

*Call for papers for a special issue of Comunicazioni Politica (ComPol)
Journal of the Italian Association of Political Communication (vol. 1, 2018)*

**Love and hate in politics.
The emotionalization of political communication**

Guest editors

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Deadline for abstracts: 5 May 2017

Notifications of acceptance: 20 May 2017

Deadline for submission of accepted full papers: 15 September 2017

Two-step review process: 1 October 2017 – 15 January 2018

Final version of accepted papers due: 1 February 2018

Special issue published: March 2018

Political communication has always exploited emotional levers to mobilise support. Now, however, this emotional component has become much more intense. As a key corollary, the public debate has transitioned from a fact-based to a post-factual, post-truth phenomenon.

After decades in the rationalistic mainstream, scientific studies, too, have recognised the pivotal importance acquired by emotional tones in political actors' communications. As shown in particular by the latest US presidential elections, emotionalization strategies have taken a decidedly caustic turn – e.g. with aggressive political language that seeks to delegitimise opponents via explicit personal attacks – as politics increasingly invokes symbols and feelings once considered pre-political, such as love, passion and the heart. Political action is built on a tension between “frames of fear” and “frames of hope”, fuelled in part by the primacy acquired by digital media.

As the great 20th century ideological frameworks have fallen apart and the great narratives have crumbled, politics has adopted the techniques of advertising and marketing. In those arenas, content has been emotionalized, firstly to seduce and secondly to identify. A political-communication era has thus dawned in which highly emotional storytelling is spreading, closely linked to the personalization of the leadership, as a tool to construct an emotional consensus that is increasingly hard to achieve on rational and ideological lines. Digital media – mainly the collaborative Internet of social networks and *personal media* in general – have established the emotional dimension as a key structural component of the communication system and register. After centuries of monopolising the rational paradigm for studying society, behaviour and decision-making (“an informed choice”), the social sciences are therefore reappraising the assumption that rationality is the sole basis for action and are reviewing it from different perspectives. Hence the social sciences need to devise innovative new empirical, methodological and theoretical approaches.

This special issue invites submissions from a broad range of disciplines with interdisciplinary approaches, in particular: media and cultural studies, sociology of communication, sociology of emotions; political science; history of political communication and election campaigns; political psychology; linguistics and rhetoric; visual

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and textual semiotics. Proposals that seek to build links between the social sciences and neurosciences or the cognitive sciences are especially welcome. Indeed, this meeting of disciplines has already yielded some of the most advanced discoveries for contemporary political communication, especially in election campaigns.

Possible topics may include but are not limited to:

- establishing concepts of “emotion” and “feeling” applied to political, electoral and institutional communication;
- the political actors’ use of strategies to emotionalize the message and its effects on the public and on the quality of public debate;
- the strategic use of the emotional frame by political and media actors in election campaigns;
- the narrativization of the political discourse and the application of emotional storytelling techniques;
- polls, *sentiment analysis* and big data as objectivity in the public debate is eroded and we cross the frontier into post-truth politics;
- the affective and emotional components of political leadership;
- tides of emotion on social media in bursts of *fake news*, *hate speech*, *negative campaigning* and *emoticons*;
- the effects of strongly emotional communication and post-truth strategies on the ebb and flow of public debate and the forms of political participation.

*Authors interested in submitting a paper for the special issue should email their abstracts in Italian or English (about 1000 words, including methodological note, research goals, main findings and tentative title) followed by a short bio, listing qualifications and publications, by **5 May 2017** to crisopher.cepernich@unito.it, edoardo.novelli@uniroma3.it and compol.rivista@gmail.com.*

For further information about the journal and instructions for authors, please see www.mulino.it/riviste/issn/1594-6061.