

Political Communication in the Meloni Era: The Post-Populist Transition and Its Global Resonance

OVERVIEW

Since her rise to power as President of the Council of Ministers in October 2022, Giorgia Meloni has embodied a major shift in Italian political communication. This phenomenon, which we propose to explore under the term "Melonism," more broadly embodies a post-populist turn (Muzergues, 2024), characterized by a strategic recentring that has the potential to inspire beyond the peninsula's borders. The media narrative of a symbolic rapprochement between Giorgia Meloni and global figures such as Elon Musk (Zelinsky, 2024) or Javier Milei (Ariza, March, & Torres, 2023) suggests that her communicational inflections and axiological embodiment potential now have international resonance.

Melonism follows in the footsteps of other structuring currents (Tarchi, 2015) — such as "Berlusconism" (Ventura, 2024), "Grillism" (Tarchi, 2014; Mosca, Vaccari, & Valeriani, 2015), "Salvinism" (Berti, & Loner, 2023; Bitonti, Marchetti, & Mariotti, 2023), and "Renzism" (Salvati, 2016) — each of which has redefined the contours of political communication in Italy. However, Giorgia Meloni's distinctiveness as a nationalist female politician leading Fratelli d'Italia (De Giorgi, Cavalieri, & Feo, 2023; Ciarniello, De Blasio & Selva, 2024; Newell, 2024) — a movement with fascist roots, symbolized by the tricolor flame inherited from the Movimento Sociale Italiano (1946-1995) — lies in adding an unprecedented dimension: a potential supranational stature, articulating with the communicational discourses and practices specific to the contemporary digital ecosystem (Froio, & Ganesh, 2019).

Melonism relies on characteristic rhetoric (De Blasio, & Selva, 2024; McLean, Capstick, & Passarini, 2024), adapted to new media formats, particularly TikTok (Pérez Rastrilla et al. 2023), offering "artisanal" content that conveys authenticity — a strategy that establishes a direct channel with Italian citizens while bypassing traditional prescribers and media gatekeepers. In this sense, Melonism evokes a process of disintermediation (Biancalana, 2017), generating content specifically designed to resonate directly with citizens' emotions and maintain proximity with them.

Moreover, the construction of Melonism's identity narrative oscillates between cultural valorisation of Italianness and a global referential corpus, particularly investing in literary pop-culture, as exemplified by the invocation of J.R.R. Tolkien's work (Moulin, 2009; Lavezzo, 2021).

This forthcoming issue of *Cahiers Protagoras* proposes to analyse Giorgia Meloni's impact on Italian and international political communication, examining how Melonism follows in the continuity of previous currents while redefining (post-)populist communicational practices on a global scale. Furthermore, it aims to situate this distinctive communicational style in an era marked by the emergence of political leaders who opt for a clear break with traditional media models, favouring strategies of authenticity and disintermediation.

We thus call for interdisciplinary and multilingual contributions (in French, English, or Italian) aimed at enriching our understanding of current communicational practices and strategies.

SUBMISSION AND PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Abstract should include :

- In a separate file: name, professional or academic status, institutional affiliation, contact details of the author(s) (e-mail and postal addresses).
- The title of the paper (maximum 180 characters including spaces).
- A 500-word abstract (excluding references) highlighting the interest of the contribution and including an overview of the problematic.
- Proposals for papers may be presented either as reflective analyses based on recent and completed empirical research, or as analyses of professional communication practises.

Proposals (in Word format) must include :

- In a separate file: the name, professional or academic status, institutional affiliation, and contact details of the author(s) (email and postal addresses).
- The article must not exceed 30,000 characters (including notes, spaces, and references).
- Title of the article (maximum 180 characters including spaces): Times New Roman, size 12, bold, and centered on the page.
- The author's name should be in regular weight, centered on the page, and followed by a footnote reference. The footnote should provide a 2–3 line biographical note about the author.
- The text (including headings) must be entirely in Times New Roman, size 12, justified, and without paragraph indentation.
- Please refrain from using any stylistic effects: no page breaks, section breaks, or double line breaks...
- Line spacing: 1.5.
- Margins: 2.5 cm on all sides. Standard page layout.
- Document structure: two levels of headings.
- Do not number headings or subheadings.
- Main section titles: bold, upright, and left-aligned.
- Subsection titles: regular weight, italicized, and left-aligned.
- Always specify acronyms when first used.
- Remove all bullet points: please use complete sentences instead.
- Use synonyms as often as possible.
- Minimize the number of footnotes.
- Remove double (or triple) spaces between words.
- Ensure the correct use of non-breaking spaces before (and after) the following punctuation marks: ? ! ; « »
- Verify all quotations in the article, as well as the spelling of proper names.
- Numbers up to twelve should be written in full; numbers beyond twelve should be in digits.
- Centuries should be indicated as follows: 18th century, 19th century...
- Quotations of fewer than four lines should be placed within quotation marks and remain in the body of the text.
- Quotations longer than four lines should be set off from the main text, indented, and enclosed in quotation marks. They should remain in Times New Roman, size 12.
- Bibliographic references should follow the French APA standards (7th edition, 2019), both in the general bibliography and within the text.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION & REVIEW SCHEDULE

Abstracts must be submitted no later than Sunday, **April 27, 2025**.

The scientific committee will review the abstracts and provide its evaluation by May 5, 2025.

Final proposals are expected by **August 18, 2025**. They will undergo a double-blind peer review by members of our scientific committee, with feedback provided by September 15, 2025.

If revisions are required, the modified proposals must be submitted by **October 12, 2025** at the latest.

The publication of the Cahier is scheduled for **December 2025**.

Abstracts and final proposals should be sent to
baptiste.buidin@galilee.be.

PROTAGORAS & IHECS

Attached to the Institut des Hautes Etudes en Communications Sociales (IHECS), the PROTAGORAS think-tank is an inter-university and interdisciplinary research centre specialised in public and political communication.

PROTAGORAS aims to build bridges between fundamental and applied research, as well as between scholars and practitioners in public and political communication.

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