanks to the communicative setting and his non-verbal language. The Duce's speeches always took place in public squares, with his image as the leader at the center of a carefully orchestrated set. He always addressed the crowd from above, from a balcony, to create an almost divine image of himself. During his speeches, there were battalions of "vanilla," "vanguardist," and young Italians who echoed his most significant statements by chanting fascist slogans. Music, flags, parades, and marches stirred the audience into almost spontaneous enthusiasm. Mussolini meticulously studied his image and the gestures that accompanied his speeches. He always spoke to the crowd, trying to physically embody the idea of the new and strong man. He stood upright, chin forward, chest out, legs apart, arms crossed in a challenging posture, or hands on his hips, conveying a strong sense of security and power. He pronounced his words with a loud and powerful voice, amplified by loudspeakers. All these actions served to exalt the cult of virility and athletic exhibitionism. When Mussolini's speech was slow and calm, his gestures were static, tense, and solemn. When the tone became more agitated and violent, his gestures became more impulsive and rapid. In the oratory field, gestures have a fundamental value, as they can enhance the power of words when they also serve to establish a direct, almost emotional, relationship between the masses and the leader. All of this represented a perfect example of decisiveness, confidence, strength, and victory. During the fascist

era, the press was also used as a manipulative communication tool for the masses. With the Fascistissime Laws (1925-1926), Mussolini decreed that each newspaper should have a responsible editor affiliated with the Fascist Party and that the newspaper itself, before being published, should undergo strict censorship. These laws also established the Order of Journalists, whose members had to be members of the Fascist Party.In 1937, the Ministry of Popular Culture was established, which had the role of controlling every publication by seizing any documents deemed dangerous or contrary to the regime, and distributing the so-called "press orders" with precise instructions regarding the content of articles, the importance of headlines, and their size. Until the 1930s, the regime favored written information and propaganda; only over time did it understand the penetration potential of the radio and film, given the high rates of illiteracy and the limited inclination for reading. Radio and cinema then took on a leading role. On radio, the programs broadcast mainly consisted of speeches by Il Duce, official marches, or discussions about racism. Mussolini, after careful study of the pedagogical and propaganda potential of the medium, launched the campaign: "The village must have a radio" (for mass listening) in conjunction with the Hitlerian slogan "Radio in every home" (for individual listening). In 1933, broadcasts by the Rural Radio Entity began, targeting students during the week and farmers on Sundays, aimed at promoting mass acculturation. As for cinema, in 1925, the Cinematographic Educational Union, better known as the L.U.C.E. Institute, was established. It was a state body for propaganda and the dissemination of popular culture. The institute produced newsreels that were mandatory in all Italian cinemas. Additionally, in the 1930s, Cinecittà Studios were established in Rome. Moving further north to Germany, Hitler's famous speeches have been the subject of study for many orators. Hitler understood that learning to speak in public using correct oratory techniques would take him a long way. Perhaps this was suggested to him by his equally famous right-hand man, Goebbels, known for his excessive passion for communication. Hitler's speeches were meant to rebuke, stir consciences, or, better yet, incite action while intimidating at the same time. A voice spanning two and a half octaves, like his, lent itself to remarkable variations in rhythm, tone, and volume. Hitler and his collaborators fully exploited these characteristics along with his unique personality. He was a man who managed, through his speeches, to seduce millions of Germans, aided by a simple actor, a few vocal and postural techniques, and impeccable oratory

skills. The German historian and essayist J. Fest describes it as follows: "It is already half-past eight, and Hitler appears dressed in a brown overcoat, accompanied by his loyal followers, heading towards the podium. The people seem filled with joy and excitement, waving their arms and shouting 'Heil!' as they rise to their feet with a resounding clamor. Then, like in a theater, a trumpet signal. Sudden silence... Hitler steps forward rapidly to the forefront and begins speaking, improvising at first, slowly, and then gradually the words become rapid, and when the pathos reaches its climax, his voice chokes to the point where it's difficult to understand what he's saying. He gestures widely, and jumps excitedly here and there, attempting to captivate the eagerly listening audience. When interrupted by applause, he imposes silence with a theatrical gesture, spreading his hands. The 'no' that is heard repeatedly is meant to reinforce the melodramatic effect and is indeed pronounced and repeated with particular vigor." In his speeches, Hitler needed to clarify certain points as much as possible, and he was not allowed to be distracted by wandering gestures. Therefore, he tried to keep his body neutral, demonstrating in many speeches that his hands might want to move, but he kept them still or clasped together, almost as if he wanted to imprison them – a probable sign that someone had advised him not to gesticulate too much.Every time Hitler addressed a topic that was important to him, he moved one arm while keeping the other immobile, making well-measured gestures: pointing with his index finger, rotating a clenched fist, and moving his arm as if conducting a tempo, like an orchestra conductor. These seemingly random gestures were a sort of choreography designed to emphasize the most important words. Like a snake charmer, Hitler knew that immobility up to that point would only be effective if interrupted by significant gestures at the right time. Pointing with a sharp, forceful motion also meant involving and admonishing everyone, signifying that everyone was included and put on notice. His voice tone became very high-pitched, and the volume almost reached a shout. The only movements different from all the others occurred when Hitler spoke about unity; he emphasized the concept by making the soft gesture of both hands, even though the fingers were very rigid. This was the only opening gesture he generally made in his speeches. In contrast to his counterparts, Stalin distinguished himself not through his body language but rather through the modesty of his behaviors. He lacked the theatrical gestures of Mussolini or Hitler. Both of them based their power on the consent of the masses, which Stalin had a genuine fear of. Furthermore, he did not like speaking in public because, apart

from lacking adequate oratory skills, he did not feel secure even in the Russian language he spoke, as he was of Georgian origin. The only gesture that characterized Stalin was his habit of always keeping his right hand hidden. Some say it was due to an illness, while others, more suspicious, believe that this gesture was related to Stalin's membership in the Masonic order, although there is no concrete evidence of this. Soviet propaganda constantly praised Stalin, describing him with words like "Great," "Beloved," "Audacious," "Wise," "Inspirational," and "Genius." It portrayed him as an even stronger paternal figure and referred to the citizens as "his children." The interaction between Stalin and children became a key element of the cult of personality; the leader often took part in highly publicized gift exchanges with Soviet children from different ethnic backgrounds and allowed himself to be photographed with them. One famous photo depicts the Soviet leader with Engelsina Markizova, which hides a tragic story and offers no concessions to Stalin's apparent sensitivity toward children, who were merely objects of propaganda, associated with his submissive citizens. The girl in question and her family had a tragic fate. Her father, a regional Minister of Agriculture and the second secretary of the regional Communist Party was accused of "counterrevolutionary activities" and was executed in 1938. Her mother was deported to Kazakhstan with her children and died in 1940 under mysterious circumstances. According to the official version, she committed suicide, but many believe she was killed by Stalin's secret police. Angelina managed to survive and become a famous orientalist scientist but remained scarred for life by her family's tragedy. Stalin always tried to present his policies not as his original creation but as the faithful continuation of Lenin's line. However, in the course of the 1930s, the number of portraits and statues of Lenin decreased, giving way to those where Stalin appeared alone or alongside the Bolshevik leader. On the contrary, all those comrades and collaborators of Lenin who had fallen out of favor or had even been tried and executed disappeared from photographs and official reconstructions of the revolution. As the top-down Stalinist revolution transformed the Soviet economy and society, regime propaganda was mobilized to celebrate the regime's successes and hide its tragedies. The collectivization of the countryside was accompanied not only by a relentless campaign against the "kulaks" (the term used to designate wealthy peasants in czarist Russia and early Soviet Russia) but also by an influx of posters depicting joyful and festive peasants, urging them to join the collective farms (kolkhoz). Often, at the center of the scene, there was a tractor, symbolizing the

modernization and efficiency that were conspicuously absent from the collective farms. Another frequent symbol of modernization in the countryside was a young female figure, prominently displayed, wearing a red kerchief on her head. An important detail was that, unlike the traditional Russian peasant costume where the kerchief was tied under the chin, the young communist woman had her kerchief tied at the back of her neck, in an entirely new manner, symbolizing the new life that, according to the regime's claims, the peasant class would soon experience. Novels, posters, and paintings were meant to convey optimism and present the USSR as the "happiest country in the world," where each worker joyfully and enthusiastically contributed to the construction of socialism. Alongside the work of artists, the press gave great prominence to those workers who engaged with remarkable speed in their respective fields. The first celebrated figure was that of miner Aleksei Stakhanov, who on August 31, 1935, managed to extract 102 tons of coal (10% of the mine's daily production) in a 6-hour shift. Stakhanov was emulated by many others, not always out of emulation or enthusiasm for the cause. These exceptional workers received extremely gratifying rewards, both in terms of salary and consumer goods, as well as success and prestige, nationally and internationally. The entire Russian film industry (25 production companies, mostly concentrated in Moscow) was nationalized in 1919, making the state, or more precisely, the People's Commissariat for Culture, which also controlled literature and the arts. Lenin himself declared that, from a communist perspective, cinema was "the most important of the arts," and this was even more true because only a small portion of Russians in the 1920s could read and write. Carried to the most remote villages by the propaganda train, cinema was presented as a symbol of modernity finally reaching Russia, thanks to the new proletarian government. The story of Soviet cinema largely parallels that of the visual arts and literature. In the 1920s, in this field as well, propaganda and the celebration of the new regime were entrusted to avant-garde artists, namely directors who experimented with new expressive techniques, foremost among them being montage. Montage involved the association of separately filmed images and shots, which were then pieced together during the final film production. The resulting film was no longer a continuous sequence of scenes; at times, it even assumed a decidedly fragmented structure. However, in its final effect, this technique managed to evoke visual impressions and emotions in the audience that, at that time, no film produced in Europe or America could convey.

The Body Language of Donald Trump

Often, the communication methods used by "The Donald" are labeled as crazy. Some believe that his statements are entirely nonsensical, too over the top, unexpected to the point of bordering on mental instability. However, by examining photographs and videos of public encounters, carefully reading his speeches, and analyzing the messages he delivers before meetings, it becomes clear that Donald Trump employs communication techniques deliberately. What may seem like "incomprehensible and crazy" behavior to the inexperienced observer is, in reality, a precise persuasion strategy. It is essential to note that Trump is not a superficial connoisseur of communication techniques; he has been obsessed with applying psychology in business throughout his career as an entrepreneur and investor. He was so passionate about this that he co-authored the book "The Art of the Deal" in 1987 with Tony Schwartz, followed by "Surviving at the Top" in 1990 in collaboration with journalist Charles Leerhsen. Trump is not just a connoisseur; he is an author who has perfected negotiation techniques, written books and held crowded seminars for years. In 15 seasons of "The Apprentice," the reality show where he taught a group of aspiring managers about business, he explained these strategies to his future presidency. Trump is not merely supported by communication experts, as is the case with most political staff, including in Italy. He is, himself, an expert in persuasive communication. This trait is unique and often overlooked, which should lead to a more accurate assessment, especially by those unfamiliar with the world of negotiation communication. There are three technical elements used perfectly by the president: dominant non-verbal communication, the use of the negotiation technique of the absurd proposal, and the choice of childish language. Regarding the absurd proposal technique, before sitting down for negotiations, Trump makes a "big splash." Often, he releases this through brief press conferences or tweets. He makes an unacceptable demand of the other party, something so excessive and extreme that the counterpart and their entourage will surely respond with a "No." Some examples include initiating negotiations with the Chinese by threatening a 50% tariff on all imports or promising a 12-meter-high wall along the entire Mexican border. Before each negotiation, he communicates an evidently excessive, unrealistic, or blatantly

unattainable intention. These words are labeled as the "ramblings of a madman." The "unacceptable proposal" technique always follows the same standardized sequence. The effectiveness of this technique is related to the brain function studied by Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman in economics. Donald knows that to get more than what the counterpart would concede, he must make a splash and get a first "No." That's why Trump presents his unacceptable proposals before the meetings. This technique works when parties are forced to communicate. Willing or not, everyone must negotiate with the USA.

Turning to Trump's described childish language, many linguists, including George Lakoff, have analyzed the president's speeches during and after the election campaign. Trump speaks like a nine-year-old child. His sentences are short, the images he uses are concrete, simple, and visual, and there are only three verb tenses: past, present, and future, with virtually no conditionals. Rarely will you find logical sequences in his syntax. Is an ignoramus in power? We need to dig beneath the surface. Donald is a graduate of one of the most prestigious American universities. Moreover, having someone write a more "sophisticated" speech for a person in his position would be straightforward. So why this childlike simplicity in his language? It's a deliberate choice. Neuroscience demonstrates that to reach the listener's brain, there are "things" and "actions." Using indicative verb tenses and concrete elements makes communication understandable and clear. Furthermore, one of the evident methodologies is repetition. Trump tends to reiterate simple concepts almost obsessively. In an era of abundant online and offline stimuli, the only way to enter people's memories is to obsessively repeat a message. The "believe me" of his election campaign, repeated ad nauseam, was a simple way to generate trust. "No one builds walls like me" is an image that lends credibility by referencing concrete elements like the "Trump Tower." Of course, building walls between states is much more complex than renovating and selling a skyscraper. Highlighting this complexity would, however, lead to long, "if"-laden messages, making communication less impactful. Simplifying and visualizing makes the message memorable. In persuasive communication, the acronym K.I.S.S. is used: "Keep it simple and stupid." It transforms a message, regardless of its implementation complexity, into simple and stupid communication that everyone can grasp. Social media have made this need even more powerful. With fellow heads of state, Trump is often accused of behaving

like a "bully." The US president asserts his dominance by using his body language, especially with his trademark long and powerful handshakes when meeting with politicians, making it clear from the outset who holds more importance. However, when it came to Putin receiving a vigorous handshake, something unusual happened. Some experts analyzed Donald's body language during a behind-the-scenes video at the G20 in Hamburg, capturing the meeting between the Kremlin leader and the White House leader, noticing something entirely different than usual. In every single handshake, he generally wants to be the dominant force, explained Tonya Reiman, author of "The Power of Body Language" in an interview with the Boston Globe. However, in this scene, a brief handshake is accompanied by a friendly grip on the left arm. "You see, Trump is very cautious," added Lilian Glass, an American expert in communication and body language. "He doesn't smile, doesn't lean on Putin, but backs away." According to Glass, this might be due to a concern about appearing friendly with the Russian president. "He probably doesn't want to give Americans the wrong impression." For their first face-to-face meeting, the presidents spent two hours and sixteen minutes compared to the expected half-hour meeting, discussing the Syrian conflict, Ukraine, and terrorism. It was a highly anticipated meeting and appeared to take place in a friendly atmosphere.

Fashion as a Communication Tool

Not only non-verbal and gestural language but also how politicians dress can convey a lot about their values and those of the electorate they are addressing. It can even be the result of a carefully considered political marketing strategy. Those who have analyzed Donald Trump's fashion choices couldn't help but notice that even the President's outfits always carry a strong political connotation. Trump reportedly dresses "like a 1980s Wall Street tycoon," a reference to the commercial and economic empire he created, which still defines him, as well as to the vague Reagan-era dream of making America great again. An indispensable detail is the tie: while the trend in recent years has been to abandon ties in politics in favor of a more casual look, some argue that for Trump, giving up the tie would mean adopting a less authoritative and more middle-management look. That's why he has been seen wearing classic ties, often knotted so they reach well below the belt, sometimes bending the rules for a perfect knot. The ties are often in very bold colors, typically

red, a symbol of the Republican Party. The idea that a politician's attire is part of the message they want to convey and, therefore, should be managed just as strategically is not new. Sociologists of fashion like Simmel in the early 20th century already highlighted how clothing in Western capitalist societies served both to mark one's belonging to a social group and to distinguish oneself within it. More recently, some have referred to the possibility of fashion becoming a tool for politicians as "power dressing." Essentially, it means that a political leader's choice of attire can be a significant asset in the right circumstances. This concept was well understood by figures like Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State during Bill Clinton's second term, who admitted to choosing and using her always prominent and non-trivial jewelry as part of her "diplomatic arsenal" to gain an edge in negotiations. Especially when it comes to women in power, their appearance sometimes takes on more importance than it should, almost overshadowing their political messages or actions. This has been the case for Italian politicians like Laura Boldrini, Virginia Raggi, and Elena Maria Boschi, who have often been at the center of sexist controversies based on their clothing choices. For female politicians, fashion can also be one of the most potent tools for distinguishing their political brand. However, the formulas chosen by female politicians to convey their messages and proposals have varied. Some have focused on tradition, local ties, or ethnic identity. African women leaders, for example, have brought colorful fabrics, natural jewelry, and traditional headwear into politics. Internationally known figures like the Nobel laureate and Burmese State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi or Ukrainian politician Yuliya Tymoshenko have done the same. On the other hand, some female politicians, perhaps to appear more credible and less frivolous, have adopted a fully masculine style in their clothing. Hillary Clinton is an example, often seen wearing simple pantsuits, like the white one by Ralph Lauren she wore when officially accepting the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016. Angela Merkel's style also appears to have a distinctly masculine dress code, despite the variety of colors she chooses. More than just appearance, a politician's look is, in fact, a significant social signal and a powerful tool for exercising soft power. It's almost natural to wonder how politicians in a country like Italy, with a long and well-recognized fashion tradition, dress. Interestingly, power dressing doesn't seem to be a top priority for Italian politicians, at least in terms of image, except when it comes to purely formal elements (such as the Northern League's green ties) or when reduced to a distinctive but somewhat

gimmicky symbol (like Matteo Salvini wearing Lega slogans on his sweatshirts). In some cases, an Italian politician's look reflects their background. For example, former Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte's three-piece suits suggest his legal background, while Silvio Berlusconi's double-breasted suits have always been a direct reference to the 1980s entrepreneurial world he comes from as a self-made man. In other cases, outfit choices are programmatic. For instance, Matteo Renzi posed in a leather jacket and white T-shirt for a Chi magazine photo shoot, signaling the complete "scrapping" of the Democratic Party he advocated to align with the new sensitivities of Italian left-wing voters. In an era where appearance has taken precedence over being, having a stylist (someone who manages your appearance, including makeup, hair, and clothing) has become a must. Even the secretary of the Democratic Party, Elly Schlein, admitted to seeking help in crafting her daily looks. Her basic elements are an oversized colorful jacket, a white shirt or T-shirt underneath, and a pair of jeans. However, as strange as it may seem, Elly Schlein's non-look carries a very specific message. Her attire is far from invisible; it claims her place within a political history and current that reinterprets easily identifiable expressive tools in light of her taste and sensibilities. A certain nonchalance in appearance, or more accurately, a choice of garments that diverges from the standard fashion of the bourgeoisie, has historically been used by the left to demonstrate its closeness to working-class citizens, although there are exceptions. A clearer example of a left-wing female politician's attire is that of Emma Bonino, characterized by a casual yet refined style, quite far from glamour and a fully institutional look. When Giorgia Meloni was elected minister in 2008, she declared that it was not right to talk about the appearance of women in politics. Today, however, we know that clothing is an important form of communication regardless of gender. As shown by social psychology, our knowledge of others begins with the first impressions formed in the first few minutes of a relationship. One's outward appearance, including clothing, is one of the first things we observe and also contributes to building one's reputation. Examining the specific outfits our prime minister wears during official events, words that come to mind are sobriety, rigor, and control. She usually opts for a full blue or black look with wide-legged pants, a shirt, and pumps—a uniform that makes her appear similar to the predominantly blue-clad men, who often wear white shirts and ties in shades of blue and light blue in official photos. The choice of color is crucial in conveying the message. Blue, for instance, is a calming color that communicates

calmness, mental energy, and emotional bonds. In its dark shade, it is deep, restrained, constructive, and expresses dedication. Black, on the other hand, communicates rigor, authority, and control, and when softened by the white of a shirt, it conveys clarity and transparency.

CHAPTER III

LEADERSHIP AND WINNING COMMUNICATION

Characteristics of a Leader

Man is a cultural being, growing up in societies formed by other men over the centuries and participating more or less actively in the life of institutions that have evolved. The establishment of leadership is a process that takes place in the minds of people who live within a culture: a process that involves the ability to invent, understand, and evaluate stories, to grasp the conflict that exists between different stories. But who is the type of person who can be part of a community, who can enter the reality of history and eventually assume the role of a leader? The birth of so-called historiometry, defined as "the statistical analysis of historical data to conduct a quantitative assessment or comparison of particular historical figures, events, or phenomena," is to be placed at the beginning of the last century. In other words, it is the identification of traits and characteristics common to prominent historical personalities. Among them, are charismatic figures like military leaders or political leaders.

The history of modern historiometry began in 1906 with the publication of the book "Mental and Moral Heredity in Royalty" by Frederick Woods. Using biographical material, the author attempted to quantitatively characterize the personalities of hundreds of monarchs on a decimal scale that assessed their "intellect" and "virtue." The work was later expanded in a subsequent work titled "The Influence of Monarchs," in which Woods extended the evaluation to other European heads of state, correlating their biographical data with popular approval and the well-being of the nation they ruled. In the following years, another fundamental contribution to the subject came from the works of Edward Lee Thorndike, an eminent American psychologist who defined the "halo effect," which is the cognitive bias where the perception of a particular trait of an individual is influenced by the perception of one or more other traits of the same individual. In other words, the prejudice that, for

example, we tend, more or less consciously, to perceive a good-looking individual as more intelligent. Thorndike's theory was later taken up by Harold Kelley and later by Solomon Asch, who suggested that beauty was the trait from which all other traits, including intelligence, personal achievement, and charisma, were most strongly inferred. Specifically, the study of political leadership was addressed by Michael Efrain and EWJ Patterson, two American psychologists who published a study in 1974 with the emblematic title "Voters vote beautiful: the effect of physical appearance on a national election." In their work, the two analyzed the results of Canadian federal elections, discovering that attractive candidates received, on average, more votes than others. The results indicate that attractive candidates received more votes than others (32% versus 11%). For a leader to be perceived as such, they must also possess specific psychological and behavioral qualities. A leader must appear reliable and understanding regarding the needs, especially the irrational ones, of the electorate. In other words, they must be able to intercept the natural needs for security, acceptance, and community belonging that are inherent in human beings. In recent decades, in particular, there has been a strong shift in this direction. While in the past, voters and leaders primarily based their choices on their ideological and value principles, today they tend to do so based on the behavioral characteristics of the leader. One study found that more than 60% of the key figures in European politics lost a parent during childhood, mostly their fathers. Children who have both parents may socially model their behavior and inclinations based on them, while children who lose a parent may be stimulated to invent original precepts and practices in both social and moral contexts. Another recurring pattern in the experiences of future leaders is that they had opposite and conflicting relationships with different father or mother figures. According to historian McGregor Burns, figures like Gandhi, Lenin, and Hitler all had a positive relationship with one parent and a negative relationship with the other. Stalin, for example, had a mother who adored him and an alcoholic father who abused him. In such a situation, ambivalence becomes predominant, and the impulse to exercise power may represent an attempt to resolve a conflict that is a source of anxiety. Another common experience among leaders seems to be that they have had a somewhat isolated position compared to their peers since childhood. They felt in some way special and, in some cases, capable of things beyond the normal abilities of people. In cases where this attribution of uniqueness is not early, there are moments in their biographies where

the individual has the precise feeling of being "chosen." For Martin Luther King, it was when he realized he could lead the Montgomery bus boycott in Alabama. In a democracy, original political leadership is not that of "political leaders" as we commonly understand them: the elected and the rulers. Original political leadership is that of the citizen: that's where the political movement begins. It is the citizen who first exercises influence, i.e., acts as a leader, by voting and deciding who deserves to govern based on personal qualities and party principles and based on the purposes that, through voting, the citizen intends to support. These purposes form the political project of candidates for elective public office, which the citizens should support because it reflects their values and informed choices. It could be argued that this is not true leadership because it lacks the other components of the leadership concept: "a person," "a group of people," and the "common goal." In reality, leadership does not necessarily have to be exercised by one person (this is one form of leadership, individual leadership). Voting is an expression of collective leadership: it is a group of people (the voters) involved as actors in the process of influence. The "group" being influenced is the set of people subject to government action (national or local; supranational in the case of elections for the European Parliament, the only elected body of an international organization with decision-making powers). The common goal is the program of a party or coalition, the implementation of which is made possible by the election results. Another type of leadership, not practiced by the majority of citizens but quite common, is the exercise of influence in the political field, at the local or national level, by non-elected individuals, through personal commitment (activists, influencers), or civil society organizations. More rare but possible are cases of people who, without holding any public office, have exerted political influence on a large scale. Examples include Greta Thunberg and Malala Yousafzai, who pursue goals related to political action, the protection of the environment, and women's rights, not as elected officials but as activists. Jean Monnet and Gandhi, never elected, changed the destiny of the European continent and the Indian subcontinent.

Returning to political leadership, politics, the charismatic leader emerges in an "extraordinary situation" (an economic, social, political, cultural crisis, a social change, or a public emergency such as an epidemic, unemployment, or immigration) in which they gain the trust of their followers, who recognize them as possessing extraordinary qualities, unique and fundamental for solving the current situation. The

charismatic leader can then focus on the mission around which a community or movement is created in support, indicating "charismatic domination" through which personal dedication to them is established. This dedication arises from the belief in the leader's qualities and the gap between expectations and the real situation of change/crisis that people are facing, which produces feelings of uncertainty such as fear, anxiety, and anguish. This psychological status constitutes the main to entrust themselves to a charismatic leader capable of spreading hope and igniting widespread and renewed enthusiasm among the masses. On one hand, the leader can become the one to whom the masses entrust themselves with deep trust; on the other hand, he can embody, in the eyes of the masses, ideas, and values that are the object of great emotional investment, leading to a common worldview, sometimes even culminating in forms of leader worship, as historically happened, for example, with Lenin, Hitler, and Castro. Obedience is given by followers only to a charismatically qualified leader who has the awareness of having to carry out a mission considered an inner duty to resolve a situation of chaos, perceived as a collective problem. From this objective, the charismatic leader draws his strength and his claim to dominance; he demands to be obeyed and followed in pursuit of his purpose. This attracting force exerted by the leader on a mass following becomes evident in the formation of a group completely devoted to him or even a movement that, in his name, seeks to bring about radical innovations in society. Over time, the leader seeks to consolidate his power within his party by forming his own following or a close circle of trusted collaborators (charismatic aristocracy), stifling the freedom of opinion of dissenting leaders as much as possible, and demonstrating his indispensability, based on competence, oratory skills, an abundance of impactful phrases, and resolute aggressiveness; qualities that make him irreplaceable despite being the subject of "venomous oligarchic vapors." Autonomy in their functions derives from the legitimacy acquired in the electoral process, where the leader assumes a prominent position that sidelines the actions of political parties. Voters establish personal trust relationships with their preferred leader/candidate, increasingly facilitated in recent times by the media and new social media. Directly engaging with citizens (going to the public) through the disintermediation process has further weakened political parties and favored the personalization of politics and, above all, leadership. In the executive sphere, the personalization of leadership coincides with the concept of presidentialization, a concentration of governing functions in one person who evokes

the charismatic hero or democratic prince. However, this concentration of power can also occur as the leader of a party, giving rise to the label of a personal party where the existence of the party is associated with the leader's image, often referred to as the "political entrepreneur." The trend toward concentrating power in the hands of party leaders has significant effects on their institutional functions through centralization and verticalization of power in favor of monocratic bodies, especially in the relationship between parties at the local and national levels. The personalization of politics is now a widespread phenomenon in both established democracies and countries undergoing or having undergone a democratization process. This is particularly challenging where the weight of historical legacies is difficult to neutralize, and new party organizations are still weak, primarily oriented toward electoral competition and charismatic institutions. As Weber foresaw in 1922, parties have become machines at the service of the leader. This prediction is supported by assumptions related to profound social transformations, starting from the second half of the last century, which are the result of postmodernity and have accentuated individualism. The personalization of politics is nothing more than a reflection of the personalization of society. There is no doubt that the role of television, starting from the 1960s of the 20th century, has brought about a change in the way politics is conducted: the mediatization of politics (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999), video politics (Sartori 1997), media democracy (Meyer 2002), videocracy (Pharr 1997), and pop politics (Mazzoleni and Sfardini 2009) are now terms and conceptual tools that have highlighted how the media have facilitated the process of personalizing politics and simplifying language, in line with the rules of new social media such as Twitter and Facebook. In this context, the charismatic leader is the one who manages to establish empathy with his "audience," which recognizes his abilities, communication skills, and exceptional qualities in the Weberian sense, and appreciates his personal story, based on a narrative constructed around his figure. One of the main consequences of the mediatization of politics is the proliferation of personal parties "serving this or that political leader," also in the form of a political enterprise party, which is a personalization of political leadership that has minimized the organizational structure and assumed a connotation similar to that of parties of notables, where the leader's image is paramount, spectacularizing political discourse and fueling the role of money in politics to finance expensive electoral campaigns, structured by communication and political marketing agencies.

The growing importance of political communication strategies is accompanied by an increasing centrality of the personalization of politics. In the absence of ideological coordinates to refer to, the leader's image has become a cognitive shortcut that can compensate for traditional party programmatic orientations in terms of mobilization. The centrality of the leader is now a constant feature of modern parties that are increasingly becoming machines at the service of the political leader, with structural and electoral effects strongly negative on party identification/membership and a progressive decrease in membership.

George Marshall: An Example of a Good Soldier

During World War II, General George Marshall, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and the author of the Marshall Plan for European Recovery, was offered command of the troops during D-Day. Though flattered by the proposal, he told President Roosevelt, "The decision is yours, Mr. President; my desires have nothing to do with this matter." As history teaches us, General Dwight D. Eisenhower was chosen to lead the military operation because Roosevelt preferred to have Marshall in Washington. Marshall's fame as a general was naturally overshadowed by this decision, but his reputation as a leader was forever solidified. The proof that Marshall's choice was not only selfless but also the right one came later when he was asked to draft the order of the day announcing Eisenhower's leadership to the Allied forces. Marshall did it promptly and sent a copy to Eisenhower himself along with a congratulatory note. Marshall was known as a sober and controlled individual who spoke when he had full knowledge of the facts when he believed he was right, and especially when no one else had demonstrated the ability or willingness to assert the position he wanted to defend. In his family and childhood, there was little to suggest that he would become a leader. Born on December 31, 1880, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, Marshall was the third child of a reasonably well-off family. Unfortunately, the young Marshall seemed more incapable and timid than his siblings, and he grew up feeling inadequate and destined for failure, especially in his studies. His father, who owned a coal-producing oven, clearly favored his older brother, and Marshall had to rely on his mother, to whom he was very attached. She played a crucial role in inspiring his ambition and his unwavering sense of integrity. When Marshall was ten,

his family suffered a severe financial setback, which further instilled in the young boy a sense of frugality.

For Marshall, the difficulties of childhood served as a stimulus. He couldn't stand feeling defeated. When his brothers and neighborhood kids tried to take advantage of him, he strategically organized his defense. Adults often reflect on their childhood experiences, and Marshall loved to recall the story of a group of girls who betrayed their agreement to pay him for a ride on a raft, and how he got back at them by sinking the raft they were on. His strengths lay more in the realm of "personal intelligence" and well-considered judgments about facts and people. At work, Marshall was not only tireless but also highly disciplined and thoughtful, and he expected these qualities from others as well. He learned the art of command and understood that he couldn't afford to show too much favoritism to those who had to obey his orders or accept his punishments. In the mid-1930s, he was appointed Chief of Staff, his last assignment before Washington as a brigadier general. The decisive turning point he had long awaited had finally arrived at the age of fifty-five. A decade before retirement, he finally entered the halls of power. In April 1939, President Roosevelt chose Marshall for his next appointment as Chief of Staff of the Army. This placed in his hands the task of preparing the army for the largest military effort ever undertaken up to that point in history and gave him the leading role in planning campaigns to defeat the Axis enemies. In the period immediately following his appointment as Chief of Staff, Marshall had the task of sensitizing Americans to the Nazi threat and the need for a rapid mobilization effort. He proved equal to the task, both working behind the scenes and openly addressing Congress. He succeeded in convincing the majority of citizens of the need to expand the size of the army, which grew from 200,000 troops to 8.3 million. Once Americans were convinced of the need to strengthen the army for the war effort, Marshall had to provide more sophisticated narratives. One of these themes concerned the nature of the army. It could no longer be a heterogeneous collection of individuals; it had to represent all strata of American society. To achieve this goal, an egalitarian recruitment system had to be implemented. Officers needed to have proper education and direct operations based on the best military training. Technology had to be modern, and research had to engage the best minds to plan future actions. Marshall envisioned a new army that would abandon obsolete regulations, bureaucratic formalities, and

obscurantism. Marshall represented a model of utmost integrity. His honesty and sense of honor were unquestioned. He was considered by all as a man capable of altruism, free from boasting and self-pity. He granted no special treatment to either himself or others. With his refined language skills, he became a superb orator. He could captivate any audience, answer questions, anticipate concerns, and focus attention on important issues. He rarely used notes and could speak for hours relying solely on his ironclad memory. Congress invited him to present his views multiple times, and he entered the annals of history for the way he, before a committee of skeptics, managed to advocate his cause, winning them over. Marshall would not have achieved such success if he had appeared biased. To be strict, he expressed his disagreement with the government's policy at the time, albeit always respectfully, even showing sympathy for less widely shared or known points of view. Marshall consistently demonstrated concern for the human dimension of the soldier. Regardless of the volume of his commitments, he always found time to meet with his subordinates, send a gift to a deserving collaborator, or show compassion in times of personal loss. Yet, he was also famous for his ability to push people to their limits, and his precise understanding of hierarchies, discipline, and authority. In American history, Marshall is a unique figure for the esteem he enjoyed among his fellow citizens and people from many other parts of the world. Truman called him "the greatest soldier that America has ever produced," and Winston Churchill, with whom Marshall had many disagreements, praised him with words of admiration, describing him as the noblest of all Romans.

Eleanor Roosevelt: A Common Yet Extraordinary Woman

If today the role of the First Lady is a politically autonomous and specific position, it is owed in large part to Eleanor Roosevelt, who, before representing the president, learned to represent herself. With Eleanor, the function of the First Lady took on a public and political significance, not just as the president's expression and voice but as a parallel "pulpit" bearing its issues and goals. Eleanor pursued objectives that aligned with her political vision, even when they didn't necessarily coincide with those of the administration. Skillful use of the media helped elevate Eleanor as a public figure, although she had to navigate a delicate balancing act, reconciling her political activism with the need not to present herself as a bona fide political figure (a common objection from conservative opponents being, "she wasn't elected"). This

was possible because Eleanor Roosevelt didn't "become" political when she became First Lady in 1933, following Franklin Delano Roosevelt's election to the presidency. Her political formation dates back at least to the years of World War I when she gradually moved away from the role of a "political wife" she had played up to that point, collaborating in Franklin's political career as a state senator of New York and later as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in Woodrow Wilson's administration. Eleanor's formative journey and activism were structured along the lines of progressive women's associations, particularly New York women's clubs, and later pacifist groups, traditionally nonpartisan. However, in a distinctive trait, she was also active within the Democratic Party, advocating for greater representation and visibility of women, such as when she directed the 1928 national campaign for the first Catholic candidate, Democrat Al Smith. In 1933, therefore, the public wondered how Eleanor Roosevelt would interpret her new role as First Lady, given her complex identity as an activist, militant, and worker. Her scope of action as First Lady was extensive and touched on issues she had been committed to for years: women's social and political rights, labor rights, poverty alleviation, youth attention, and increasingly, albeit inconsistently, the rights of African Americans and minorities in general. In her way, Eleanor Roosevelt was someone who aimed high, but the direction her ambition would take could not be foreseen, as the position she eventually occupied did not exist in the society she had grown up in. Born in 1884 into a very wealthy New York family with high political and social standing, she had more opportunities than a woman of her generation typically would. However, Eleanor had a particularly unhappy childhood. Her parents, Anna Hall Roosevelt and Elliott Roosevelt appeared to be an ideal couple. Her autobiography begins with this sentence: "My mother was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen." But behind the brilliant façade of the large Roosevelt clan lay severe pathologies. The Victorian world of her father and therefore her uncles and aunts was marked by alcoholism, adultery, child molestation, rape, and abandonment. Her mother was a cold woman who died of diphtheria when Eleanor was eight; her father died two years later. For most of her adolescence, she was raised along with her siblings by her maternal grandmother. Eleanor Roosevelt remembered herself as an unattractive child, with a constant sense of inferiority compared to other family members. She had little confidence in her intellect, and her academic abilities were also shaky. The most important event in her development was her trip to Europe, where she attended

the Allenswood School in the suburbs of London. When she returned to the United States, she immediately put her efforts into social causes. The progressive era was unfolding in Washington, with her uncle Theodore Roosevelt as the dynamic president; New York City was permeated with social reform zeal. But the mentality of the time did not envision such a commitment to the public sphere, as laudable as it might be, becoming the main occupation for a young New York debutante. Expectations for her were to fall in love, get married, and dedicate herself to family life. Following the script, Eleanor became engaged to her distant cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a young man who, while somewhat superficial, knew how to make a favorable impression on people. The two young people married in 1905. The fifteen years that followed did not indicate that Eleanor's life would eventually take an unusual course. Eleanor gave birth to five children, although she was not particularly talented as a mother, undoubtedly due to her troubled childhood.

In 1917, America's entry into World War I allowed her to be of service, and she seized it eagerly. She worked in the Red Cross canteen, organized the Red Cross for the Navy, and supervised knitting work in Naval Department workshops. She introduced strict rules for food savings in her family and aimed to spread this austerity model as widely as possible. Politically, she became increasingly progressive and actively pushed for women's suffrage, eventually feeling capable of confronting the more conservative members of her family. Perhaps this emerging self-esteem, albeit a bit late, was an early sign of the challenging capacity that is characteristic of a leader. The end of the war in November 1918 could have forced Eleanor to return to her essentially apolitical role as her husband's support. Instead, two dramatic events changed the nature of her marriage and pushed her further onto the path of independence she would follow for the rest of her life. The first was when Eleanor discovered the ongoing relationship between her husband and Lucy Mercer, his secretary. The second decisive event was public: in the summer of 1921, Franklin fell seriously ill with polio, and for a time, it was uncertain whether he would ever walk again. Eleanor energetically engaged in her husband's rehabilitation, determined to prevent him from remaining disabled. She wanted Franklin's achievements to be preserved and that he could return to politics if he wished. Almost simultaneously, as Eleanor discovered her own voice and political dimension, Franklin was ready to re-enter the public scene. In 1928, he was elected governor of the state of New York,

and he later won the historic 1932 presidential election by a landslide. While Eleanor sincerely admired Franklin's capabilities and had learned from him to observe and analyze human situations, she derived little pleasure from his political victories. One of the factors behind this lack of engagement was that she did not genuinely enjoy the tumult of political life, and the need to always be controlled, and she had a real aversion to the life of a politician's wife, in which all privacy was denied. Once Franklin assumed the presidency, absorbing all his energies, Eleanor made efforts to build her own life. Activities she could consider independent became essential to her: her lectures, essays, radio programs, and her commitment to causes she felt close to. By this time, Eleanor had become a very different person from the young housewife of 1910. When Franklin took the oath on March 4, 1933, at the height of the worst recession the country had ever experienced, Eleanor was concerned that she could no longer decide freely in which direction to direct her efforts, nor express a position different from her husband's on certain important issues. At the same time, she probably began to realize that a certain power was implicit in her position and that she could direct that power in the direction she desired.

The Eleanor Roosevelt who emerged during the 1930s played at least four distinct roles. First, she was a committed advocate for women's participation in government. Both openly and behind the scenes she pressured women to be included in prestigious positions and worked with equal vigor to have women's viewpoints more widely disseminated and, wherever possible, implemented. The second role was that of a spokesperson for liberal causes. Roosevelt had enormous access to the media and used it to the fullest. In addition to holding regular press conferences, she wrote articles and books, and for many years maintained a column titled "My Day," which appeared in 136 newspapers. The third role was that of a spokesperson and defender of citizens' rights, and finally, the fourth, perhaps the most important and delicate, was that of her husband's private advisor. Many years later, it is worth remembering that Eleanor Roosevelt was highly esteemed in her time. In almost all surveys, she emerged as the most respected woman in America, and in various rankings, she was even named the most popular woman in the world. When Franklin died in 1945, Eleanor mourned for the nation, but she seemed indifferent. A few years later, the newly inaugurated President Truman invited her to join the first U.S. delegation to the United Nations. Since she would be the only woman in the delegation, she

commented, "If I hadn't been able to make myself useful, they wouldn't have simply thought that I, as an individual, had failed, but the failure would have been attributed to all women, and shortly, there would have been few chances for others to participate." Beyond this official position, Roosevelt embraced many causes with differences from when her husband was alive: she could freely express her thoughts without worrying about the effect her words would have on her husband's career, and she increasingly shifted her energies onto the world stage. Roosevelt embodied the innovative message that a woman could lead a life of independent thought and action without adopting confrontational attitudes that would alienate the sympathy of the masses. Many questioned her convictions, but her conduct, her respect for others, and her sensitivity to the needs of the times converted more than a few skeptics. The ability to learn from experience was fundamental for her because essentially, she had no models to inspire her, nor support organizations behind her. Unlike other leaders, Roosevelt was in the precise position of having to invent herself and build her narratives from scratch.

Margaret Thatcher: A Clear Identity

Undefeated, that's the title she would have wanted to see on the cover of her biography. The concept of invincibility has always characterized and accompanied the life of Margaret Thatcher, one of the most debated figures of the post-war era. She served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom three times, the longest tenure in 20th-century British history. She is also credited with two exceptional feats: first, becoming the leader of a major political party that had never had a woman as its leader, and second, after becoming Prime Minister, completely changing the life of post-war British society. The blend that composed "Thatcherism" included the rule of law, a strong currency, free markets, fiscal discipline, strict control of public spending, low tax rates, patriotism, and a touch of populism. Thatcher had the task of addressing an entire population and fulfilled this task by offering the British people a type of identity and inviting her compatriots to embrace it. If anyone refused to identify with her vision, she would not hesitate to enact exclusionary processes. Her childhood was as unremarkable as can be imagined: her father, Alfred, owned the

main grocery store in the town of Grantham, adored his daughter, and treated her like the son he never had. As a young girl, Margaret was a good student; she worked hard and adhered strictly to the rules, although she was not considered intellectually precocious. Perhaps the most unusual element of her childhood is the fact that Thatcher practically denied the existence of her mother, Beatrice. When she became Prime Minister in 1979, she stated, "Of course, I owe almost everything to my father. He raised me to believe in the things I believe in, and it is on those values that I fought to be elected." Her initiation into politics took place during the years of World War II when England found itself alone in upholding democratic values threatened by the Nazi scourge. It was a difficult but glorious period. Under Churchill's stimulating and relentless leadership, England proved to be a great power once again. As with Franklin Roosevelt, Margaret's choice of a life partner was somewhat calculated. In 1951, she married Dennis Thatcher, a divorced man older than her, who had been very successful in the business world. By entering into this marriage, she became part of a social class higher than her family's, and she no longer had to work to earn a living. But Dennis offered her more than money and prestige; he was an extraordinarily supportive companion who allowed her to appear openly on the public stage.

In the 1960s, she became a leading figure in the Conservative Party. Young, attractive, balanced, well-prepared, superbly articulate, both determined and prudent, she made a great impression on both political allies and the general public. Between 1965 and 1970, she served as a shadow minister in various sectors, and when the Conservatives returned to power in 1970, the new Prime Minister, Heath, appointed her as Minister of Education. In all of these positions, she performed commendably. Although Thatcher's talents were widely recognized and esteemed, it was unclear to what extent she could aspire to climb the party ranks. The Conservative Party's elite consisted of aristocrats who had known each other for years. In almost every respect, she differed from the typical figures of the system. She was a woman, came from the middle class, attended a regular high school instead of one of the prestigious schools of the English aristocracy, and, above all, she genuinely believed in the conservative values that her contemporaneous leaders adhered to more in name than in practice. In her new role as the leader of the opposition to the Labour Party, Thatcher adopted a line that required the utmost balance. On the one hand, she tried to be inclusive,

attempting to keep rival Conservative leaders under control and to win over those who were not entirely supportive of her leadership. At the same time, she began to convey to the nation and the world that she had a political philosophy of her own, much less moderate than that of the other leaders. In the 1979 election campaign, she challenged the conventional image that Britain had of itself. However, when she came to power, it was unclear whether the promised changes would ever materialize. What helped Thatcher stay firmly on the course was primarily her great self-confidence. She believed that honesty, initiative, decorum, in short, the virtues she had absorbed from her father, were the right remedies for the ills afflicting England. Since Churchill's time, no other political figure had been able to embody that sense of self-esteem and confidence that Thatcher aimed to arouse in the demoralized English population. To achieve this result, she was willing to fight and personally adhere to the strictest rules. In general terms, the Iron Lady falls into the category of leaders who, from a young age, consider themselves predestined and demonstrate their ability to challenge authority. However, it should be emphasized that, as a woman in a male-dominated world, she always had to walk a fine line between questioning and breaking down barriers. But once she became Prime Minister, she immediately made it clear that she would be a very different leader from her immediate predecessors. She cared more about asserting her ideas than about consensus; therefore, she immediately declared her goals and mission. She talked about "new beginnings" and "great transformations." Both on the domestic and international stage, Thatcher gained a reputation as an uncompromising person who took a position, expressed it plainly, and ignored any criticism. Among her life circumstances and her ideology, there is inevitably a contradiction. Although her origins qualified her as a member of the "us," she also had much in common with the "them." After all, she was wealthy, educated, and engaged in an activity related to ideas; despite being a sworn enemy of state bureaucracy, she had always received her salary from the state. However, like Reagan, she managed to convince the public that she was the embodiment of "us" and fundamentally different from "them." Regardless of her husband's wealth, she had no trouble embodying the story she told. She saw reality in black and white and could not tolerate ambiguity and subtleties. Completely uninterested in public opinion, she even accused those who took it into account of betrayal. Where Thatcher achieved truly remarkable results was in influencing how British citizens saw their own country, the choices they faced, and

the place they held in the world. She effectively challenged the socialist orientation that had characterized British politics since the end of World War II; she strengthened individual entrepreneurial abilities by favoring innovative small businesses and, in general, gave space to market forces; she criticized the consensual view of the leading role of trade unions, state industries, and local government. We can confidently assert that Margaret Thatcher qualifies as an effective direct leader: someone who knew how to influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of her contemporaries. She also deserves to be considered an innovative leader because she managed to revive beliefs and values that had lain dormant in England for years. However, she often brought about this transformation through divisive methods, deepening the contradictions between England and other countries, between conservatives and laborites, and within her party between those who were entirely loyal to her and those who dared to voice some criticism. Nevertheless, if she had been less tenacious, perhaps she would never have reached power, or having reached it, she might not have succeeded in bringing about a decisive shift in the attention, interests, and energies of the English people. Thatcher's failures stem from the same factors that determined her successes.

CONCLUSION

The study of language in political contexts is important not only for its practical implications but also for the consequences it could have on the democratic process. Today, we live in an information society where everyday life at all levels is heavily influenced by communication systems. It's a society that communicates intensely and continuously through increasingly versatile and sophisticated means, with countless purposes stemming from its pluralistic nature and the complexity of the social system. In politics, the advent of social media represents a turning point. Political communication finds in social media, seemingly horizontal and universally accessible platforms, a new channel for the practices of disintermediation, where political leaders can directly distribute their messages to a universal audience of citizens without any intermediaries. Up until this phase, political parties and leaders needed to establish their presence in traditional media and interact with professional information operators. With the rise of social media, political communication reaches its recipients directly, without contextualization, introductions, clarifications, or mediation by journalism, and without the need to adapt the message to the right format. Throughout history, technology has created a world that didn't exist before. Mussolini speaks in Rome, but squares ranging from the Indian Ocean to the Alps hear his voice simultaneously. With the advent of communication, leaders emerge. Their voices reach every place, but over time, a further need arises: "What to say." The need for content, for words that can build consensus, becomes apparent. Figures of the 20th century, as well as democratic leaders like Churchill, understand that wars are fought primarily with words. In this paper, it has been emphasized that politicians need to master two languages: verbal language and the language of the body. Knowing what to say is important, but knowing how to say it is equally important. Non-verbal communication consists of facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language, and all these elements are crucial for those pursuing a political career. The study of non-verbal language, certainly relevant today but originating in political leaders of all times, should, in my opinion, be given greater consideration and be equated with verbal communication.

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