**Setting the narrative: how women in power use social media to spread their**

**messages.**

**Outline**

This project aims to compare two very different, but in some ways also very similar women in power: Giorgia Meloni, the Italian premier, and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, also known as AOC and a US politician. Far from focusing on the different ideals that these two women represent - the former is right-wing, the latter left-wing - our aim is to show how these two women use social networks to communicate with the public and how their way of communicating can have an effect on the country and on political elections. We chose this theme because we think that nowadays it is extremely important to be able to communicate via social media and because this new way of communication is very different from traditional ones. The research question guiding our study is whether there are any correlations between the way these two women use social media and their political success, by considering also the theme of intersectionality. Regarding this topic, we found some studies previously conducted by various scholars. However, these mostly concern the topic of women in politics, or the growing role of social networks in political campaigns, as well as exploring the topic of intersectionality. Therefore, the topic we have chosen turns out to be an in-depth exploration of the topic of social networks and politics, with a special focus on women in power and how they use social networks. However, we did not find any studies already conducted on this specific topic: therefore, we concluded that it was the perfect topic to explore in depth, finding it also absolutely interesting, since social media is the bread and butter of young people and the key to the future, both political and otherwise.

**Goal and target**

The goal we have set ourselves with this project is to understand the mechanisms behind the success of these two seemingly very different women, but who actually have one very important thing in common: both have managed to achieve great success and a large following. Very often on social networks there is a lack of political argumentation, precisely because the "classic" politicians end up sharing mere news, in a didactic manner or using too solemn a tone, leading to the news not being fully understood by those reading or listening. Both of these women, however, have succeeded in their intent and in creating a network of followers who in one way or another manage to understand and keep up with the *Main Voice* of the two female users they have decided to support and follow. Therefore, we want to understand if this success can be somehow traced back to the way these two women use social media within a broader communication strategy.

Our ideal target audience is curious young people who are interested in understanding the mechanisms behind certain political phenomena in relation to social networks. We chose young people because we believe they are best suited to understand some of the mechanisms of social networks, being the main users of these applications. In addition, the output we produced is a website within which there is a variety of content-images, videos, podcasts-and we believe that young people are more able to move with agility within a website like ours and move from one content to another without difficulty.

**Methodology**

As for the method used, right from the start, the group agreed to tackle this issue and, above all, to compare two different female politicians, both of whom are very popular on social media.

In particular, concerning the methodology used to carry out our project, we can indicate several steps. First of all, we looked for previous studies on the topic of our interest. We made use of some studies made available by the professor on Moodle (those of IEGMC), and we searched for other documents on the JStore portal. We divided up the different papers and each member of the group wrote a small summary of what was indicated in the paper that might be of interest for our project.

After that, we compared notes and came up with our research question. Only at this point we started searching the Internet for the material we needed to conduct our study, by consulting different websites, such as Primaonline, Reputation Manager, The Wise Magazine. We also used some lessons from the Agemi platform (​​like: Unit 2, 5 and 7) and the North South Centre’s presentation on intersectionality; we had read different documents shared by the teacher like “#Intersectionality: the fourth wave feminist twitter community” written by Tegan Zimmerman, Minority Women Politicians written by Flora Galy-Badenas and Marketing Women Political Leaders written by Michele Goulart Massuchin and Francisco Paulo Jamil Marques with the collaboration of Isabele Mitozo. After collecting the necessary material, we divided the work among the different group members in order to coordinate the work effectively and efficiently: one group focused on Giorgia Meloni’s social communication; another group focused on AOC’s social communication; while the last group focused on how these two women dealt with the theme of intersectionality. At this point, each member focused on the specific area of interest, and we searched for different examples of these two women's communication on different social media, limiting the search to **Twitter and Instagram**, which we considered to be the most used social media in the political field. This is because both Instagram and Twitter are the most widely used tools in general at the moment, and they are the platforms where all kinds of news can be read every day. We decided to exclude **TikTok**, for example, because it is a newer social media platform, but less dedicated to the political cause; despite this, Giorgia Meloni uses this platform to showcase her campaign; however, Cortez does not use TikTok directly (there are only fan-reported videos) and so we opted for two online platforms used by both of our women, so that both contexts could be analyzed equally. Starting precisely from Twitter, which works with a *"trending news"* mechanism, we were able to find the right material for our research. In fact, both Giorgia Meloni and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez use these social networks to talk about their politics and ideals, in a completely different way!

Right from here, we combined the material we found, created the 3 podcasts, the website, and by analyzing the information we found, we answered the research question we had set for ourselves.

**Challenges and limits**

In carrying out our project, we encountered some difficulties. First, the fact that we could not find previous studies on the relationship between women in politics and communication through social networks was certainly one of the biggest problems. In fact, the different studies we found were certainly very useful in creating an initial knowledge base and understanding some mechanisms, but they did not give us any insight into how women in politics use social networks to communicate their ideas. However, for this very reason we thought this topic could be very interesting for us. In the concluding section, we will summarize the main features of the social communication of these two women and observe whether it played a decisive role in building their success, with a focus on the issue of intersectionality. In addition, we will be able to compare our results with existing studies on social communication and politics. Another problem we encountered concerned the output to be produced for our project. Initially, we were undecided whether to choose the podcast formula or the informational video formula. The former, however, did not allow us to include the visual aspect, which was very important to us given the subject matter (especially if we wanted to make concrete examples of posts). The second, on the other hand, risked taking the form of the classic educational presentation (school or university, risking failing to pique the interest of the viewer). In the end, therefore, we opted for a format that would manage to exploit the strengths of both formulas: creating a website within which to insert various content, including images, videos, texts and podcasts, which are the new news dissemination tool favored by young people nowadays (in fact, there are podcasts of every type and for every niche; including, of course, politics). In this way, we obtained a more complete output, and the podcasts are accompanied by a visual part consisting of images and videos to which they refer.Finally, there were other difficulties that we encountered, but they are related to technical aspects. For example, how to put our podcasts on the website or what images we could include on the website without violating copyright. These were all problems that we were able to solve successfully.

**References and web resources**

Online Articles:

* *Becoming a social media sensation: AOC as a Case Study* by Doug Schowengerdt. URL: <https://new-moon.com/becoming-a-social-media-sensation-aoc-as-a-case-study/>
* *AOC case study: How to make social media work for you (politicians edition)* by Charlie Sawyer. URL: <https://screenshot-media.com/technology/social-media/aoc-social-media-presence/>
* *Ocasio-Cortez delivers powerful speech after Republican's sexist remarks* by The Guardian*.* URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/23/aoc-speech-video-ted-yoho>
* *Alexandria Ocasio Cortez* by Francesca Oggiano. URL: <https://mondointernazionale.com/domina/alexandria-ocasio-cortez>
* *'Change Is Closer Than We Think.' Inside Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Unlikely Rise* by Charlotte Alter. URL: <https://time.com/longform/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-profile/>
* *La Comunicazione Social di Giorgia Meloni* <https://www.primaonline.it/2021/10/07/335321/la-comunicazione-social-di-giorgia-meloni/>
* *Come funziona la comunicazione social di Giorgia Meloni?* <https://www.thewisemagazine.it/2022/09/07/come-funziona-la-comunicazione-di-giorgia-meloni/>
* *Da “Io sono Giorgia” al 25 settembre: storia dell'evoluzione social di Meloni* <https://www.wired.it/article/meloni-fratelli-italia-social-comunicazione/>
* *LGBTQ and women's rights advocates worried after Meloni's win in Italy* by Euronews. URL:<https://www.euronews.com/2022/09/28/lgbtq-and-womens-rights-advocates-worried-after-melonis-win-in-italy>
* *Italy’s Giorgia Meloni denies she is anti-women as credentials questioned* by The Guardian. URL:<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/29/giorgia-meloni-italian-women-abortion-pink-quotas>

Papers and Essays:

* *Marketing Women Political Leaders* by Michele Goulart Massuchin, Francisco Parulo Jamil Marques, and Isabele Mitozo.
* *Hanging together or not? Impacts of social media use and organizational membership on individual and collective political actions* by Xinzhi Zhang and Wan-Ying Lin. Source: International Political Science Review, March 2018, Vol. 39, No. 2 (March 2018), pp. 273-289. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26956732>
* *How Discrimination Impacts Sociopolitical Behavior: A Multidimensional Perspective* by Kassra AR Oskooii. Source: Political Psychology , OCTOBER 2016, Vol. 37, No. 5 (OCTOBER 2016), pp. 613-640. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44132915>
* *Minority Women Politicians* by Flora Galy-Badenas
* *Facebooking a different campaign beat: party leaders, the press and public engagement* by Karen Ross (Newcastle University, UK), Susan Fountaine and Margie Comrie (Massey University, New Zealand). URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.12013603.16>
* *The wider world: Politics, the visible and the invisible* by Elisabetta Costa. Published by: UCL Press. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1g69z14.10>
* *Using a Feminist Paradigm (Intersectionality) to Study Conservative Women: The Case of Pro-life Activists in Italy* by Cambridge University Press
* *At the Digital Margins? A Theoretical Examination of Social Media Engagement Using Intersectional Feminism* by Charlotte Galpin.
* *Intersectionality: The Fourth Wave Feminist Twitter Community* by Tegan Zimmerman
* *Queen of the clap back: A Framing Analysis of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s Use of Social Media* by Mireya Jacuinde
* *My friend AOC: parasocial interaction and political social media, a thesis presented to the Faculty of San Diego State University* by Kelly A. Dorian

Online contents (videos, and posts):

* <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CmJ8eDrqN95/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y%3D>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqIa9VqQm0c>
* <https://www.instagram.com/p/ClMgBO8um38/>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zv0QooXM49s>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85pFf0HogSE>
* <https://www.instagram.com/p/Ce1R4ZMKQ7g/>
* <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bs0t5CcBeQU/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=95557f76-20f3-4ca1-a7aa-4c154308caa8>
* <https://www.instagram.com/p/ClMbTl7uMBF/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y%3D>
* [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez su Twitter: "One way to support the local LGBTQ community impacted by Boston’s white supremacist parade? Contribute to the Bail Fund for the activists who put themselves on the line protecting the Boston community:https://t.co/z2NRSqHMve (Any $ left over goes to @MassBailFund+@Boston\_GLASS)" / Twitter](https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1167951441631121408)
* <https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1583986155602595840?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1583986155602595840%7Ctwgr%5E4b63bce4c4c2e15177c720093d70826afbd25828%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thepinknews.com%2F2022%2F10%2F26%2Falexandria-ocasio-cortez-lgbtq-rights-homophobes-new-york%2F>
* <https://www.instagram.com/p/CiC_5KZDNsi/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=e1269e98-1f22-428f-a0c8-2d388e2b21ca>

**Members of groups**

Adambayeva Indira (Kazakh) → In charge of researching material for the intersectionality and social media part of the two women politicians. She created the podcast on this part and provided the material to complete the page on the site related to this topic. She was also responsible for researching materials including essays, articles and abstracts regarding the topic at hand, to better compare with the results obtained and see what had already been studied.

Cattelan Silvia (Italian) → In charge of researching material for the part concerning Alexandria Ocasio Cortez's social communication. She created the podcast on this part and provided the material to complete the page on the site relating to the aforementioned topic. She was also responsible for researching materials including essays, articles and abstracts regarding the topic at hand, to better compare with the results obtained and see what had already been studied.

Doldo Matteo (Italian) → In charge of researching material for the part concerning Alexandria Ocasio Cortez's social communication. He created the podcast on this part and provided the material to complete the page on the site relating to the aforementioned topic.He also contributed to the compilation of the FiPO document. He was also responsible for researching materials including essays, articles and abstracts regarding the topic at hand, to better compare with the results obtained and see what had already been studied. In the end, he worked on creating the presentation via slides to be presented in class, containing the highlights of our research: starting from the search for information to the results obtained with the help of the other group members.

Margarita Kustiaeva (Russian) → In charge of researching material for the intersectionality and social media part of the two women politicians. She created the podcast on this part and provided the material to complete the page on the site related to this topic. She was also responsible for researching materials including essays, articles and abstracts regarding the topic at hand, to better compare with the results obtained and see what had already been studied.

Ricci Eleonora (Italian) → In charge of researching material for the part concerning Giorgia Meloni's social communication. Created the podcast on this part and provided the material to complete the page on the site related to this topic. She also contributed to the compilation of the FiPO document. She was also responsible for researching materials including essays, articles and abstracts regarding the topic at hand, to better compare with the results obtained and see what had already been studied.

Villanova Eva Luna (italian) → She found out the materials and readings regarding the project’s topic. She was responsible for the creation of the website and the inclusion of all content within it, including images, videos, texts, and podcasts. She was also in charge of researching material for the part concerning Giorgia Meloni's social communication. She created the podcast on this part and provided the material to complete the page of the site on the above-mentioned topic. She also contributed to the compilation of the FiPO document. She was also responsible for researching materials including essays, articles and abstracts regarding the topic at hand, to better compare with the results obtained and see what had already been studied.

Nargiza Zhukabayeva (Kazakh) → In charge of researching material for the intersectionality and social media part of the two women politicians. She created the podcast on this part and provided the material to complete the page on the site related to this topic. She was also responsible for researching materials including essays, articles and abstracts regarding the topic at hand, to better compare with the results obtained and see what had already been studied.