Chapter 2

THE 2018 ITALIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS ISSUES IN THE TV AGENDA BETWEEN TV NEWS AND TALK SHOWS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2018 Italian General Elections represents one of the most interesting case studies in political communication field. On the one hand, there are many reasons related to purely political questions and, on the other, there are several aspects related to the communication dimension of the players involved (Cavallaro, Diamanti, Pregliasco 2018). In particular, on the political aspect, the scenario emerging from the earliest hours after the vote made the March 4 ballot a unique event with two specific ingredients: the success of two populist political forces (Five Star Movement and Lega Nord) and a general political framework marked by a high level of political instability. This is reflected, first of all, in the precarious potential alliance between the "winning" parties; secondly, in the disappearance of the so-called "classic coalition system", which had already given the first warning on the eve of the 2013 Italian General Elections (Morcellini, Antenore, Ruggiero 2013; Chiaramonte, De Sio 2014).

At the same time, these elections were characterized by a "hybrid" use of different media, where politicians and parties have developed a variety of strategies, styles and languages in relation to the diversity of the current media environment (Lombardo, Novelli, Ruggiero 2019). Besides to a widespread increase in the use of the Network as a tool for promoting the individual candidate and their political programs, in order to reduce the "distance" between politics and citizens, we must also consider the role played by mainstream media in this "new" media scenario. We are currently faced with a complex media system characterized by the development of processes of transformation and hybridization (Chadwick 2013; Mazzoli 2017) and citizens seem to recognize two fundamental roles played by the

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