

‘Emotion that Goes Around Comes Around’. Political Charisma and the Emotions Conveyed through Social Media

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Abstract: In studying the processes of social influence, charisma is a matter of great importance for establishing a persuasive dialogue. Psycho-social research focused primarily on classical political media while neglecting the charisma conveyed by leaders through processes of self-presentation within computer-mediated interactions (i.e. social media). The first study analyses the charisma conveyed and the emotions expressed by Italian political leaders of three different orientations (center-left, center-right and no ideological orientation) from a multimodal perspective, considering both verbal and bodily aspects, pointing out three different "charismatic", self-presentation strategies in their Facebook videos and pictures. Results highlight how political and power positions can differentiate the type of charisma displayed and the emotions expressed in online settings. Furthermore, a second perceptual study tested the potential followers' emotional and evaluative processes, showing how expressing negative emotions causes more negative emotions (sadness and bitterness) and evaluations (false, astute and dangerous) within the social media users perception, whereas an emotionally regulated charismatic politician can increase the users' perception of their competence and thereby, raise their voting intentions.

Keywords: charisma; multimodal charisma; social media communication; political emotions; self-presentation strategies

1 Introduction

Research on persuasion has developed several models considering almost all the actors within the field (Poggi, 2007; Mucchi Faina, et al. 2012): the persuader, the persuadee, and the characteristics of both the source and the message; yet, it neglected, the relationship between two aspects that are now the object of daily attention: The use of a particular channel, namely, “social media”, and its relationship with a political leader’s expression of emotions. Within the studies on persuasion, this contribution aims to investigate a particular type of persuasive component: the political leader’s charisma and its relationship with the emotions expressed within social media interactions, in relation to different political orientations. The term “charisma” in modern literature has been first launched by Max Weber (1920). According to this great sociologist, “charismatic” leaders generally emerge in times of great crisis for a nation, responding to the necessity of a strong leadership to come out of the crisis. Weber defines charisma as an “extraordinary quality” of a person who is believed to be endowed with superhuman properties, in such a way as to induce people to acknowledge him as a leader, to the point of making a cult of him. He calls this quality “charisma” (from Greek “charis”, grace), thus considering it a grace, a divine gift that only some people may be enlightened with. Weber does not describe this gift at length, and even considers it beyond human comprehension; yet the very notion of charisma has been alternatively redefined and challenged.

This work presents a definition of charisma in terms of a socio-cognitive model of social interaction and investigates how charisma is perceived from multimodal communication on social media. Section 2 overviews some theoretical and empirical work on charisma, by proposing, in terms of that model, a conceptual definition of charisma, focused on its multidimensionality, focusing on the role of expressed and induced emotions in charismatic leadership, and devoting particular attention to the role of the leaders’ self-presentation in social media. On this basis, Section 3 presents an observational study (Study 1) on the Facebook profiles of three current Italian charismatic leaders from opposed political orientations, and Section 4, a perceptual study (Study 2) aimed at measuring the emotions and evaluations on the three politicians elicited by selected videos.

2 Related Work

Some first examples of charisma may be retrieved by looking at the ancient philosophers. According to Heraclitus only few individuals are endowed with particular physical and mental skills and virtues, that include, following Socrates, fast learning capacities, memory, open mind, vision (for an overview, see Signorello 2013). These virtues are innate, according to Plato, and make a chief the object of trust, faith and veneration by other people, which results in the cult of

the leader (Cavalli 1995). Such idea of the charismatic leader, when meeting with Nietzsche's myth of the Superhuman in 1900, is impersonated in the great dictatorships of the Twentieth Century: Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Research on charisma was mainly conducted in Social Psychology within the general framework of leadership studies. Some authors view the skills for being a leader as internal to a person, as witnessed by the trait perspective, that analyzes the traits typical of leaders (House et al. 1992): for example, Transformational leaders, that are acknowledged as charismatic by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) show high values in four of the Big Five factors, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Joyce et al. 2004). An opposite view – the contingency perspective, that also includes the “contextual” approach, contends that leadership and charisma are strongly determined by context: contextual factors trigger or inhibit particular leadership behaviors, and leadership is interactively constructed by the relationship between leader and followers: (Haslam et al., 2011). This “contextualist” view further develops into the Transactional leadership perspective, in which the strength and effectiveness of leadership is determined by a cost-benefit computation, followers accept to comply with the leader's will to the extent they feel this is functional to their goals, and their behavior is stimulated by rewards and punishments more than trust and identification. This is the case, instead, for transformational leadership, that, introduced by the so-called neo-charismatic school, views a true leader as an authentically charismatic person (Lowe et al, 1996), endowed with vision and capacity for inspiring followers, who works in their interest and aiming at their growth (Bass 1985). Neo-charismatic scholars, stressing the ethical import of transformational leadership, also alert towards the “dark side” of charisma and the inauthentic or pseudo-transformational leaders, who with self-serving aims consciously or unconsciously act in bad faith. Actually, the charismatic / transformational view integrates sociological and psychological aspects since it sees charisma as a “social process” in which the perception of followers becomes a very central aspect (Shamir, 2000). The discussion among these diverse perspectives, based on personality or context, transaction or transformation, makes the definition of charismatic leader and the singling out of charismatic attributes particularly complex. In fact, charisma is a multidimensional construct (D'Errico et al. 2013): it is certainly affected (and constructed) by values, needs, motivations and potential followers' discourses that can change across times, but it also importantly depends on the leader's skills, choices and characteristics expressed with the aim of intercepting them. Beside theoretical discussions on the nature of charisma, some works investigated how it is perceived from body communication (Atkinson 1984). Tackling the relationship between the acoustic-prosodic characteristics of a political leader's speech and the perception of his/her charisma, Strangert and Gustafson (2008) examined the relationship between prosodic features and the perception of a speaker as a “good communicator”, while Rosenberg and Hirschberg (2009) studied the correlation between acoustic, prosodic, and lexico-syntactic characteristics of political speech and the perception of charisma.

Later studies then investigated charismatic leaders' words (Rosenberg and Hirschberg 2009; Poggi and D'Errico, 2016) gesture (Poggi, 2017) and voice (Signorello *et al.* 2012; D'Errico *et al.* 2013). From this quick overview is possible to highlight how the body is central to the evaluation of a leader's charisma. In this sense, this paper investigates how three political leaders, generally acknowledged as charismatic by their voters, present themselves and (multi-modally) communicate through their personal Facebook page. To do so, we wonder, first, what charisma may be, and then what are the features that manifest it in the body communication of political leaders.

2.1 What is Charisma?

The crucial role played by the communicative sphere within political persuasion process led us to deepen the role played by the 'charisma' of politicians, being aware of the fact that very often it can be intentionally built by expert teams and spin doctors within that operate within the logic of communicative professionalism naturally widespread especially in the largest mass parties (Mancini, 1999). In particular, the notion of charisma become important especially when, as in the case of recent years, the political communication is mainly based on the decision of communicating by means of 'social leaders', a kind of leader who communicates their daily message with a savvy use of new media (Cepernich & Novelli, 2018). Apart from this macro-variable behind our first goal in this paper is to define the charisma of a political leader, within the notion of charisma in general. In fact, not only political leaders can be charismatic – a singer, an actor, a teacher, a company manager may be charismatic too. As a first approximation, relying on our previous model of social influence (Poggi 2005; Castelfranchi *et al.* 2003), we posit that charisma is a set of internal features of a person which, when manifested by some external displays – some ways of being or behaving – have the effect of influencing other people in a very peculiar way. While the internal features of charisma are the object of Section 2.2, let us now briefly explain what are its external displays.

The external displays are the perceivable expression of the internal features, and we can distinguish two kinds of them, that may be called "charisma of the body" and "charisma of the mind" (Signorello *et al.* 2012). Actually, the external features may stem either from the mind or from the body of the leader: the aspects that manifest the charisma of the mind are the creative and charming ideas or feelings displayed by a person's words or actions, while the charisma of the body is displayed by specific aspects of his/her visual and/or acoustic appearance, determined by the multimodal traits and behaviors of his/her body (Bull 1986; Atkinson 1984; Rosenberg and Hirschberg 2009). These two forms of expression of charisma – body and mind – may sometimes combine: for example, Barack Obama may be seen as charismatic both for the concepts he proposes and the way he exposes them: he has charisma both of the body and of the mind (Bligh and

Kohles 2009). In sum, charismatic persons may have different kinds of charisma, depending on the type of their internal charismatic features, on the external features that express them, and on their combinations. The aim of the present work is then to highlight the multidimensionality of charisma, and to explore in detail a specific display of political leaders' charisma: their self-presentation on Facebook.

2.2 The Internal Features of Charisma: A Multidimensional Account

In our socio-cognitive model, charisma may be seen (D'Errico et al., 2013; Signorello et al., 2012) as a set of internal features of a person that, when manifested by some external displays – some traits displayed or behaviors performed in various modalities – trigger a set of emotions in other people, that have the effect of influencing them by inducing them to pursue some goals not through coercion but voluntarily and willingly, while feeling involvement and enthusiasm. Studying charisma therefore means on the one side to track what external displays in the multimodal traits or behaviors of a person – words, prosody, voice, gesture, posture, face, gaze, body – manifest the internal features, and on the other to specify what are those internal features.

In our model, the internal features of charisma in a great part correspond to aspects of persuasive discourse. According to Aristotle, to persuade the Audience the Orator may exploit three strategies: *logos* (rational argument), *pathos* (the appeal to the Audiences' emotions), and *ethos* (the Orator's character). Within *ethos*, based on studies on how politicians are evaluated by laypeople, and on how they discredit each other, Poggi et al. (2005, 2011; D'Errico et al. 2013) singled out three criteria of evaluation: *benevolence* – a politician's tendency to care the others' interests, more than his own; *competence* – his intelligence, expertise, planning capacity, creativity; and *dominance* – the capacity to win in competition and to impose his will. In a qualitative study (Signorello et al. 2012) asked participants to generate adjectives describing charismatic and non-charismatic persons, accordingly, a list was produced containing 68 adjectives that cluster around the following dimensions:

- 1) *Emotional intelligence*: the charismatic leader has a high tendency, and a high skill to feel emotions himself, to manifest them, and to be empathic with others' emotions (this feature was stressed by adjectives like *enthusiastic, passionate, empathetic*).
- 2) *Sociability and inclusiveness*: The charismatic leader is people-oriented, inclusive, and makes followers feel “similar” and “together” with him (he is, for example, *extraverted, sociable*).
- 3) *Competence*: the charismatic leader has various physical and mental skills, and is endowed with them at a surprising and admirable extent. He may be physically strong, possibly skilled in sports, but mainly he has notable

cognitive and communicative skills, among which vision, creativity, foresight, strategic intelligence (he is *visionary, creative, enterprising, clear, persuasive*).

- 4) *Dominance*: the charismatic leader is dominant, he often challenges traditions and defies other leaders, while not submitting to others (he is *active, dynamic, courageous, vigorous*).
- 5) *Emotional induction*: the leader's charisma causes emotions in people (he is *attractive, charming, seducing*): they are charmed, subjugated by him, infected with his enthusiasm, hence willing to comply with his will.

These are in general the internal features of a charismatic leader. Subsequent research on how they are manifested and perceived in political leaders' voice found out that different dimensions of charisma may be more evident in different leaders, or in the same leader in subsequent phases of his leadership. This was evidenced, for example, in a study about Umberto Bossi, the founder and first leader of Lega Nord (North league), a populist party aiming at the secession of some regions of North Italy (Padania) from the rest of Italy, who during his long leadership across fifteen years, Umberto Bossi had a stroke that impaired his speech and changed his voice; from acoustic analysis and perceptual studies on his speech acts and his voice quality some years before and some years after the stroke, it emerged (Signorello et al., 2012; D'Errico et al., 2013) that the dimensions above can be grouped around three factors, proactive-attractive (mainly described by adjectives like *lively, dynamic, charming, convincing*), calm-benevolent (*wise, calm, just, intelligent, easy, sincere*), authoritarian – threatening (*determined, threatening, disturbing, individualist, authoritarian*), and Bossi's charisma, as perceived from his voice, shifted from a more proactive-attractive and authoritarian-threatening type, before the stroke to a calm-benevolent type after the stroke. From this study, it emerged that these three “factors” can actually make up three different types of charisma, resulting from different combinations of the aspects above. Poggi (2017) finally showed how the features of these different types of charisma are manifested in different aspects of the leader's words, gesture and body posture and can be singled out to measure the prevailing charismatic type of a leader.

2.3 Charisma and the Role of Emotions

In our model of charisma emotions play a crucial role, both for their being displayed by the leader's expression (pathos) and for their being triggered in the followers by “emotional induction”, that is, the fact that the leader, either by expressing emotions himself or simply thanks to the way s/he is or the actions s/he does, causes emotions in the followers. Leader's display and followers' emotional reactions together can color and characterize different ways of being charismatic.

The relation between emotion and charismatic leadership has been studied in different domains, but with particular attention by organizational and political psychology. Within the former, Dansereau et al. (1995) pointed out that the charismatic leader has the role of inspiring positive emotions in followers by articulating a compelling vision, imagery and rhetoric (Bono et al. 2007). In the same vein, Johnson (2008) and Damen (2010) found that a leader's display of positive moods was positively related to followers' ratings of their charisma. These results were generally confirmed by several studies, but Van Kleef and colleagues (2010) more specifically pointed out how the effectiveness of positive emotions can depend on individual and contextual factors, like in the case of mood or personal traits (Van Kleef et al. 2010; Gaddis 2004). As to contextual ones, for example, Gaddis observed leaders' emotions when delivering failure feedback to work group members: he found that the leader's negative emotions were related to lower leader effectiveness scores and lower group performance. In particular, the leader's negative emotions were perceived less favorably when groups were focused on promotion goals, whereas his negative emotions were perceived more favorably in groups with prevention goals. As acknowledged by Gooty (2010) too, negative emotions seem to play a crucial role in facing challenging situations. In the political domain, Brader (2005) demonstrated, with two experiments during elections, that cueing enthusiasm motivates participation, while fear stimulates vigilance and increases reliance on concurrent evaluations. So the charismatic leader has to take into account his own position (vantage and disadvantage with respect to his opponents), group goals, and wonder if it is more convenient to promote actions or reflections. In this perspective it is particularly interesting the so called "Obama Phenomenon" (Engelken-Jorge 2011): Obama's using his emotional display to construct a process of reconciliation (Leone et al., 2015; D'Errico et al. 2015).

2.4 Charisma, Political Self Presentation, and Social Media

Charisma can be conveyed by public image through social media. Differently from reactions and behavioral patterns presented live in traditional media, in social media it is much easier to "study", to "calculate" one's own self-presentation, being in an a-synchronous environment. Leary (1995) defines self-presentation as "controlling one's image", with "image" defined as a self-representation perceived by others, and presumably social media can be the best context to control it. This sense of control of one's own image in political social media has to be as acquisitive as possible and therefore as close as possible to the expectations of voters. Self-presentation in social media has been studied in relation to culture and gender (Rui and Stefanone 2013), but what happens when a political leader, diffusely considered as charismatic, wants to present himself on a personal social page? Which dimensions of self-presentation should he better choose? Can we expect a coherence between the expectations of potential electors

(who follow the political leader) and the dimensions of his charisma he chooses to display? What is the relationship between self-regulated charisma and political orientation? A charismatic leader is by definition (Haslam *et al.*, 2010) one who has the ability to represent the shared values of a group, to be and to represent himself as a good prototype of the group. In this regard the charismatic features that become most important are those that can vary and be chosen at different degrees depending on a leader's membership in different political groups.

The classic dimensions of social perception are "communion" and "agency" (Abel and Wojciszke 2007) that follow the model of Fiske, Cuddy and Glick (2007) of Warmth and Competence. "Communion" includes characteristics of attention, empathy, helpfulness and sociability, morality and trustfulness, while "agency" represents energy, intelligence and competence. These correspond, in the model outlined above, to the dimension of Benevolence and Competence, respectively, to which, though, we add our further dimensions of Dominance – the skill of being assertive and of imposing one's (political) ideas and programs. These dimensions are evoked both by the contents of the leader's verbal communication, and by the aspects of Pathos and emotional induction conveyed by his both verbal and body communication. During his self-presentation on social media consideration, a leader can choose which charismatic aspects to display the most. Social media are generally composed by a young audience (Mori, 2015), thus, politicians might consider people who read their pages "more tailored" (Wattal *et al.* 2010), "like-minded citizens" (De Zuniga *et al.* 2010). In this sense politicians, unlike when communicating through classical media (e.g. TV, Newspaper) which involve a more generalist audience, on social media have to deal with their "friends/followers" and must take into account their fundamental values in greater consideration.

If we look at the Italian context (the one analyzed in the present study), it is generally acknowledged that values as "action and leadership" (closer to the dimension of Dominance) are positively perceived by voters of the center-right, as opposed to center-left voters, who prefer instead the Benevolence values as morality, empathy, solidarity and openness towards others (Caprara *et al.* 2007; Barisione and Catellani 2008). In what follows we present two studies aimed at analyzing the self-presentation of three Italian leaders and the perception of their charisma by voters.

3 Self Presentation, Multimodality in Social Media Self-Presentation (Study 1)

The goal of the first study is to investigate the specific strategy of self-presentation by leaders of different political orientations in social media. Our hypothesis is that in one's self-presentation a leader attempts to convey a particular type of

charisma, that different aspects of charisma are considered more desirable or effective by different political groups and consequently by their leaders, and that the different types of charisma selected determine the particular self-presentation of different leaders in social media

3.1 Data

To test this hypothesis, we analyzed photos and videos extracted from Facebook pages of three major Italian political leaders in 2015: Matteo Renzi (Leader of the Center-Left, at the time the Prime Minister), Matteo Salvini (Centre-Right, Leader of the Secessionist North League), and Luigi Di Maio (Vice President of the House of Lords; the leader of the Movement 5 Stars): our research question was whether, in their self-presentation, candidates promote different kinds of charisma. These candidates were chosen both because they are the representatives of different parties, and because they are considered each as “main leader” by their voters. Renzi, for example, is recognized as the first “strong” leader of the left (De Sio, 2013), although the dimension of dominance is traditionally not appreciated by leftists. In the same vein, Di Maio also has been unanimously mentioned as the future charismatic leader of his party (Five Stars Movement). This party does not belong either to the right or to the left but, following the aggressive protest of his founder, Beppe Grillo, a popular comedian, strongly stresses the dimension of benevolence – the leader’s honesty and morality: for 5 Stars Movement followers, all professional politicians are thieves, while the 5 stars Parliamentary Members call themselves “citizens”, to stress the fact that their primary goal is to take care of public affairs. Matteo Salvini, the representative of the North League, is viewed as possibly the next representative of the center-right, whose consensus has been lost in recent years.

3.2 Procedure and Annotation Scheme

To analyze the type of self-presentation and the type of charisma conveyed, we relied on an annotation scheme in which two independent judges, with a strong background in psychology and differentiated for their political orientation, annotated, the following aspects of the relevant signals in the photos and videos (see Table 1):

- 1) Date of the post and Name of the Leader (Renzi, Di Maio, Salvini)
- 2) Description of the analyzed signal, whether word or sentence, prosodic element, gesture (Kendon, 2004), facial expression (Ekman and Friesen, 2002), posture, suit or garment: for instance, gestures were described in terms of their parameters – handshape, location, orientation, movement – and their expressivity parameters (Hartmann et al., 2003)

- 3) Meaning of the signal: a verbal paraphrase was provided of each gesture, gaze, prosodic feature.
- 4) Charismatic Element: each meaning was classified as pertaining to one of the aspects of charisma above: benevolence, competence, dominance, pathos. Given the study is focused on the candidate’s expression and not on the followers’ reaction, “emotional induction” was not taken into account.
- 5) Type of charisma. (i.e. Proactive-Attractive, Calm-Benevolent, Authoritarian-Threatening) (D’Errico *et al.* 2013)
- 6) Positive and negative emotions: those expressed by the verbal and body behavior performed in the photo or video.
- 7) Contextual information: whether the background of the photo or video is internal (e.g. Office) vs. external (street, square) and reveals a formal or informal interaction and audience.

Table 1
Annotation scheme for charisma detection

Leader And time	Signal Description	Meaning	Charismatic Element	Type of Charisma	Context	Emotion
Renzi,	Verbal <i>Bisogna cambiare</i>	(A change is needed)	DOMINANCE	Authoritarian-Threatening	Formal	Pride
	Vocal Raising intensity of voice	I am feeling an emotion while saying this	PATHOS			
	Face Chin up	I am proud	DOMINANCE			

3.3 Results

The analyses showed an average agreement between judges with Cohen $K=0.85$. The first results are shown in Fig. 1.

Renzi and Di Maio tend to present themselves in internal and formal contexts (their office or the Parliament, in 80% and 60% of cases respectively; on the other hand, Salvini prefers informal external contexts: among peasants, sellers, laypeople in 66% of cases. The same formality also holds in clothing and garment choices, with Renzi and Di Maio more formal than Salvini. In general, the contexts of self-presentation put the three leaders in a different distance with the citizen. Coming to the elements of charisma displayed in the three leaders’ self-presentations, the aspects of dominance (36%) and pathos (30%) prevail over those of competence (21%) and benevolence (13%). This confirms a trend,

previously found in the Italian context, that seems to favor the criterion of dominance over other criteria of evaluation of politicians (D'Errico & Poggi 2013).

These results, though, differ significantly ($\chi^2 = 4.825$; $p < 0.05$) depending on the specific leader, and therefore on the political orientation. It comes out how dominance is a feature mainly displayed by the center-left leader (50%), followed by the center-right leader (40%), whereas pathos prevails in the latter (46.7%) as opposed to the former (25%). Di Maio's self-presentation is utterly opposite to them, being much more focused on Competence (43.8%) and Benevolence (25%).

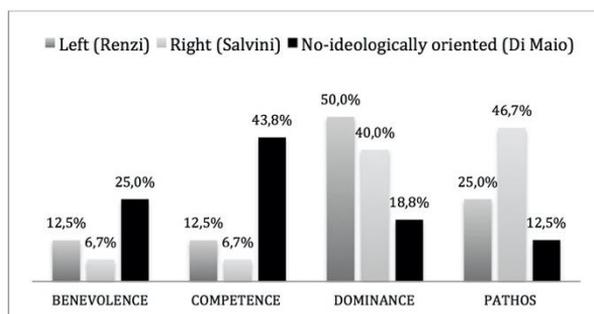


Figure 1

Charismatic Features*Political orientation

On the other hand, if we consider the combination of the different aspects of charisma, the results appear even more sharply characterized: the diverse types of charisma combine in a different use of emotions by politicians of different orientation. [$\chi^2 = 18.308$; $p < 0.0190$]. The center-right leader (see Fig. 2) presents himself in a way definitely stressing his own strength, displaying a type of charisma characterized by an aggressive dominance: this is definitely the authoritarian threatening charisma found by D'Errico et al. (2012), and is displayed in 60% of cases. Here is an excerpt exemplifying this type of behavior.

- (1) 0.46: Salvini, while talking of immigrants, says: “*Questi che vanno in giro con il telefonino a rompere le scatole al prossimo, questi li rimando subito a casa!*” (Those going around with their mobile while bothering others, these I send them home immediately!).

He uses a progressively raising intensity of voice, deictic gestures pointing with a fast and jerky (then, threatening) movement, and facial expressions of anger.

Renzi (center-left), instead, presents himself as a dominant but proactive leader (35.7%): In his videos and pictures, he generally encourages electors, communicating mainly positive emotions.

- (2) 1.41. Renzi says: “Io non mi accontento, io voglio che sia un’Italia a servizio dell’Europa. Ma per farlo ho bisogno dell’aiuto di tutti. Gli Italiani sono la più grande risorsa del nostro paese”,

(I am not satisfied; I want an Italy in the service of Europe. But to do so I need everybody’s help. Italians are the greatest resource of our country).

He accompanies his words with gestures of strength (e.g., closed fist), repeated, and with a medium/high muscular tension.

At the same time, Renzi does not give up to a self-presentation in terms of high benevolence and competence, but he generally expresses these aspects with a calm and quiet attitude (benevolence in 28.6% and competence in 21.4% of cases).

Finally, the presentation of one’s high competence is typical of Di Maio (53.8%). When talking about the risks of a course of action, he discredits the opponent as to his credibility, but he also offers solutions with high decision, and generally shows himself as very positive. Here are some of his sentences:

- (3) “Io credo che la soluzione è una sola” (I believe the solution is only one)
 (4) “Sarebbe l’estrema ratio” (This would be the last chance)
 (5) “io credo fermamente che l’italia sia l’ottava Potenza mondiale” (I firmly believe that Italy is the eighth world power)

He also presents himself as very competent by using precision gestures (Lempert, 2011; Vincze *et al.*, 2014), and with a hyper-articulated speech (Pettorino *et al.*, 2013) and scanned rhythm.

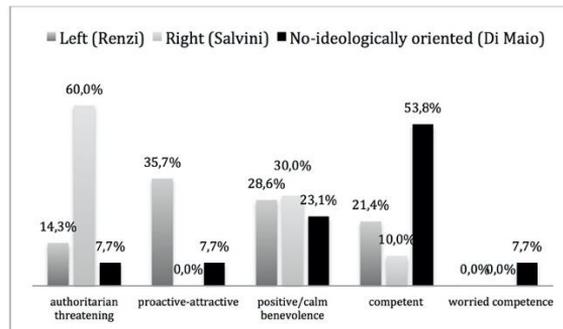


Figure 2

Type of Charisma *Political orientation

Coming to the self-presentation strategy of the three candidates from the point of view of the emotions they display, it very clearly results (Fig. 3) how the center-right leader, Salvini, mainly expresses negative emotions (anger 30.8%; disgust 19.2%, worry 15.4%, disease 7.7%; $\chi^2 = 24.262$; $p < 0.006$), while Renzi, to the opposite, mainly displays pride (28%), enthusiasm (20%), interest (20%), and

calmness (20%). The emotions expressed by Di Maio are quite close to Renzi's positive expression: he shows concentration and interest (30.4%) and calmness (17.4%), but in various other situations, worry (21.7%) as well.

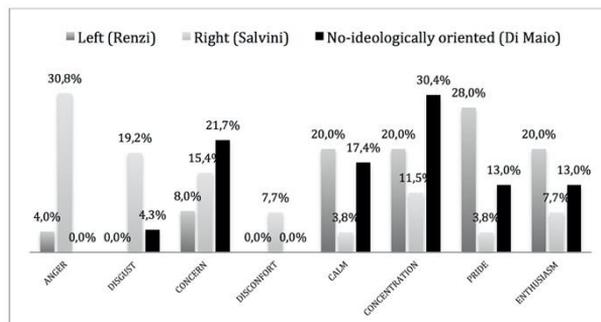


Figure 3

Emotions*Political orientation

4 Perception of the Charismatic Leaders (Study 2)

Our second study aims at testing the participants' perception of the three charismatic leaders, analyzed in the first study multimodally, through a list of critical emotions and evaluations, created ad hoc. Our hypothesis, following previous studies (D'Errico et al. 2013), is that the charismatic leaders will be evaluated in different ways and will elicit different emotions: a politician with an authoritarian-threatening type of charisma will elicit mainly negative emotions (Van Kleef et al. 2010; Lewis 2000) and will be evaluated more negatively than the proactive and competent one; thus, the latter two will report higher vote intentions from participants.

4.1 Experimental Design

To test these hypotheses, we designed a monofactorial *between subject's* perceptual study with one independent variable with three levels being the three different political orientations: Matteo Renzi (Center-Left, Prime Minister), Matteo Salvini (Centre-Right, the Leader of the Secessionist North League), and Luigi Di Maio (Vice President of the House of Lords; the leader of the Movement 5 Stars). The dependent variables were the emotions elicited in the Addressee, and the induced evaluation of the Target. 62 participants were submitted a semi-structured on line questionnaire after viewing a video according to three different conditions corresponding to the independent variable "type of charismatic leader".

The sample was gender balanced, being composed by 54% women, the majority having a high school degree (48%) or a University degree (36%), age of 41.62 (sd=12.9), and balanced for political orientation: 30% oriented towards the left party, 28% oriented towards the right party and 29% oriented to “5 star movement”.

4.2 Procedure

In this study three video-stimuli were exploited, previously analyzed multimodally in the first study. Each participant was assigned to one of the three conditions (political orientations of the leader), that is, after viewing only one stimulus video (with the left, the right, or the 5 star leader) outside the social media (in order to exclude other information like the reactions to the post), was asked to fill in a questionnaire of 34 closed questions, investigating the emotions and evaluations elicited by the video. The quantitative questions were aimed at measuring:

- 1) The emotions elicited by the video (joy, bitterness, sadness, interest, amusement, boredom, pleasure, enthusiasm, displeasure, indignation)
- 2) The evaluation of the politician (negative, indifferent, amusing, proactive, competent, dangerous, strong, credible, enthusiasm inducing, stupid, convincing, false, charismatic, astute)
- 3) The behavioural intention to vote the politician. All questions asked to rate the investigated aspects on a 5 point Likert scale. The survey was carried out on April 2017, when Matteo Renzi was the Prime Minister of the Italian government, while both Matteo Salvini's and Luigi Di Maio's parties were in the opposition.

4.3 Results

Emotions toward the politician. An *Anova analysis* on elicited emotions shows that Renzi is significantly higher in positive emotions than are Salvini and Di Maio, whereas Salvini elicited mainly negative emotions like sadness and bitterness. Nevertheless, when we compare positive and negative emotions we can notice that negative ones are always higher than positive ones across politicians. (Table 2)

A *repeated measures Anova* in particular confirms that displeasure and bitterness are generally more frequently felt by participants $F(2, 60) = 3.62; p < 0.03$ toward the three politicians, and in particular mainly for Salvini and Renzi compared with Di Maio $F(2, 60) = 2.642; p < 0.05$. This result is in line with previous studies in organizational contexts (Van Kleef *et al.* 2010; Lewins 2000) that show how the negative emotions expressed by a leader induce negative emotions in his followers.

Table 2
Leader type*Emotions

	Renzi		Di Maio		Salvini	
	M	sd	M	sd	M	sd
Joy *	1,31	0,60	1,07	0,27	1,00	0,00
Bitterness*	3,10	1,66	2,43	1,60	3,65	0,88
Sadness*	2,66	1,61	2,36	1,55	3,25	1,02
Fun**	1,62	0,90	1,14	0,53	1,10	0,45
Enthusiam**	1,55	0,91	1,14	0,36	1,10	0,31
Displeasure*	2,86	1,66	2,64	1,45	3,6	0,99

The more controlled/regulated politician (from the study 1 above) Di Maio causes fewer negative emotions (Figure 4).

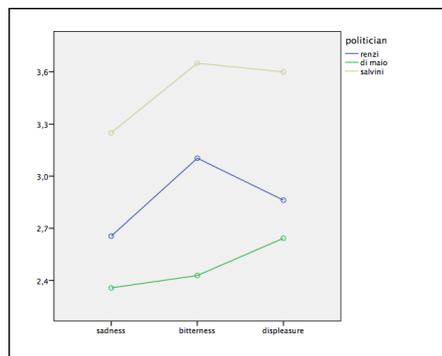


Figure 4
Negative Emotions*Leader Type

Politician Evaluation. As to the evaluation on the politicians, the *Anova* pointed out that the negative expression of emotions accompanied by signals of dominance (D'Errico and Poggi 2012), namely in the case of Salvini, lead participants to evaluate him as strong, but in a more negative way than the other two leaders since this behavior makes them consider the leader be as more dangerous. In the case of Renzi, who communicates his charisma by means of both positive and negative emotion expressions and by signals of dominance, he is evaluated stronger than Di Maio but also false, astute (Table 3).

Table 3
Leader type*Politician Evaluation

	Renzi		Di Maio		Salvini	
	M	sd	M	sd	M	sd
Competent	2,14	1,13	2,71	1,27	1,95	1,05
Dangerous	2,83	1,61	1,86	1,23	3,05	1,39
Strong	2,52	1,33	2,29	1,20	2,55	1,05
False	3,14	1,60	2,36	1,22	2,50	1,40
Astute	3,83	1,20	2,71	1,49	2,75	1,41

The ‘benevolent-competent’ charisma of Di Maio gives him more credibility in terms of competence evaluation. From the repeated measures analysis, it emerged that evaluations as astute and false are more frequent than those as strong, dangerous and competent. [F (2, 60)= 5.52; p<0.001]. The significant interaction effect between type of evaluation*type of leader [F(2, 60)= 3.19; p<0.05] shows that while the prevailing evaluations are astute and false in the case of Renzi, they are strong and dangerous with Salvini, and astute and competent with Di Maio (Figure 5).

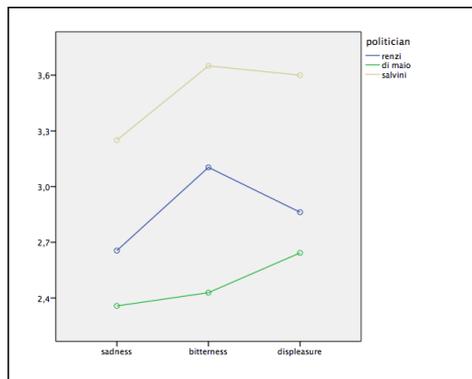


Figure 5
Politician Evaluation*Leader Type

Voting intentions. Concerning voting intentions, we do not find significant results in relation to the type of politician; nevertheless, from the correlations below we can see that the valence of emotions significantly contributes to voting intentions: negative ones like feeling sadness, bitterness and displeasure toward the leader can be inversely related to voting intention. In the same vein, negative evaluation like false and dangerous are also negatively correlated with voting intentions, differently from the perception of competence (Table 4).

Table 4
Correlations Emotions and Evaluations*Voting Intentions

	<i>Sadness</i>	<i>Bitterness</i>	<i>Displeasure</i>
Voting intentions	-,397**	-,425**	-,393**
Sign.	0,001	0,001	0,001

	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Dangerous</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>False</i>	<i>Astute</i>
Voting intentions	,712**	-,491**	,438**	-,575**	-,291*
Sign.	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,021

5 General Discussion

The present study has the role of deepening the notion of charisma within a new era for political communication aware of the role played by expert team and spin doctors who tries to built their ‘social leaders’ in daily interaction with their followers (Cepernich & Novelli, 2018). In particular, our study tackled the difference in self-presentation of politicians from different orientations, and the consequent perception of different types and dimensions of charisma. While previous work (Caprara et al. 2007) had claimed that center-right politicians mainly prefer the value of dominance, whereas center-leftists value benevolence more, our study seems to show that this is only partially true. Actually, our results reveal that both prefer to focus on the dimension of dominance. Moreover, both credit high importance to the expression of emotions, that has a central role in specifying the type of dominance projected: in Renzi the dominance display is colored by positive and proactive emotions, like pride and enthusiasm; the display of dominance by Salvini, on the contrary, makes appeal to threat and negative emotions, and it aims at scaring and showing other disruptive emotions, with a prevalence of anger and disgust. The use of charisma, and the selection of what kind of charisma to display, is an important part of a leader’s political strategy. But this choice is modulated on the basis of the actual position occupied. In fact, in the case of our three leaders, Renzi, who is at the time of the study, the Prime Minister of his country, has to defend his work from a position of power. Di Maio, as an emerging political force, tries to project an image of high competence, by reassuring electors about the actual skills of “5 stars Movement”, but at the same time alerting them about the problems to face: when talking of his Movement he is very calm, while when talking of the problems of the country he shows serious and worried. Finally, Salvini, starting from a disadvantaged position, aims to have the charisma of one who must break down with previous schemas: therefore, he chooses to project an image that is utterly opposite to one of the Prime Minister, so polite and positive, hence he displays an arrogant and challenging power, aimed at defying the present political order (Poggi and D’Errico, 2010).

From this first account, the results of the observational study of the three politicians seem to depend only on their power position within the political arena. But when such messages are communicated on social media, what emotional responses and evaluations can they induce (Paciello & D’Errico, 2021)? These three multimodal communicative patterns can influence social media users differently: from an emotional point of view the type of charisma conveyed by Renzi apparently elicits positive emotions like fun and enthusiasm but also negative ones like displeasure, even at a higher extent (2.86 vs. 1.31 and 1.55 of joy and enthusiasm); on the other hand, Salvini induces mainly sadness and bitterness (Poggi and D’Errico, 2011). When the three politicians are compared on negative emotions the one who displays an ‘authoritarian threatening’ type of charisma is higher than the proactive or competent leader on all the negative

emotions. The evaluation process follows the emotional side in this way: the proactive politician (Renzi) elicits mixed emotions (displeasure accompanied with fun and enthusiasm) and he is judged as false and astute, differently from Salvini who is even seen as 'dangerous', highlighting how negative emotions together with dominant charisma can cause a 'reactance effect' (Brehm, 1966) in terms of judgment (D'Errico and Poggi, 2012; Van Kleef *et al.* 2010), that is, an unpleasant motivational arousal emerging when people experience a threat to their free behaviors by inducing, on the contrary, a rejection of the politician. Finally, the politician who communicates mainly his competence and benevolence by regulating his negative emotions but rather expressing calmness is perceived just as a 'competent' leader, and this perception is strongly correlated with high voting intentions; on the contrary, a high expression of negative emotions seems to backfire on their sender, thus possibly resulting in a boomerang.

These results show that while, as predictable, the disintermediated communication favored by social media can reduce the space between politicians and their followers, allowing a more direct transmission of content through both verbal and body communication; very importantly, this also allows frequent and direct emotional expression, which can strongly contribute to the voters' intentions, but seems to do so mostly with negative emotions. This study shows that the politicians that express fewer or less negative emotions are the ones that likely elicit more positive evaluations and higher voting intentions from their followers. A further demonstration of this might be that three years after the study has been carried on all the three politicians considered the charismatic leaders by our participants actually became the acknowledged leaders of the three parties, and that Di Maio got the highest number of votes among all three, reaching as much as the 32% at 2018 elections. More in general from this results also emerged how charisma can be defined as a 'social process' (Shamir, 2000) where the charismatic politician is a person that basically senses his/her followers' beliefs, emotions and attitudes, also by means of 'strategical tools' (e.g. spin doctors), and s-he tries to integrate them within his 'charismatic' speech in order to allow a process of identification. This study has several limitations, the first being its sample that is mainly represented by Italians, while we know that charisma can be perceived differently across cultures (D'Errico *et al.*, 2013). Future studies should deepen this dimension by comparing, for example, the role played by different self-presentations and emotion expression across different cultures and political values.

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